

An abstract painting with thick, expressive brushstrokes. The palette includes white, yellow, black, green, and red. The composition is dynamic, with large areas of white and yellow dominating the upper and middle sections, and darker, more saturated colors like black and green in the lower and side areas. The texture is highly visible, suggesting the use of heavy paint.

Tristan Hoare

Press Release

Lydia Gifford

# *Undercurrent*

2 October - 14 November



Tristan Hoare Gallery is pleased to present *Undercurrent*, a new series of works by British artist Lydia Gifford, whose practice delicately negotiates the boundaries between painting and sculpture, form and feeling. Favouring the emotive, intuitive and spontaneous over the calculated.

Renowned for her deeply tactile and process-driven works, Gifford's approach is rooted in materiality and the quiet drama of surface. The artist begins with the construction of a support; not just a canvas, but a foundational ground for her landscape to take shape. These structures become a ground for paint, but paint, in Gifford's work, is not simply applied. It is pushed, scraped, and worked into the surface, layered and re-formed. The act of painting becomes an excavation; of earth, emotion, and memory. Her bold use of colour, from bruised purples to deep reds and delicate blues, intensifies this sense of embodied contradictions.

Working predominantly in oil, Gifford resists the immediacy of fast-drying media in favour of the mutable, malleable nature of oil paint. "A lot of what I do is related to digging and earth," she explains. "You can excavate it for days, weeks, months... and then you have to really respect the topography of it." This commitment to slowness and physical engagement is visible in the surfaces of her works, which often retain the trace of each movement.

In *Undercurrent*, Gifford heightens the interplay between density and fragility, weight and lightness. The title suggests something hidden but persistent, a submerged rhythm that pulses beneath each composition. While the presence of drawing is not directly embedded into these works, its influence lingers in the immediacy of her mark-making and the graphic quality of her compositions. Oil pastel occasionally enters the conversation, but more often, the history of each work is written through the multi-layering and erasure.

Gifford's paintings are marked by a raw, physical intensity that resists minimalism. Deeply expressive, they reflect intimate records of touch, tension, and time. These works offer a space for embodied looking, inviting the viewer to navigate uncertainty and reconnect with the subtle, complex textures of being.

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

**Lydia Gifford** (b. 1979, Cheltenham, UK) lives and works in London. She studied at the Royal College of Art and Chelsea College of Art, with an Erasmus Scholarship at Universität der Künste, Berlin.

Gifford has held solo exhibitions at leading European institutions including the Centre International d'Art et du Paysage (Île de Vassivière), BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art (Gateshead), Kunsthau Baselland (Basel), and the David Roberts Art Foundation (London). Notable gallery exhibitions include Marlborough Gallery (London), Laura Bartlett Gallery (London), L21 Gallery (Barcelona), and Super Dakota (Brussels). Her work has also been shown at Art Basel and included in major group exhibitions at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen (Rotterdam), and GAMeC – Galleria d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea (Bergamo).

Gifford's work is held in several prominent public collections, including the Margulies Collection, the Jumex Foundation, FRAC Auvergne, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, and Kunsthau Zürich.

**PRIVATE VIEW: 1 October, 6-8pm**

