

# FRESTONIAN GALLERY

## LUKE ELWES LANDERMERE

**Private View: Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> November, 6-9pm**

Exhibition: 11<sup>th</sup> November – 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2021

Consisting solely of works on paper 'Landermere' marks Luke Elwes' second solo exhibition at Frestonian Gallery and the culmination of an extraordinary investigation into a practice that is as meditative as it is dynamic.

For the past two decades, Luke Elwes has alternated his time between his studio in London, mainly working in oil paint, and extended periods out on location making works on paper. Beginning with the *Osea* series, created over the course of a decade on a small island off the east coast of England, in recent years he has gone on to make significant bodies of work on paper during residencies in the US, at both the Vermont Studio Center and the Albers Foundation in Connecticut.

These latest works on paper, created over the last eighteen months, are centred on a fragile wilderness of salt flats and tidal marshland, the eponymous Landermere, and capture this permeable space and its ever shifting lines between water, earth and sky. They are created in, and reflect, a place which appears tranquil but is also cyclical and endlessly mutating, recalling Heraclitus' dictum that 'everything flows and nothing abides'. Each image is begun and completed in one sitting and continued regardless of changes in the weather. They refer both to the immediacy of a single encounter and the recollection of past experience. This distillation of a range of conditions of light, colour and personal physical experience of the landscape calls to mind Cy Twombly's 'Four Seasons' paintings (1993-4) – evocations of a broad and more universal experience, that both reflects and transcends the subject matter.

The process of making these works is one very much of Elwes' own devising, and something that is being continually explored and perfected – were perfection possible in an exercise where the elements of chance are so integral. Each work begins with a complex web of under-drawing in ink, crayon and graphite before the work is immersed in layers of gouache mixed with tidal water. This solution allows the pigment to float and run as Elwes manipulates the durable Arches paper, forming undulating streams of colour here, or pooled lakes of textured paint there. In this process the entire work becomes the 'drawing tool', and the act of painting a highly physical full-body exercise. The point of resolution – the decision as to when a work is 'finished' – is made only when the balance between what is veiled and revealed of the 'original' drawing feels perfectly in balance.

Situated between the visual field and a mental landscape, these works represent a continual process of excavation - of what is lost or recovered in memory as well as what lies buried or concealed by the tides of time.

**Luke Elwes** was born in 1961 and now lives in London. His early years were spent in Iran, where the light and space of the mountains and desert were a formative influence. He studied at Camberwell school of Art (UAL) and holds undergraduate and research degrees from Bristol University and Birkbeck, University of London.

His work has been exhibited worldwide, with recent institutional exhibitions including the Museo della Grafica, Palazzo Lanfranchi (Italy) + Fondazione Bottari Lattes (Italy), Young Museum and Estorick Collection (UK) and the Albers Foundation (USA). His work is held in numerous public and corporate collections including: The Bayer Collection; Christie's Contemporary Art Collection; National Trust Foundation for Art; Imperial College, University of London; Merrill Lynch Collection; Coopers & Lybrand; N M Rothschild; Deutsche Hypo Bank London; Hoares Bank Collection; Societe Generale, London; Electra Collection; Europa Collection, London & the Freshfields Collection. In 2022 he will undertake a Fellowship at Ballingren Arts Foundation (Ireland).