

ALMA PEARL

Hannah-Sophia Guerriero: Veils of Space

4 April – 17 May 2025

Opening Reception: Friday, 4 April 6–8pm

Alma Pearl is pleased to present *Veils of Space*, Hannah-Sophia Guerriero's debut solo exhibition in London since completing the Apollo Painting School.

Sensuous and intimate are some of the adjectives that come to mind when confronted with Guerriero's miniature paintings. Her painted depictions are drawn from highly selected details of her own photographs, exploring the ephemeral nature of the everyday through a personal focus and lens. *Direct*, one of the two works in the presentation, is a self-portrait referencing Hans Holbein's *A Lady with a Squirrel and a Starling* – here a cameo of sorts to the artist who painted some of the earliest and most beautiful known miniatures in Western painting. *At Ease* explores the hidden beauty of the mundane by overlapping two of the same photographs, captured while driving through the Peak District. In both instances, Guerriero magnifies a detail of the photographic image – an act of curation or mediation – to then reproduce the chosen segment pictorially. The conceptual gesture of zooming in is by definition, to make something bigger and more visible, which here has to contend with the minimal size of the support. Both pictorial images are set against a blank background displaying a further engagement with scale within the confines of the picture plane.

While positioning her work within the historical lineage of 'miniature painting' and portrait miniature – often painted by female artists such as Anne Mee (1765–1851) – Guerriero's production is something of a radical move in the contemporary context of the attention given to those making paintings of museum dimensions. To dismiss such works as simply a painterly exercise on a smaller scale is to re-enact a historical injustice and to miss the point entirely. In her 2001 essay "Modest Painting", the critic and artist Mira Schor critically questions the "often accorded genre status" attributed to "small paintings" when compared to larger canvases. While in "Looking at the Overlooked" (1990), Norman Bryson states, "The enemy is a mode of seeing which thinks it knows in advance what is worth looking at and what is not." That is to say, we consistently scan through our lives by noticing only what stands out. Guerriero aims to go in the opposite direction – we should say, she scans reality by highlighting fleeting moments or details, inviting the viewer to slow and size down. Scaling down then becomes a critical position – a powerful restorative statement – proportionally inverse to the dominant propensity to go large. Fittingly, her statement here is not shouted but whispered.

Hannah-Sophia Guerriero (b. 2002, Oldham, Greater Manchester) works predominately in painting and occasionally drawing. Living in High Peak, Derbyshire, she is currently a third-year BA Painting and Printmaking student at The Glasgow School of Art. She was amongst the inaugural cohort of five painters to complete Apollo Painting School, founded by Louise Giovanelli, Ian Hartshorne, and Alice Amati. Recent exhibitions include *Apollo Painting School*, Alice Amati, London (2025); *In Residence, In Transit*, Museo Cambellotti, Latina, Italy (2024); *Digital Dreaming*, spudWORKS Gallery, Sway, Hampshire, England (2023); *Selected Ten Student Exhibition Exchange*, and The Hochschule für bildende Künste Hamburg, Hamburg, Germany (2023); *Future Creatives 2020, This City is our Canvas*, Manchester Art Gallery, Manchester, UK (2020); *Disposable LTD*, Manchester Art Gallery, Manchester, UK (2020). In 2020, she was awarded Student of the Year at the Design & Visual Arts programme at Manchester College, as well as being nominated a finalist by Manchester Art Gallery for the 'Lockdown Innovation Award' in Manchester, UK.