

Chips and Egg

Kate Davis, Cinzia Mutigli, Alia Syed, Milly Thompson, Hayley Tompkins
with a new text by Maike Hale Jones

Curated by Helen Nisbet

15 November – 21 December 2019

Taking its title from the famous scene in the 1989 'kitchen sink' film Shirley Valentine (*I like chips and egg on Tuesday, this is Thursday*) this exhibition explores mundanity, domestic life, class, the evolving body, cliché and sparkling re-discovery.

Milly Thompson's six paintings come from a series of work depicting menopausal nude, or near-nude women in relaxed, luxuriant poses – they lay on beaches, day beds, sofas or next to swimming pools. The titles describe a place or activity relating to women's names. The work *Neon Nails* references a nail bar shop sign and typifies the carefree positivity of the series and their unapologetic relationship to pleasure and desire.

Unfolding by Alia Syed was shot in a council laundry on Deptford High Street in 1986/7. The work developed from a desire to film functional spaces that have traditionally acted as support networks for women. Syed spent months getting to know the women and the rhythms of the laundrette in relation to use, time and light. She printed the film herself using superimpositions and repetition; it was made at University of East London as part of her BA degree show.

Kate Davis' *Charity* juxtaposes art historical depictions of breastfeeding with documentation of domestic chores like dishwashing - questioning how the essential, but largely invisible and unpaid, processes we employ to care for others could be reimaged. Accompanying the film are two new drawings, *Flaw I* and *Flaw II*, explorations of dust, dirt and crumbs from the artist's kitchen, drawn on scraps of paper found in her home. The drawings are inspired by 'The Unswept Floor' a Roman mosaic detailing the detritus left on a floor after a feast. They also consider the unswept floor as a cypher for neglected domestic labour and as a potential act of defiance.

My Boring Dreams featuring Kylie, Neneh, Whitney and the Gang, is a new work by Cinzia Mutigli. The film collages adverts for beauty products, clips from the home shopping channel QVC and projections of famous women including Lena Horn, Dorothy Dandridge, Marylyn Monroe and Kylie Minogue. Narrating the film, Mutigli describes failed aspirations, dreams that came to nothing, what it means to dream of kittens and the powerful impact a lack of sleep has had on her thoughts, ideas and sense of self.

Painted objects by Hayley Tompkins are grouped throughout the gallery. Made using everyday items - phones, tools, clothing and kitchen utensils, the works eschew a hierarchy of materials. Familiar, domestic objects are transformed into paintings that sensitively and humorously explore colour, function and form.

The exhibition is accompanied by a short story, *Embers in the Ashes – The Rise and Fall of Pat Phoenix* by Maike Hale-Jones.

Kate Davis (b. 1977, Wellington, New Zealand) lives and works in Glasgow. Recent solo shows include Stills Gallery, Edinburgh; Dunedin Public Art Gallery, New Zealand and Temporary Gallery, Cologne. She won the 2016/17 Margaret Tait Award.

Cinzia Mutigli (b. 1970 Edinburgh) lives and works in Cardiff. Recent projects include presentations at Cubitt Gallery, London; Somerset House, London and Arcade Campfa, Cardiff.

Milly Thompson (b. 1964, London) lives and works in London. Recent solo exhibitions include Timespan, Helmsdale; Freehouse Gallery, London and Westminster Waste, London. Thompson was a member of the collaborative art group BANK between 1994 and 2003.

Hayley Tompkins (b. 1971, Leyton Buzzard) lives and works in Glasgow. Recent solo shows include Drawing Room, Hamburg and Bonner Kunstverein. Tompkins represented Scotland as part of a group exhibition at the 55th Venice Biennale.

Alia Syed (b. 1964, Swansea) lives and works in London. Recent exhibitions include, Yale Centre of British Art; LUX, London and Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Syed was nominated for The Jarman Award in 2015.

Maike Hale Jones (b. 1983, Huddersfield) is a writer based in London.

Helen Nisbet is a curator from Shetland, now based in London. She is Artistic Director for Art Night and curates projects across the UK. Helen sits on the Acquisitions Committee for the Arts Council Collection and on the Board of Trustees for Art Quest and a-n.