

Sui Kim

HOBBS MCLAUGHLIN GALLERY

March 29 - 21 April

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For Hobbs McLaughlin's inaugural exhibition at Flat 55 Balfron Tower, Sui Kim presents a purpose built display of watercolours alongside a selection of works in oil, including those from her *Tropical Dream* and *Arches* series.

Kim has an eye for images of leisure, her paintings channeling the *joie de vivre* of the summer holiday. The beach ball, the palm tree and the arch are amongst a number of motifs that make up a visual vocabulary in her practice, appearing in ever evolving variations of colour and form. The various transmutations of such motifs have markedly different impacts; in one painting a beach ball is a gesture of innocent pleasure, while elsewhere it is the scene of excess and unpredictability. The excitable charm, characteristic of her painting, is liable to escalate; her spirited brushwork at times becomes frenetic, allowing the general gaiety of her practice to spill over into a state of manic exuberance. Language, in Kim's work, is transient; a sweet and gentle phrase can soon become jarring.

Act 2 (*Tropical Dream*) is one of a number of new works in oil with an historical precedent in Monet's *Water Lily* paintings. Similarly to Monet's later works, a formation of colourful motifs set against a dusky background create a vivid, abstracted pattern with little more than a shallow illusion of depth. The distinctly artificial shadows in Act 2 (*Tropical Dream*) have a curious effect; rather than drawing one into the work, they act like launching pads, propelling the motifs outward. Kim is something of an Unnatural Impressionist. Half ball, half umbrella, the luminous shapes blustering across the surface of the painting are a development of the beach ball motif, and they maintain its plasticky, manufactured feel. These vivid forms belong to a landscape of another order than that of the water lily, one that is con-

spicuously man-made. Like streetlights morphing in a puddle at the end of a heavy night out, the blurry neons and smudged greys are a vision of intoxication. The sensory overload in this work is characteristic of Kim's *Tropical Dream* series; capricious and over-stimulated, they are paintings with a distinct flavour of urban savagery.

Kim's paintings have a fresh and physical presence, her ebullient brush strokes jumping out from the surface of her works into the surrounding space. Applying her brush directly upon the walls, and in a recent development to furniture-like constructions, this movement outward from the canvas or paper is at times physically manifested. One such construction has been produced by Kim especially for her exhibition at Hobbs McLaughlin Gallery, upon which a number of new watercolour works are displayed. Kim's watercolours are the breeding grounds for her ideas; in sketchbooks and on paper, paintings are rhythmically and speedily dispatched, capturing the essence of her loose and fluid style. Shown alongside each other, these works provide a microcosmic view of the playful associations of shape and colour that bounce back and forth in her practice at large.

Kim is a brave and prolific painter, who fully embraces flux. Unafraid to follow wherever it may lead, she approaches her work with a loose grip, allowing her to ride the changing tides of her practice without weighing it down. Each of Kim's works is a juncture, at which the rapid flow of thoughts and forms re-surface in a new state, moulded by their passage. Her visual language, ever shifting, offers works that are at once liberated and volatile.

LIST OF WORKS

STAIRWELL

Arch from Miscellaneous oil on canvas 26x26cm 2011

LIVING ROOM

Act 2 (Tropical Dream) oil on canvas 60.5x80cm 2012

Lay oil on linen 13x17.5 2012

Building Figures oil on plywood, watercolour on paper
190x20x9.5cm 2012

BEDROOM

Study on Arches oil on canvas 47x70cm, 47x70cm 2011

BIOGRAPHY

b.1983, Gyeonggi-do, South Korea

2010–12 MA Painting, Royal College of Art, London

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

In the Presence Bloomberg New Contemporaries 2011-12

Julian Rena and Sui Kim Gallery 54, London 2010