

**Sarah Buckner**

*Paintings*

8 June

9 June – 30 June

Ermes-Ermes is pleased to present the first solo show by Sarah Buckner (1984). *Paintings* presents a selection of works from 2013 to 2015.

*Not Why Not But No Why*

Text by Alastair MacKinven

Let's imagine we are in the grocery store buying our week's shopping and next to the breakfast cereal is a mother with her young child of let's say about two years old; for some unknown reason the child is screaming-crying-flaying-kicking and shouting with a violence unrecognisable to an adult. There is nothing the mother can do to calm the child as it makes the noise of a jackhammer. In desperation to stop the public scene the mother tries concern, "Oh are you all right little Baby, what is wrong?!" said in a sickly sweet voice. Next stern authority, "**Come on Baby! STOP MISBEHAVING!!**" followed by bribery, "If you don't stop screaming you will not be allowed to watch Peppa Pig and eat ice cream when we get back home.... You love watching Peppa Pig and eating ice cream, don't you?!" Next rational desperation, "Oh what is wrong, TELL Mommy what is wrong?" But this may be the very root of the problem, the child only knows about 100 words and they are not the right ones to express the inner-trauma of being in the grocery store and if the words were found in the child's limited vocabulary they may be: "I want to throw all the rainbow-coloured Lucky Charms cereals on the ground, take off my clothes and crush them into a powder and lick it off the floor but I am trapped in this pushchair, DAMN IT!" Even if the child can express its desire in a cogent, well-formed sentence what would follow would be the question "WHY?" So the screaming goes on until the reason for starting is long forgotten.

Translating from the ephemeral mist of desire into the stone tablet of language is that which we have been taught for centuries and the key to translation is a universality- an understanding between two people that have experienced the same feeling and related these feelings to specific vocalisations. Yet if the desire is that which falls outside of the shared or the universal, the speaker will have to contend with a great big WHY.

Art at its core is inexplicable yet this activity comes attached with the insistence, whether right or wrong, that it is 'original' or 'new'. Therefore, paradoxically, it is a subjective language that is placed in the gallery, a public space, to talk to the many. Due to the demand of the 'new' that is built into the structure of art what occurs is a lot of WHYS from the viewer and a lot of shit press releases pre-empting the WHY that comes from using a subjective language and the attempt at the invention of the 'new'. But newness is that which bubbles up from the primordial ooze that has yet to be named and is thus outside of language and because of being pre-language is invisible. So what is built into the structure of art is a paradox; this thing (art) must come from an individual position but must be understandable to the many, it must satisfy the WHY of the viewer which involves bringing the inexplicable work of art into language thus co-opting the aspirations to be the NEW. The surrogate position of language vis-a-vis the artwork as an explaining tool is turned on its head and now like the scientist's hypothesis (language proposition) is written before the work that 'explores' the ideas is made. Work is now made to fit the determinate; the good idea kills free thought. Satisfying the question WHY? is where success is determined and if a complicated subjective can be explained through a convincing (universal) logic then we are happy, the art is successful because it SPEAKS to the viewer and speaking belongs to language, and language has to be shared.

It is important to remember the word abstraction in its essential meaning: that which is separate from example, not concrete; let's not think of it as a style, trope or genre. The crying child in the grocery store is involved in true abstraction, any attempt made by the child to translate its unknown feelings is a neutering of the experience to appease the mother's desire to oedapolise the child, by engraining the process of translation, forcing the inexpressible into the expressed through the use of an inadequate language. Sarah Buckner is involved in essentialist abstraction in that the framing device of language is not satisfactory for her work which remains free from the empirical and thus pushes towards newness or, more correctly, an unknowable which Sarah has realised is present all the time it just remains un-named, rendering it invisible to most. Sarah has the ability to see these visions that are invisible due to being un-named and, more importantly, is able to put them down in oil paint on canvas.

I see a similarity between Sarah's work and the moment at the séance when the medium's eyes roll back into their head and what falls forth is noise, grunt, the odd sound which sounds like words mixed with sprayed spit, this being the emergence of true abstraction. What is brought back from the séance is the knowledge of the unknowable un-named that sits on top of this linear time. Like the medium, Sarah offers us through her paintings the visions reflected on the obsidian scrying mirror. For Sarah time is deconstructed and the leakage or feedback that occurs from a past time/ future time makes us realise that they both occur simultaneously all the time.

Sarah is a 'sensitive' one who receives the feedback and does not ask the WHY and therefore is the conduit in the process of emergence. Like the medium at the séance Sarah brings back images from the rupture in this time-space. Sometimes complete, sometime fragmentary, not always wanted and not controllable. From a room in Dusseldorf academy flow depictions of death, sex and cannibalism. A painting from 1914 Haiti that was unpainted at the time became almost exactly 100 years late in Rhineland Germany. It is best not to question Sarah's process of occurrence or you will remain forever the frustrated mother neutering the possibility for a way out of what seem the endless linguifying of art in the end days of post modernism. There is something else, just don't ask its name.

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