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CLAIRE HOOPER: HEKATE

Preview: Thursday, 27 May, 14:00-20:00

Exhibition: 27 May – 26 June 2021

Hollybush Gardens is pleased to present *Hekate*, a solo exhibition of new textile and watercolour works by Claire Hooper. Continuing her interest in Greek mythology, Hooper presents a body of work informed by the ancient figure – a Greek goddess whose symbolism includes crossroads, thresholds, witchcraft and necromancy among several other associations. In distinction to the contemporary understanding of Hekate as a figure of sorcery and magic, Hooper references the goddess for her tripartite evocation and embodiment: as three faces, as crossroads, as intermediary, and as connected to the three realms of earth, sea and sky. Throughout the exhibition, Hooper associates Hekate's incorporation of tripartite states and symbols to the continuum of embodied knowledge experienced in motherhood and mothering.

Several large works occupy the entranceway, acting as hanging partitions before the gallery's main space. Informed by the technique of batik – a hand-dyed design that becomes patterned by the removal of wax – these works are installed with specific light arrangements, affecting the reception of the work's pigmentation. The treated surface of these linen works mirrors the weight of the watercolour paper on view elsewhere, such treatment disturbing the presumed legibility of Hooper's material. This sleight of hand extends to the content of Hooper's watercolour works which feature ribbons as fluctuating pathways and Y-junctions – forms typically associated with Hekate. Larger scale watercolours appear as jigsaws of sliced geodes and cut aggregates of dense rock formations. In both instances, Hooper has constructed the patterns and compositions by repeating profile silhouettes of her daughter, grandmother, adopted sister and herself. Once noticed, these facial profiles behave as discrete patterning devices and as detectable code throughout the exhibition. Enriching their formal mutability, these large scale watercolours indicate Hooper's interest in the image plane as a site of activity, capable of numerous compositional arrangements.

Hooper's use of the female profile – extending across generations and beyond a familial lineage – not only ruminates on the lived experience and genealogy of motherhood but, as a conceit, also introduces doubt in the experience of image recognition. Hooper references the polymath, philosopher and intellectual Roger Caillois, whose *La Lecture des Pierres* (1970) catalogued a materialist mysticism in the magical reading of stones. Caillois' decipherment of images within naturally occurring forms is one of personal projection, overlaying a pattern, system and signification to natural phenomena. In Hooper's use of the profile, the embedded image is both a personal means of apprehension and a configured optic, whose communication is sustained by the empathetic and irreducible experience of motherhood.

Claire Hooper (born 1978, UK) lives and works in London. Recent solo exhibitions include *Hekate*, Hollybush Gardens, London, (2021); *Claire Hooper*, The Gallery at Plymouth College of Art, (2016); *She Knocked Aggressively at The Door, She Shouted Aggressively at the Gate*, ANDOR Gallery, London, (2016); *Clay as Bread and Dust as Wine*, Hollybush Gardens, London, (2016); *Fig 2, no. 7*, ICA studio, London, (2015) (in collaboration with Maria Loboda); *Ziggurat*, Edel Assanti, London, (2015); *Claire Hooper*, Bonner Kunstverein, Germany, (2014); and *Claire Hooper*, Vanity Projects, New York, (2013). Group exhibitions include The Mardin Biennale, Turkey, (2015); *Regional, International and Extra Terrestrial*, Mars Gallery, Los Angeles, (2015); *An Archeology*, Zabłudowicz Collection, London, (2012); *Songs of the Swamp*, WUK, Vienna, (2011); *New Narrative*, Digital Arts Centre, Taipei, (2011); and Koln Kunstfilm Biennale, Kunstwerke, Berlin, (2010). Screenings of her work have been presented internationally, including at International Film Festival Rotterdam, the Netherlands; MUMOK, Vienna; ICA, London; The Serpentine Cinema, London; Whitechapel Gallery, London; and Berwick Film and Media Arts Festival, Berwick-upon-Tweed, UK. Hooper was awarded the Baloise Art Prize in 2010, presenting her video *Nyx* (2010) at Art Basel's Art Statements that year.

For press inquiries please contact: alex@hollybushgardens.co.uk

Gallery Hours: Wednesday - Friday 11:00-18:00, Saturday 12:00-18:00; or by appointment.