

Piper Keys Exhibitions

Rachal Bradley
Prunella Clough

25th July to 23rd August

Rachal Bradley shows work from her ongoing Kevlar series alongside paintings by post-war British artist Prunella Clough (1919-1999).

Prunella Clough's painting practice spanned over fifty years. Exhibited here are *Industrial Plant II* (1954), *Industrial Interior V* (1960) and *Inside and Outside* (1970-75). The earlier two take from observations of industrial scenes: the first a view onto a set of structures in shallow perspective; the second an allusive, flat study of factory machinery. The third, largest painting is suggestive of cartography, comprising a cross motif in one corner beneath a string of irregularly outlined shapes. The three paintings, all in Clough's muted palette of blue-greys, ochre and black, chart the long turn away from historic forms of realism in her work.

Rachal Bradley's Kevlar series, first shown in 2015, uses the industrial material originally invented by American chemist Stephanie Kwolek in the mid-1960s. The ingenuity of her invention centres on Kwolek's use of weaving techniques to knit further strength into the chemical polymer strands. In these exhibited pieces the fabric is laid in sections, the surface manipulated and recorded in resin. The material is used in its standard colours of lemon yellow and black with frayed edges and a matt-to-gloss finish. The fabric's weave has been pulled apart in places and the surface folded back onto itself. This kind of fingertip re-working is reminiscent of textile traditions; a metaphorical loosening of the material's connection to its laboratory beginnings and later military application in personal protective clothing.

In conversations in the run up to the exhibition, Bradley raised questions of how we, as individuals, can respond to the vast hegemony of infrastructure and whether an artist's attempt to work with the stuff of industry is a form of amelioration. 'An attempt in the minor to recuperate agency for the body in the face of the enormity of infrastructure.'

The Arts Council Collection along with numerous regional museum collections have loan schemes to provide public access to a repository of artworks. Here this opportunity is taken up to bring one practice and its formal experiments to bear on another's current conceptual trajectory.

Exhibition conceived by Piper Keys and Rachal Bradley. Works by Prunella Clough on loan from Arts Council Collection, Southbank Centre, London*. With thanks to George Liddiment.

Piper Keys is supported using public funding by the National Lottery through Arts Council England

Please note, to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission there will be no opening event. The exhibition will be on view during regular opening hours and visitor numbers inside the gallery will be limited. We ask that those who attend wear a face mask and follow social distancing rules.

Gallery opening hours 12noon to 6pm, Friday to Sunday
Entrance through 58a Artillery Lane

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*This exhibition has been supported with loans from the Arts Council Collection. Founded in 1946, the Arts Council Collection is the UK's most widely circulated loan collection of modern and contemporary British art and includes important examples by all of the UK's prominent artists. For more information please see www.artscouncilcollection.org.uk