

Penny Davenport **Shallow Depths**

30 September - 05 November 2022

OTP Copenhagen is proud to present 'Shallow Depths,' a solo exhibition of new paintings by Liverpool-based artist Penny Davenport (b. 1979, Inverness; UK) inaugurating the gallery's new location at Rantzausgade 9.

Featuring a series of intimate watercolour on wood panel paintings, 'Shallow Depths' presents an honest and esoteric understanding of the human psyche. In these small and precious images, Davenport shines a hazy and pigment-soaked spotlight on the pregnant tensions that arise when the structure of social convention, or a lack of conscious understanding, gives rise to potent feelings and impulses that cannot, or must not, be articulated.

Depicting the anthropomorphic animal characters and daydreamed landscapes that have become the artist's signature motifs, here Davenport delves deeper into the psychological nuances of bodily experience and the inherent complexities of inter-personal relationships.

Having worked for many years in a number of educational establishments, including specialised schools for children with very specific pedagogic needs, Davenport's practice is informed by a particular attention towards the ways in which humans are socialised, and the subtle mechanisms by which behavioural codes are enforced, and social grouping structures maintained.

Keenly aware of the learned patterns of repression that humans promote amongst themselves in the name of social order, the animalistic figures in these paintings gaze back at the viewer with a sense of mutual understanding - both of the alienation that can arise from strict withholding, but also of the disruptive and unacceptable thoughts that we force ourselves and those we find ourselves surrounded by, to contain.

An interest in promoting a sense of sympathetic mutuality lies at the heart of these paintings, and is particularly relevant to the artist's interest in an aesthetic of 'cuteness'. What other visual framework is capable of producing such immediate and approachable images, eliciting positive and disarming emotional, physical and exclamatory ("Cute!") responses all the while?

It is this appearance of childlike benevolence that ultimately powers these images' gently soothing quality, despite the hint of a sinister undertone that often appears in Davenport's imagery; these non-human figures display an uncanny humanity in their familiar expressions and an intense performativity in their gestures of embrace, concern or discomfort.

Displaying an almost Jungian interest in the recesses of our brains as well as the idea of a broader collective human unconsciousness, the paintings in 'Shallow Depths' ultimately speak to the secret lives of human minds. Appearing like half-remembered images from childhood, or individual frames from an incomplete narrative set in a far off dreamy world, here we encounter turmoil, elation, belonging and disconnect, all framed by openness and a distinctive vulnerability.

Penny Davenport

Born 1979, Inverness; UK
Lives and works in Liverpool; UK

EDUCATION

2002 BFA, Liverpool John Moores University, Liverpool; UK

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2022 *Shallow Depths*, OTP Copenhagen, Copenhagen; DK
[Upcoming] *The Looks of a Look That's Looking*, Harkawik Gallery, New York (NY);
USA

2021 *Murmurings*, OTP Copenhagen, Copenhagen; DK

2019 *Silent Ancestors*, Fortnight Institute, New York (NY); USA

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2022 *What A Day* (with Delphine Hennelly, Ryan Travis Christian and Ryan Browning;
curated by
Raymond Lemstra), Everyday Moonday, Seoul; KR
Works on Paper on Fridges, Harkawik Gallery, New York (NY); USA

2021 *Andante Remix* (with Ellen Gronemeyer, Catherine Biocca and Dorota Jurczak),
Linseed Projects,
Shanghai; CN
Postcards, Galleri Magnus Karlsson; Stockholm; SE

2020 *Winter Solstice: Art, Books and Ephemera*, Fortnight Institute, New York (NY); USA
Antonym, Wilson Stephens & Jones, London; UK
Within The Distsance, Johansson Projects, Oakland (CA); USA

2019 *The Secret Things* (duo show with Jason Thompson), BDDW Gallery, New York (NY);
USA
FOUR, Wilson Stephens & Jones, London; UK

2018 *Truth and Fantasy*, Craven Museum, Skipton; UK

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Shared Worlds, Nieves, Zurich: 2020
Silent Ancestors, Innen, Zurich: 2020