

One Between Two
Penny Davenport & Jason Thompson
26 September – 25 October 2025

Dialogues between artists often emerge without physical encounters. The affinity between two painters, separated by centuries and cultures, can resonate just as deeply as the connection between colleagues who attended art school together, shared studio space or worked inside a common social milieu.

Liverpool-based artists Penny Davenport (b. 1979, Inverness) and Jason Thompson (b. 1970, Liverpool) have exhibited together several times in the past. They met in the studio, became better acquainted after participating in a group show together and now share living and working space. *One Between Two* explores the mutual influence they have exerted on each other's work in recent years, and their shared interest in themes of intuition and improvisation, living things, impermanence and the sense of renewal that comes when one state transitions to the next.

Positioned between the sacred and the profane, Jason Thompson's paintings on panel have been described as hovering between the religious icon and the shed door. For a long time the artist has used found wood and a patchwork process of assemblage to create worn surfaces that feel as if they have been touched by a thousand hands.

The artist favours an approach to composition akin to evolution. Individual gestures within Thompson's paintings either survive and multiply to produce a final image, or disappear and are replaced by other species of marks through a series of spontaneous interventions. Negative space is repainted, panels are sawn in half, layers of paint are sanded away to reveal solidified patches of colour beneath. This organic and highly physical approach to abstraction has a philosophical underpinning. Namely, that for an artwork to attain a sense of depth, it must undergo significant and unexpected change – weathering the process to be transformed by the experience.

Penny Davenport's latest oil paintings register a similar interest in experience and embodiment. Combining animal-like anthropomorphic creatures with geological features, these paintings pay particular attention to the emergence of understanding that comes through interaction with other people and one's environment. Emphasising the fleeting nature of life and a sense of fundamental closeness and detachment between different human minds, these paintings register the changeability of the world and the gentle sadness that emerges when one recognises the beauty of impermanence.

In works like *Transience*, the artist presents a large face that appears like an expression caught between ecstasy and pain, as well as rocks caught between the banks of a river. In *Eternal Life*, faces sprout from a landscape like hummocks in a friendly hallucinatory field, perhaps offering an approachable reminder that those who pass away remain physically and spiritually in the world, albeit in a transformed state.

A shared sense of the otherworldly and spiritual permeates both artists' work – amplified by the precious, almost devotional scale of the panels on which they are painted. The works seem to pre-empt a form of imminent conversion, acknowledging that all things (objects or beings) exist in states of flux and exchange. Whilst these paintings point towards the cumulative richness of development over time, they also recognise the uncanny potential of change beyond recognition and the poignant feelings of melancholy that occur when things disappear which once seemed firmly in place.