

Simone Menegoi: Your exhibition is opened by a selection of charcoal drawings you made last Spring. In our conversation at Collezione Maramotti, you told me you don't consider them proper "studies" for the paintings, yet some of them rehearse motifs and forms that can be found in the paintings (although in a much more explicitly figurative version). How do you conceive of the relationship between the two groups of works? Why did you decide to show the drawings, while usually, with few exceptions, you don't exhibit your works on paper?

Phoebe Unwin: The drawings relate to the paintings in terms of exploring certain forms and subjects: a changing horizon, movements of stretch and speed, of containment and a combined inward/outward perception. The drawings were made alongside the paintings but also sometimes afterwards. At times they do become close to functioning as studies, but I see them as working in parallel with the paintings, exploring their own emotional register. Making the paintings then became so much about responding to colour and building a different kind of space that, in my mind, they have and need a particular independence from the drawings.

In terms of exhibiting, there was an opportunity to present the drawings in a separate room from the paintings. This was a way to still communicate the overall exploration of revealed and obscured forms, the abstract and figurative elements, without stressing a direct, linear relationship between the two bodies of work.

SM: All the paintings on show have been realised between late Spring and September, in a relatively short period of time. The resulting body of work is quite compact, in terms of medium (oil on canvas), content (the landscape) and style. To start with, can you tell me about the choice of the medium, which, to my knowledge, you have used very seldom so far?

PU: For almost all of my exhibitions in the past I have made at least some of the paintings entirely with oil paint – so that goes back more than ten years! However, you are right in that I did often also find my subjects through the material contrasts of a range of paint and other materials (acrylic, household paint, pastels, ink), creating a variety of different marks and forms. My *Field* paintings take this idea of response somewhere a bit different: in my mind they are about building more of an open pictorial space, with changing depths, through the orchestration of colour relationships alone. Because of that, I chose to work with just oil paint: there's nothing quite like oil paint in terms of the intensity of the pigment, the possibility of very delicate glazes and workability over time. These are individualized landscapes, in some ways all transient perspectives, which oscillate between being a place of emotion and comprehension, yet, then, I think they also swing back to being about the act of painting: painting as a place in itself. I wanted to be able to think within a sensitive and powerful spectrum colour: from the opaque to the translucent, bright to dark. Oil paint allowed me to do that.

Although many of the paintings were essentially realised over those months, as a cohesive exploration (made specially for the Maramotti Collection's Pattern Room), the development of the ideas and approach goes back a good couple of years. The painting *Approach* was made during the previous Summer.

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