

PRESS RELEASE

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Tyga Helme
In the wings
31 May – 30 June
Messums London



Road leads back to you, 2023

This exhibition celebrates a new body of work by British landscape painter Tyga Helme and her second solo show at Messums London. The work presented has all been produced between 2022 and 2023 in different locations across three countries – the UK, France, and India. A young painter who trained at Edinburgh College of Art and The Royal Drawing School in London before participating in Messums Emerging Talent programme, Helme is invested in explorations of the natural world viewed through close observation.

Helme infiltrates the hedgerows and undergrowth of her environment, discovering and depicting the narrative of these complex microcosms. She is captivated by the minutiae of detail, the juxtaposition of colour, a shift in weather, the subtlety of changing seasons in these miniature worlds which confront the senses. She describes:

“I like getting to know these forgotten, overlooked corners, and returning to the same spot day after day, drawing or painting directly from life. In focusing intensely on one subject over a few days or weeks your experience of it becomes more vivid. Colours become brighter, shapes stranger and you become more attune to subtle changes in what you are seeing. This experience transfers onto everything else and looking becomes wildly exciting.”

Helme’s approach to painting is rooted in drawing. Focusing on the essential qualities of acute observation, she aims for the work to retain the same energy and immediacy of response. Like so many artists before her, she observes the natural world with awe, perceiving something vastly greater and more complex than can be fully comprehended.

Working in India, Helme found the lack of familiarity with her subject encouraged a deeper response in her senses. Painting in this climate required an even faster pace as she found organic growth was taking place more swiftly. Works in this series from India include, *What’s felt in the wings*, *Flare up like flame* and *Underwings*.



What's felt in the wings, 2023

The series of ‘nettle’ paintings in the exhibition – *They whisper still*, *Days won’t keep still* and *Tenderness surrounds you*, together with the painting *Violet blue in clover* – were created in France while Helme was on a residency there in 2022. Despite the pastoral beauty of the area (Pays de Belves) Helme was drawn to finding the wilder, more secret patches of woodland, a further indication of her desire to connect to nature in its truest form.



Violet blue in clover, 2023

Helme's working process reflects the ideas inherent in the work. She paints on small panel format which, on a practical level, allows for the work to be easily portable for painting en plein air but, more significantly, the approach permits the work to grow and unfold organically, offering a metaphor for nature itself. Her innate sensitivity for the environment reminds us of the value of looking, listening and respecting our natural world at a moment when it is being tested more than ever before.



A few wings of summer left (7), 2023

Biography

Born in 1990, Tyga Helme lives and works in the UK. She is a painter and printmaker with drawing at the heart of her practice. Helme trained at Edinburgh College of Art and The Royal Drawing School in London, where she won the Machin Foundation Prize. Although Helme lives and works in the UK she won an Erasmus scholarship to study at the L'Ecole Nationale Superieue des Arts Decoratifs in Strasbourg and for more than a year taught at the International Institute for Arts, Modinagar in India. Helme's work is held in held in a number of important collections including the Royal Collection.



PRESS

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MESSUMS WILTSHIRE is a leading multi-purpose gallery and arts centre set inside a restored thirteenth-century tithe barn and surrounding buildings with exhibition space, sculpture garden and restaurant.

MESSUMS LONDON is a 2,000 sq ft exhibition space on Cork Street behind the Royal Academy. It hosts a rolling programme of exhibitions for our contemporary artists.