

VICTORIA MORTON
ba BA ba02 July - 30 August 2008
25 Heddon Street London W1

For her third solo show at Sadie Coles HQ, Victoria Morton exhibits a group of new paintings based on her ongoing investigation into the popular art of painting and its ability to perform as a psychological object. In her paintings, which she considers sites for contemplation and adrenalin-driven repetition, Morton says that: "Everything comes from the body. Directly." Her work simultaneously displays strength and vulnerability, alternately comic and serious, something discernable in her quoted influences and titles. She considers painting a way of registering daily experience in bouts of intense concentration. More specifically these new paintings reflect on the interrelationships between emotion, physicality, need, nourishment and separation.

During the making of this new work Morton cites influences as diverse as Bonnie „Prince“ Billy's album „The Letting Go“, and the experience of visiting the Salimbeni brothers' frescos in Chiesa di San Giovanni in Urbino, as well as a collection of intimate personal photographs. Folkloric storytelling and snapshot-love moments are compositionally restructured and used as a point and counterpoint on which to hang her own personal narrative. The situation the paintings make, and their broken down images, convey a series of interdependent physical and cognitive relationships. What look like disjointed letters become "figures" occupying the pictorial space and so paintings become characters enacting a psychological drama. With titles such as 'Oh Shit!' and 'ba BA ba' and combined with Morton's vivid pallet, these pictures are heady and high-spirited. All-absorbing, painting does not stop at the edge of the canvas; it moves over the frame, demands another panel to be added and occasionally is resolved free-standing or on the floor.

In this more recent work, the often subtle pallets of previous work have developed into earthy, mature and saturated tones. Her fragmentation of crumbling geometric shapes, redolent of cubism and futurism, has become even more extreme – there are no smooth lines here as in previous paintings. The result is a cacophony of raw, disparate and conflicted techniques: jagged daubs of paint, steadied thick brushstrokes, and layered clods. In Morton's opinion, painting can communicate and reinvigorate all of life. She says: „For me, painting is like an extension of consciousness. It can harness the minute and otherwise incomprehensible flickerings of the mind. Instinctual, sexual, and manual drives construct the hot surface. A body part or a desire can become the same thing expressing the need to inhabit, the will to break with familiarity.’

Victoria Morton was born in 1971 in Glasgow. She studied at Glasgow School of Art, Scotland. She has had solo shows in Britain, Europe, and the United States including at Bonner Kunstverein, Bonn, Germany, 2004, and Plus and Minus, Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh, 2002. Group exhibitions include Sun By Ear with Katy Dove, Tramway, Glasgow 2007, In Viaggio, Museo Corta Alta, Fossombrone, Italy, 2004, and Painting Not Painting with Jim Lambie, Julie Roberts, and Richard Slee at Tate St Ives, Cornwall, 2003. A monograph of her work was published by Fruitmarket Gallery to coincide with her exhibition in 2002. She lives and works in Glasgow, Scotland, and Fossombrone, Italy.