

ALMA PEARL

Lydia Gifford: Low Anchored Cloud

15 March – 13 April 2024

Private view: Thursday, 14 March 2024, 6 - 8 PM

Unit T, Reliance Wharf
2-10 Hertford Rd
London N1 5ET

Wednesday–Saturday, 12-6pm



Lydia Gifford, Untitled, 2023 © Lydia Gifford

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Alma Pearl is pleased to present *Low Anchored Cloud*, an exhibition of recent works by British artist Lydia Gifford, her first with the gallery and in London since 2015.

The exhibition draws its title from a poem by Henry David Thoreau. The connection with the natural environment is a primary concern of Gifford's most recent body of work while maintaining a critical engagement with paintings that verge into three-dimensional forms. Sculptural and fragile objects, but also manifestations of a particular atmosphere that is both intimate and emotional, the works respond to gestures woven through layers, creases, overlaps, and folds, all drawing from seasonal landscapes and geologies.

The works in the exhibition translate these engagements into abstract sensations. Featured in the gallery space is a series of sculptural and richly layered paintings showcasing luscious thick impasto surfaces

alongside more fragile and ephemeral materials—dyed gauze, ink, and cotton scrim. Working into wet cloth, Gifford harnesses the resistance of oil paint to adhere and thus accentuates the sculptural nuances and object relations of paint and support.

The exhibition also includes two large-scale, unstretched works that are presented as tapestries or banners. These herald a sense of fragile beauty that merges with their solid materiality. The gauze and positioning of the dyed cloth—functioning as both support and material—taps into a psychological space that reaches out to humanity's place in nature as not a part, but our grounding and psychical 'home'. A series of intimate, small-scale textile assemblages hang in a separate room. The artist conceives of these works as colour compositions, yet the material choices are made from used fabrics that have absorbed the artist's lived experience, thus becoming keepers of personal and familial memories.

Lydia Gifford writes, "I am drawn to paint on domestic fabrics such as towelling, bed sheets, corduroy, denim, blankets and bandaging, fabrics that have a direct and intimate relationship to the body. Often, I obliterate the identity of the cloth, making it unrecognisable, transforming it with smothered paint. This series of assemblages, *Untitled (sensitive fibres)*, 2023, sits alongside my paintings and painted objects and shows a different side of my relationship to cloth and my enquiry into how cloth absorbs and supports. It is an exploration into the nature of textile to emote tenderness. Tactile memory. These assemblages are made up of portions of cloth extracted from my hoard of very personal fabrics that have intimate and significant meaning for me, paired with paint scrubbings/washes. These bits of fabric are treasured keepsakes of texture, colour, smell, place and moments in time. They unlock tender and sometimes painful or difficult feelings and memories. Bodies, the body gone, the body grown, grief, love, the changing body, ageing, loss, pain, joy and desire. I am showing them here with an element of caution and vulnerability. Some left whole and recognisable items, articles left intact that I couldn't bring myself to cut up or destroy, laid bare and unchanged by my process of paint covering."

About the Artist:

Lydia Gifford (b.1979, Cheltenham, UK) lives and works between Ardnamurchan and London. She received her MA from The Royal College of Art, London in 2008 and has exhibited widely staging solo exhibitions including *Poreuse*, Galerie Gilles Drouault, Paris; *I Am Vertical* at the Centre International d'Art et du Paysage, Ile de Vassiviere, France; BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead; Galeria Alegria, Barcelona; L21 Gallery, Mallorca; Micky Schubert, Berlin; Laura Bartlett Gallery, London; Kunsthau Baselland, Basel. 'Art Statements', Art Basel, Switzerland; and David Roberts Art Foundation, London.

Her work is included in important collections worldwide, including Margulies Foundation, Florida; Jumex Foundation, Mexico City; FRAC Auvergne, France; Kadist Foundation, Paris; Kunsthau Zurich, Zurich; Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam; Galeries Lafayette, Paris; Lepsien Art Foundation, Dusseldorf; LVMH, Paris.