



Jack Milroy *Waterline*, 2014, (detail)
cut book-page construction
148 x 131 x 12.5 cm

● FT Critic's Choice ● Waitrose Weekend



Mimei Thompson *Woodland*, 2015, (detail)
oil on canvas, 60 x 80 cm

JACK MILROY A Natural World

11 March–1 May

Hanging in the gallery's front window is *One Hundred Day's of Lunch*, a cut construction made of as many Piccanti sardine cans. Recycling his favourite lunch dish, Milroy creates a jubilant shoal of silver blue sardines leaping out of their metallic containers. It takes you completely by surprise.

'Sometimes the simplicity and directness of the presentation, in the raw material that Milroy has always cannibalised for his work, can be disarming and deceptive... And of course there are the illustrated books that, occasional experimentation or comparative digressions apart, have been at once the principal working substance and imaginative preoccupation in his work these past 30 years or more. Few artists have similarly made the Book their own, as both material and subject.'

William Packer has observed Milroy at work through these decades, covering his developments with a keen eye. Other writers include A. S. Byatt, Philip Henscher, Andrew Lambirth, and Jackie Wullschlager.

In her *FT Critic's Choice*, Wullschlager noted that 'Like Jeff Wall, Milroy came of age when beauty was suspect and has found his own subversive way of incorporating sumptuous colour and formal rigour into work that is offbeat and unexpected'. Of his late surrealist wit, and his sense of the infinite possibilities of mutation, she detects 'a pertinent contemporary vision, fraught with 21st century tension about science and nature'.

AF Projects

MIMEI THOMPSON A Year of Sleepwalking

11 March–1 May

In contrast to Jack Milroy, Mimei Thompson's natural world is resolutely urban at source. The show brings together her ideas of 'nature' which in the work represents a site of authenticity, or a place of origin, longed for, but knowingly unattainable. It is in the area of slippage between the desire for something natural and the reality that it is inescapably a part of man-made culture that her subject matter resides, synthesizing the everyday and the sublime.

Weeds, woodlands, bin-bags, flies and pot plants are given epic status through translation and re-presentation, whilst also expressing 'interconnectedness'. Thompson believes the fluid world of her paintings reflects the feeling that matter temporarily takes on certain forms, but that these are transient, and capable of shifting and morphing at any moment. This shape-shifting is connected to myths and magical thinking.

Born in Japan to a Chilean mother and an American father, she lived in the Sudan before moving to the UK. Thompson studied at Glasgow School of Art, Central St Martins and The RCA, London (MA 2005). She participated in Jerwood Contemporary Painters, was commissioned by the Contemporary Art Society and is included in the Arts Council Collection.



David Price

Rides, 2015, oil on panel, 39 cm diam



Machiko Edmondson

Pirouette, 2015, oil on canvas, 182 x 182 cm

DAVID PRICE Dreamland

6 May–6 June

In his third solo exhibition at Art First, Price presents a new series of works in which he re-imagines Piranesi's illustrations of ancient Rome as a corrupted amusement park called Dreamland.

In 2012 Price moved his studio to Margate, home of the real Dreamland. Fascinated by the ruined remains of a resort that in its heyday had been modelled on a park of the same name in Coney Island USA, he found a metaphor for the degraded concept of the 'American Dream' that once symbolised the hopes of a generation in a bright Modern future, where everyone could enjoy the rewards of labour and democracy.

In our current social and political climate the dream of a democratic, meritocratic utopia has crumbled along with the Dreamlands built to symbolise them. Price's work privileges a choreography of architectural fragments that expose humanity's complex relations with the built environment and renders quiet, intimate, beatific scenes with apocalyptic significance.

Price's studies in printmaking at the RCA (2006–9) continue to inform his primary practice of painting where each colour is painted separately, unmixed, directly onto the gesso surface. The brilliance and clarity of his imagery release astonishing details that delight the viewer only after careful observation.

AF Projects

Visage 6–23 May

A short study exhibition bringing together emerging artists whose work—either in particular series or as an overarching element of their practice—centre on the human visage. From direct representation and display, such as in the haunting photo-realist paintings of Machiko Edmondson or the stark filmic portraits of Jessie Brennan's 43 Strangers, to the reductive or abstract—as in the carved clay and bronze busts by Joni Brenner or shimmering, resin heads by Melissa Bugarella. This exhibition brings into focus that motif—the face or mask—which our minds are uniquely designed to see and seek out in the world around us.



Wilhelmina Barns-Graham



ST IVES CONNECTIONS

Wilhelmina Barns-Graham, with works by Roger Hilton, John Wells and Bryan Wynter

10 June–14 August

Art First brings together key works released by the Wilhelmina Barns-Graham Trust with fine examples by three of her St Ives' contemporaries.

AF Projects

Dolly Thompson (detail)



DOLLY THOMPSETT

The Secret Life & Other Stories

10 June–14 August

AFP is pleased to introduce the work of this 'knowing post-romantic' painter with a new series of evocative, fragmentary narratives.

Guler Ates (detail)



GALLERY NEWS

GULER ATES

Government Art Collection Acquisition

Art First has great pleasure in announcing that two works from her recent exhibition, *Stilled: Photographs from the Rajasthan Series*, have entered The Government Art Collection.

MIMEI THOMPSON

Atlantic Centre for Arts Residency

Thompson has been awarded a Residency at the Atlantic Centre for the Arts, New Smyrna Beach in Florida (May 2015) where she will participate in the Master Artist in Residence Programme with artist Inka Essenhigh and a writer, a composer and a poet.

Mimei Thompson (detail)



EILEEN COOPER RA

Book Launch & Exhibition

Tuesday 26 May–Saturday 6 June

Cooper's eagerly awaited monograph, *Between the Lines*, with essays by Martin Gayford and Sara Lee, is to be launched at Art First on 26 May. It will be accompanied by a small survey exhibition of her work covering three decades—the period during which she has been represented by Benjamin Rhodes and Art First.

Eileen Cooper (detail)



Royal Academy exhibition

At the RA's Fine Rooms, Eileen Cooper's exhibition *Hide and Seek: Drawing 1977–2014* opens on 29 May and runs till 23 August.

For further information please see www.artfirst.co.uk
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