

James Collins, Haroun Hayward, Ella Mcveigh, James Owens, Yi To, Cheung Tsz Hin & Alyina Zaidi.

## **ONCE, THEN, GONE**

October 27 — November 30, 2023

Observation is frequently employed as a crucial method for unravelling the enigmas of reality. Whether it involves scrutinizing natural or human-made structures, the artists featured in *Once, Then, Gone* turn to nature and introspective observation to uncover the possibilities for direct access to the divine. Amid the intimate scale and the layered patinas and textures of the showcased pieces, the artists explore the delicate balance between nature-inspired abstractions, nonobjectivity, and geomorphic interpretations. *Once, Then, Gone* offers a glimpse into the sublime—whether it arises from human expression, is entwined with the natural world, or is purely aesthetic.

In *Once, Then, Gone* the realms of mysticism hold dominance, crafting narratives that transmute the physical world into a universe of boundless possibilities. **James Collins** suggestively points at symbols and meanings within the logic of painting that transcend specific references to time or illusion. **Ella McVeigh's** ongoing exploration of spatial dimensions and scale results in gestural paintings that resist easy interpretation. **Haroun Hayward's** watercolours exude reflections akin to an oasis of light. Hong Kong-based artist **Cheung Tsz Hin** weaves nostalgic recollections and vague memories to craft joyful and soft interior scenes. Artists **James Owens** and **Yi To** conjure works that originate from liminal spaces, with their images appearing to be in a perpetual state of becoming. Finally, Delhiite painter **Alyina Zaidi** infuses her vibrant works with symbolism and animism, offering a glimpse into multiple metaphysical perspectives.

The artists in *Once, Then, Gone* offer distinct yet parallel explorations of abstraction in their works. **James Collins** (b. 1992, UK) employs directional textures and a vibrant interplay of materials, creating captivating reliefs of oil paint. He devises images that seem to undulate, tarry pictures under which geometric circuits pump and slither. Engulfed in subtly chromed darkness, they evoke maps or, perhaps, anatomical observations. In his series *Liquid Engineers*, Collins uses large sections of warm, earthy reds interwoven with cold blue tones to describe the inner workings of a mysterious system. Engraved segments delineate intricate forms comprised of intersecting lines and curves that invite deciphering like an unknown language. Paint appears to move autonomously, allowing the tension in Collins's pictures to unfold almost as if guided by an external force, underscoring to painting's unique ability to redefine itself for each viewer. In harmony, **Ella McVeigh's** (b. 1992, UK) works transcend conventional meaning or representation and embrace pure abstraction. The artist blurs the boundaries between two-dimensional and three-dimensional experiences. In her work *Drumlin*, a large scale canvas of somatic gestures and bold mark-making, ideas of spatiality and depth are conveyed in a symphony of colours and contrast of light and dark.

**Haroun Hayward's** (b. 1983, UK) works in *Once, Then, Gone* are a quest for transcendentalism through the act of observation. Specifically, two watercolors, *Craigs Birch Winter, No. 1* and *Craigs Birch Winter, No. 2*, draw inspiration from the British painter Ben Nicholson, as they explore a shared theme. Hayward extracts elements from images, sounds, and perceptions to craft visuals that provide a profound sense of place while simultaneously transcending it. This artistic pursuit aligns with British painters influenced by the American River Hudson School, a movement renowned for emphasizing the spiritual connection between individuals and the natural world. In the creation of these works, Hayward's creative process involves daily bike rides along the same route, where he meticulously records the ever-changing bucolic landscapes and the shifts in light quality. These subtle, almost imperceptible changes underscore his deep fascination with observation, as well as his exploration of themes related to repetition and variation. These themes are akin to principles found in electronic music and textiles also of interest to Hayward, and his pursuit of exploring rhythmic patterns as a means of connecting with the divine.

**James Owens's** (b. 1995, UK) work gathers past, present and imagined scenes to form new narratives, which operate in moments of liminality. In these works, plants creep, dance and communicate in hushed tones. They grow in unlikely settings, pushing up through cracks and stretching towards the sun. In *A Broken Foot*, a multitude of elements spring forth from the forest floor, while a figure seated by a tree paints from observation. Owens masterfully captures the world and nature in its full imaginative capacity, delicately balancing between the splendour of growth and the stark reality of death. Much like a small flower tenderly blossoms while another wilts, or a curling tendril transforms into a parasite, his paintings navigate the balance between strength and weakness, hope and doom. In parallel, painter **Cheung Tsz Hin** (b. 1992, UK) embarks on an intimate exploration of the mundane, interweaving the threads of reality with cherished memories to conjure images suffused with an ethereal atmosphere and soft hues. In *the pace of forgetting papaya tree and other things*, Cheung immerses us in an interior scene from a bird's-eye view, where objects oscillate between withering and formation, capturing fleeting glimpses of moments emphasizing the poignant helplessness of memory's ever-shifting accuracy.

Within the abstraction of the world, **Yi To's** (b. 1995, Hong Kong) works are concentric self reproductive patterns in a matrix of familiar and unfamiliar structures. On the other hand, **Alyina Zaidi** (b. 1995, Delhi) draws from her diverse cultural experiences, having grown up in New Delhi and lived in the US and UK. Her art transcends boundaries, infusing magical landscapes with symbolism and animism. In her work, *Daughters of Elysium*, she references Beethoven's 9th Symphony, invoking notions of paradise and afterlife.

In this captivating convergence of abstract realms, the artists in *Once, Then, Gone*, actively partake in the discourse of representation, whether through subtle allusions to figuration or complete rejection of it, all the while providing a visual experience that exists purely for its abstract essence. Each work distils the sublime into an intensely intimate form of artistry. Here, the boundary between the tangible and the ephemeral dissolves, and the divine beckons in the works' surfaces.

**Once, Then, Gone will run from October 27 to November 30, 2023. Opening hours are Wednesday — Saturday from 13:00 to 18:00 hrs.**