



From Hiding Places Ten Years Deep
Jessie Stevenson
12 September – 26 October

Berntson Bhattacharjee is delighted to present *From Hiding Places Ten Years Deep*, a solo exhibition by Jessie Stevenson, whose work explores the physical and emotional energies from the natural world. The exhibition showcases expansive paintings, which oscillate between the poetic environments of the Norfolk marshes and the Western Deserts of Egypt. Responding to memories of Cairo from childhood, Stevenson contemplates our collective place in history and the transmission of stories through time; she interweaves studies of antiquity, ritual and a sense of nostalgia within her evolving landscapes.

The exhibition's title, inspired by William Wordsworth's tale "The Waggoner," delves into themes of wilderness, memory and the passage of time. Stevenson's paintings serve as portals to hidden corners and higher realms. She explores the enchanting mysticism and uncanniness of these in-between spaces, creating a mirror world of light lines and hovering shapes.

Visitors immediately encounter a towering wooden structure, representing the entrance of a tomb. The painting within acts as a metaphorical portal and the physical experience of crossing it brings the viewer into an enclosed environment. Surrounded by the main body of work, viewers journey into Stevenson's metaphorical space in-between, reminiscent of travels through the drylands. Navigating the exhibition and encountering the monumental piece on the back wall evokes a profound emotional response. The exhibition's centrepiece, set within a salvaged bead-and-butt wooden frame, elicits a deeper physiological response and fosters a spiritual atmosphere, further enhanced by the gallery's skylights. As visitors retrace their steps, a new perspective emerges, and the entryway structure reveals an unseen passageway. The continuous activity of looking back and seeing ahead allows a deeper physiological response about our understanding of belief, the unconscious state and the acts of living in the present.

Reflecting on her recent trip to Cairo and the ancient burial grounds at Saqqara, Stevenson contemplates the cyclical nature of history and the human experience. The rich symbolism and intricate narratives of Saqqara's archaeological wonders deepen her exploration of return and belonging. In her artistic process, Stevenson channels subconscious acts through sweeping, visceral strokes of oil paint and layers of colour atmospheres inspired by the desert landscape and tomb hieroglyphs. Diagonal lines carve through the sand, where the interplay of light and smog produces a gentle, warm haze overhead. Stevenson is interested in the optical contrast between sharp and gentle lines, mirrored in the topography shaped by nature and human interaction. These extreme conditions generate shifts in perspective, which she translates onto canvas. Thus, Stevenson's studio becomes a site of excavation, where each brushstroke unearths marks and traces, navigating between familiarity and mystery, moments of advancement and retreat across the painted surface.

By delving into personal and historical narratives, Stevenson provides reflections on our innate desire to capture time and our continuous quest for connection and meaning. This new body of work invites viewers into a celestial space, offering a profound exploration of belonging, departure, and return.

About the artist

Jessie Stevenson (b. 1993, Norwich, UK) lives and works between North Norfolk and London. She graduated from Central Saint Martins with a BA in Fine Art in 2017 and finished her MFA in Painting at the Slade School of Fine Art in

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2022, for which she received The Bartolomeu dos Santos Award. She is currently Honorary Research Associate at the Slade School of Art. In May (2024), Stevenson presented a solo booth at Market Art Fair with Berntson Bhattacharjee in Stockholm. Recent solo exhibitions include; 'The Circling Deeps' at Sapling Gallery in London (2023); 'Broken Gleam' at Berntson Bhattacharjee in Sweden (2022); 'Way Out West' at Sapling Gallery in London (2021). Recent group exhibitions include; 'Ithaca' at Herald St Gallery in London (2023-24); 'Babele' at Spazio Musa in Turin (2023); 'The Whitechapel Gallery Art Icon Charity Auction' at Phillips in London (2023); 'Dreaming in Colour' at Bonhams in London (2022); 'The Pump House' at Berntson Bhattacharjee in London (2022); 'Staying Alive' at Berntson Bhattacharjee in Sweden (2021). Stevenson was winner of the Cass Art Prize in 2017 and was the recipient of the 2021 Col Art Residency in London. In November 2022, she completed her residency as part of The Richard Ford Award at The Prado Museum, Madrid.

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