

FRESTONIAN GALLERY

ANNA FREEMAN BENTLEY

SOLO PRESENTATION AT THE ARMORY SHOW 2022

PRESENTS SECTION – BOOTH P39

Javits Center, Halls 3E, 3D, 3B – 429 11th Avenue, New York, NY 10001

Friday 9th Sept 12-8pm / Saturday 10th 12-7pm / Sunday 11th 12-6pm

Frestonian Gallery is delighted to present an extraordinary new body of work by Anna Freeman Bentley, an emerging star of British painting, at The Armory Show. The works on display comprise the first half of a major exhibition split between openings at The Armory (8th September) and Frestonian Gallery's London space (21st September).

The series – entitled 'make believe' is derived from an informal artist's residency at Sky Studios during the latter stages of lockdown in 2020/21. The film sets that provide the subject matter for these vibrant, enigmatic paintings are from the 2021 release 'The Colour Room' – a biopic of Clarice Cliff, herself a pioneering female British artist, who in the early 1930's became the first female Art Director of a major British ceramics studio.

Freeman Bentley's work is characterised by a tension between her strictly disciplined process, and her lyrically loose and joyous style. Her choice of subject matter has been a closely observed exercise in focus and control – choosing to paint interiors exclusively, and at all points leaving those interiors free of overt human presence, instead allowing the implied *markers* of presence – a scattering of objects; an open door; a window ajar – to 'do the work'.

The nature of these interiors follows a studied coda – in every case providing a conceptual element of tension between the seen and the unseen, the known and the unknowable. This is perfectly exemplified in the 'make believe' series, where the film sets depicted are both real and unreal, solid and yet impermanent – to be dismantled once the movie production wraps. Here and there Freeman Bentley allows a clue to the essential nature of her subject to creep in to the picture plane... a lighting rig here, a coiled electrical cable there... reminds us that what we are looking at is a work of art inspired by a work of artifice. As the process of arriving at a subject and composition is conceptually rigorous, so too is the physical production of the work – with each motif being fully explored in sketches, preparatory drawings and then works on paper before 'graduating' onto canvas or panel.

It is, then, in the act of painting itself that Freeman Bentley's style and skill takes flight above such rigour and restraint. Her expressive brushwork, masterful control of both thinned and thickened medium and singularly bold, exuberant palette brings forth work that is as vibrant and evocative as it is detailed and considered. The works in 'make believe' are as cinematic as the subject that inspired them, resulting in a body of paintings that radiate a light and life all of their own.



Brilliant Colour 3, 2022, oil on panel, 18 x 14"

Abbreviated Artist Biography



Anna Freeman Bentley (b. 1982, London) is a graduate of the Royal College of Art (receiving her MA in Painting in 2010), having previously studied at the Kunsthochschule Weissensee, Berlin, and Chelsea College of Art and Design. She has exhibited widely in the UK and internationally. Recent solo exhibitions include Frestonian Gallery, London (2020), DENK Gallery, Los Angeles (2019), Ahmanson Gallery, Irvine, California (2018) and Space K, Seoul (2017).

Her work has been included in prestigious prizes and institutional exhibitions such as the Dentons Prize, East London Painting Prize, the Prague Biennale and the Bloomberg New Contemporaries. In 2019 she was awarded both the Elizabeth Greenshields Foundation Grant and the Palazzo Monti residency in Brescia, Italy. Her work is held in the Saatchi Collection & Hogan Lovells Collection (London), Hotel Crillon Collection (Paris), Ahmanson Collection (California), The Basma Al Sulaiman Museum of Contemporary Art (Jeddah) and numerous private collections worldwide. She lives and works in London.

Selected solo and two person exhibitions

- 2022 make believe (part 2), Frestonian Gallery, London, UK
- 2022 make believe (part 1), The Armory Show – Presents section, New York, USA
- 2021 Armory Show - Presents section (remote), Frestonian Gallery, London, UK
- 2020 Collected and composed, Frestonian Gallery, London, UK
- 2019 Second home, DENK Gallery, Los Angeles, CA, USA
- 2018 Exclusive, Ahmanson Gallery, Irvine, CA, USA
- 2017 Chapters, Wolfson College, Oxford, UK
- 2015 Settlement, Husk Project Space, London, UK
- 2013 Double Vision with Ale Groen, Fieldstead Gallery, California, USA
- 2012 Restoration, Pied à Terre, London, UK
- 2007 re – collected, Galerie Kollaborativ, Berlin, Germany

The exhibition 'make believe' is accompanied by a catalogue with a new essay on Freeman Bentley's work by Thomas Marks, and an interview between the artist and film producer Georgie Paget. For information on the publication and further info on the artist please contact: galler@frestoniangallery.com