

Emma Cousin

Mardy

Opening reception: 6-8pm Thursday 5 July 2018
Exhibition: 6 July - 15 August 2018
Monday to Friday 11am - 6pm



Edel Assanti is pleased to present *Mardy*, Emma Cousin's first exhibition at the gallery. The exhibition consists of four large-scale paintings, works from a new body of work developed over the past six months.

Cousin's paintings depict a space of permanent suspense and stasis, inhabited by groups of anonymous figures engaged in collective actions. Emptied of almost all reference points and coordinates, this zero-landscape is a theatre for these figures to question the role that the body plays in processing and defining experiences.

They use their own and each others' bodies as tools to measure their parameters: pushing, pressuring, stretching, supporting, embracing and strangling. In this timeless environment, childlike amusement is punctuated by implicit danger. The relationship between the individuals could go either way - providing a support system or pulling each other to pieces.

Cousin establishes this space of otherness with a bold palette, creating pulsating backdrops to the scenes by layering refined gradients of colour over one another in delicate washes. Bodies are articulated in confident outlines, with uncomfortably otherworldly complexions, yet altogether tangible and flesh-like.

Cousin's paintings investigate our expectations of our own bodies and the judgements we make over others. Age and mobility are questioned alongside more basic social conditioning - status and hierarchy; affection and neediness; function and elasticity; attraction and repulsion. We are asked to look in wonder at the body, recognising raw power and vulnerability in the same gaze.

Emma Cousin graduated the Ruskin School of Fine Art in 2007, and is currently on residence at Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture in Maine. Recent solo exhibitions include *Leg Up*, Lewisham Art House, London, 2018; *Aids to Living*, Dolph Projects, London, 2017. Recent group shows include *The Silk Room*, House of St Barnabus, London, 2017; *ING Discerning Eye*, Mall Galleries, London, 2016 and *8 Minutes from Here*, Southbank Centre, London, 2013. Cousin lives and works in London.

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