

# eric firestone gallery

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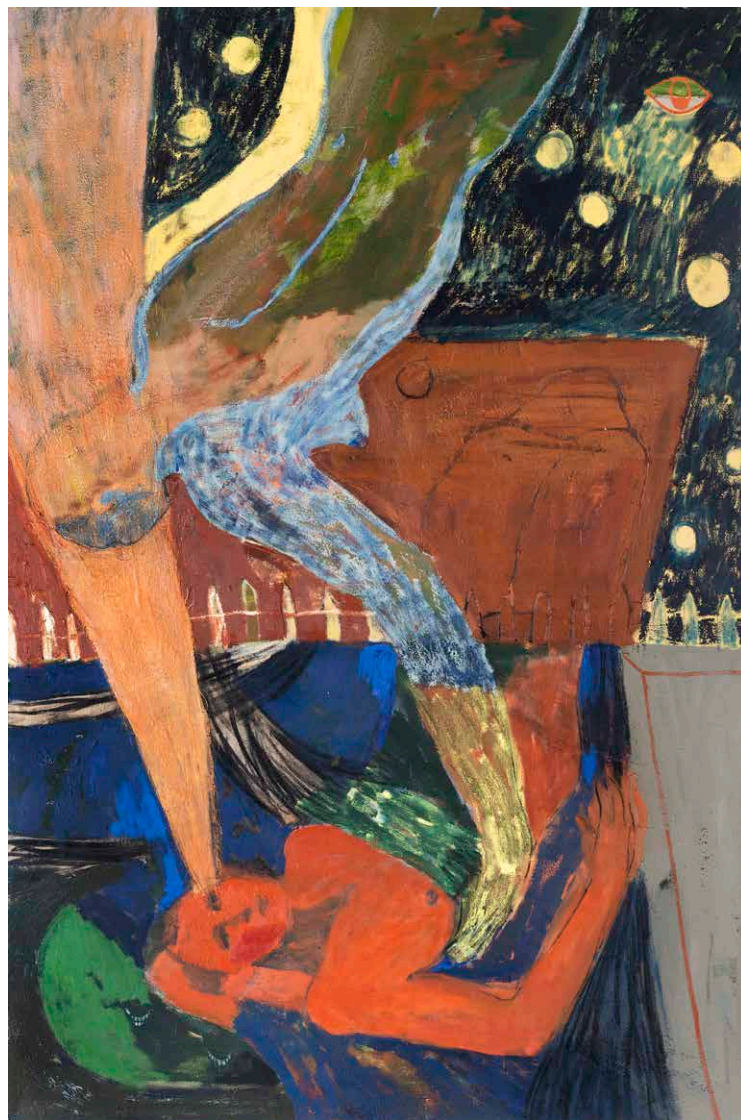
## ACROSS THE POND CONTEMPORARY PAINTING IN LONDON

Edmond Brooks-Beckman • Shannon Bono • Jo Dennis • Emma Fineman • Gabriela Giroletti  
Nick Jensen • Patrick H. Jones • Kathryn Maple • Pia Ortuño • Ro Robertson • Max Wade

Eric Firestone Gallery  
40 Great Jones Street | New York, NY 10012  
September 6 – October 19, 2024  
Opening Reception: Friday, September 6, 6:00–8:00PM

*Across the Pond: Contemporary Painting in London* is a group exhibition of 11 UK-based artists, curated by Emma Fineman in collaboration with Eric Firestone Gallery. The work on view is linked by an interest in unearthing and re-investigating histories, visually realized through painting processes involving scraping back, unveiling, and layering. As Fineman states: “Living and working in London is an act of daily reckoning with its long and layered histories and rapidly modernizing future.” Today’s London painters are necessarily global, participating in a broad cosmopolitan, diasporic, and multivocal conversations. Traces of the past, formally and metaphorically, are present. In this sense, the works by a new generation of painters mimics the experience of traversing London: a palimpsest replete with medieval architecture and modern design, layered histories of imperialism, and visual traces of war. Fineman asks: “How do we acknowledge and mourn for these histories, unearth them in their totality, re-investigate them, and highlight the threads that might have been overshadowed or cast aside? How do we allow things like yearning, grief, and prospect to all be present?” For these artists, she concludes, “the approaches to painting within this exhibition feel like an act of haunting and also of breaking free.”

Edmond Brooks-Beckman (b. 1987) and Max



Emma Fineman | *Eurydice* | 2024  
oil, charcoal, and encaustic on linen  
106 x 71 in.

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Max Wade | *Pausing Memories* | 2024  
oil on linen  
82 1/2 x 67 in.

Wade (b. 1985) make abstract paintings in which root images dissolve, yet inspire forms and carry meaning. Brooks-Beckman's work often includes words, names, numbers and symbols. Oil is added in layers, often covering what was there before. The paint is then scraped back with a Stanley blade to reveal part of what is underneath. What remains is not always legible. The forms defy categorization, yet carry specific links to language and heritage. Wade's paintings begin as sketchbook images often focusing on negative space. Working primarily on canvas, he transforms his drawings of everyday scenes into passages of bright, clashing colors and rhythmic motifs. He creates layered, imaginative environments by distorting and rotating elements of his drawings.

The paintings of Pia Ortuño (b. 1996) and Shannon Bono (b. 1995) are embedded with influences from ritual and diverse spiritual iconography. Ortuño's work explores the ability of painting to behave like sculpture. Carving and marking with a chisel and applying raw pigment, oil paint, rusted metals, and marble dust to

wood surfaces, Ortuño examines the relationship between industrial materials and decomposing metals with natural pigments, traditional mark-making and gestures referencing pre-Columbian rituals. The palette references Ortuño's Costa Rican heritage: vibrant and rooted in nature. They convey a feeling of scorched earth, of loss and divine transformation. Shannon Bono makes layered, figurative compositions embedded with symbols and scientific metaphors that centralize Black womanhood as a source of knowledge. The iconography reflects sources from African spirituality, Christianity, and Renaissance art: with messages looking to an improved society. The grounds of her paintings incorporate patterns from African fabrics, as well as biological and chemical structures, merging with anatomy and the body in the foreground.

Material aspects of painting are centered in the work of Gabriela Giroletti (b. 1982) and Jo Dennis (b. 1973). Dennis's multimedia paintings relate to home, shelter, and memory. Discarded military tent fabrics become her painting surfaces, on which she layers oil, acrylic, spray paint, marble dust, drop cloth and yarn, sometimes attaching steel elements. Dennis incorporates found objects and studio waste to address our emotional connection to places, and consider how belonging is connected to places of ruination and dereliction. Giroletti, a Brazilian painter living in London,

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explores the relationship between the painted image and its material presence. Giroletti builds up surfaces, disrupting the intrinsic weave of the canvas and adding physical elements. She explores how the tactile surface calls for work to be experienced by the whole body, not just the eyes.

The paintings of **Emma Fineman** (b. 1991), **Nick Jensen** (b. 1984), and **Patrick H. Jones** (b. 1987) all hover in a liminal space between figuration and abstraction. Fineman, an American artist based in London, is concerned with the dense compression of time in our contemporary moment;

how we are affected by existing in physical, spiritual, and digital realms all at once. This creates skewed and haphazard perspectives. She explores methods to fracture and reconfigure pictorial space, and the possibilities of figurative painting to both extend and compress time. Fineman's painting *Eurydice* literally and metaphorically speaks to themes running through the exhibition: transforming the past to propose new ways forward. Nick Jensen uses phone images as starting points, transforming them into small watercolors before building them up into large canvases. Mixing watercolor and acrylic, with muted palettes and pops of color, they suggest glimpses of a moment, bodies pausing in motion, dissonance in the midst of the everyday. Jones's paintings depict spectral horse forms which emerge and recede against their grounds. These panels are juxtaposed with small panels depicting a bullseye form. The combination reflects themes of loss and grief, and the relinquishing of control that accompanies these emotions. It signifies the idea that loss often becomes a catalyst for growth.

**Kathryn Maple** (b. 1989) and **Ro Robertson** (b. 1984) create synergies and unities between the body and the landscape. Maple creates an overall painterly rhythm that unifies and animates her treatment of natural forms, trees, landscapes, figures and buildings. In her painting *Runner*, the figure is nearly camouflaged into its green and umber environment, discernible through subtle shifts in directional mark-making to create a feeling of motion. Robertson, who exhibits in London but is based in West Cornwall, draws freely and unconsciously *en plein air*, reflecting the improvisation of the sea and the chance compositions it leaves behind. The drawings resonate with surrealist techniques of automatism and are inspired by the tidal zone of the shoreline, which is submerged at high tide and exposed at low tide – in the artist's words, "rewriting" the



Nick Jensen | *Far Park II* | 2024  
oil on linen  
47 1/4 x 63 in.

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beach twice a day. The drawings appear in flux and between body and landscape.

Together, the work on view acknowledges the rich history of art in the UK, along with the rapidly changing digital landscape, while charting an exciting and diverse path forward in contemporary painting.

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For further information, contact: [press@ericfirestonegallery.com](mailto:press@ericfirestonegallery.com)