

RICHARD STONE

# NEW HYPNOTIC ABSTRACTS

July 2018



Richard Stone presents a new series of abstract paintings in colour and monochrome. These works are the culmination of a six-year conceptual evolution, across both sculpture and painting.

If viewed through a strictly aesthetic lens, these works represent Stone's boldest works to date, while continuing the conceptual narrative which has always been present.

In these works, Stone unmakes the tradition of landscape painting, by filling the canvas with figurative elements, that almost, but do not quite, dissolve into a dizzying abstraction. There are flashes of Kandinsky, Picasso, Twombly and Pollock alongside traces of Stone's journey from and to the edge of abstraction.

WORKS CURRENTLY  
ON VIEW AT

Kristin Hjellegjerde Berlin  
Linien Str. 13010115

Wednesday – Saturday  
12pm - 6pm

These multi-layered works, oscillate and sing between and within each layer. If Stone is trying to stand still in a storm, mentally he has let himself go, which has yielded a menagerie of new leitmotifs that are thrillingly contemporary.



***he paint, war paint*** 2018 oil and oil stick on canvas, with ivy overprint, tulip wood moulding, dark oak finish, 130x160x4.5cm



***locket***  
2018  
oil, oil stick on canvas, ivy, sunflower  
overprint tulip wood moulding, dark oak  
finish 90x120x4cm



***totems (for vincent, for emily)***  
2018  
oil, oil stick on canvas, ivy, sunflower  
overprint tulip wood moulding, dark oak  
finish, 90x120x4cm





***traverse, traverse, the forest verse***, 2018, oil and oil stick on canvas, with ivy overprint, tulip wood moulding, dark oak finish, 130x160x4.5cm



***his key monochrome***

2018

oil, oil stick on canvas, ivy overprint tulip wood moulding, dark oak finish  
90x120x4cm



***his land cape***

2018

oil, oil stick on canvas, ivy overprint, tulip wood moulding, dark oak finish,  
90x120x4cm

## A journey from and to the edge of abstraction

As if in a waking dream, you find yourself in an English landscape, where bright sunshine burns the fabric of time. Then, a fog rolls in. Suddenly, floating in the calmness of a still sea, vague forms begin to resemble landscapes. Eventually, these landscapes collapse into the sea and become an imagined reality, where vibrancy, movement and surrealism speak in a cacophony of familiar yet unheard voices. But this is not a dream. This transition is the conceptually grounded, most definitely eccentric, development of Richard Stone's approach to painting.

At the beginning of this journey, Stone sought the ephemeral in existing antique paintings which he sanded back to unearth images trapped within. In these works, released in 2012, ghosts began to drop from the sky and figures moved in and out of view. As well as creating a contemporary image by erasing an antiquity, Stone signalled the separation of landscape and figuration as problematic. Stone says, "I had to delicately balance the sensation of figure both being of and moving in the landscape, and then merging together in abstraction through the process of sanding". In this moment of collapsing, he also created a sense of movement within stillness.

In these earlier works there may be seen a figure, a movement, a life force, an essence. Stone made a stand for a universality within both figure and landscape. However, to fully reveal this force, a step deeper, into a more imagined reality emerged.



*after* (private collection) 2012, antique oil on board, surface partly removed, lime wood moulding, waterwhite mirorguard AR glazing, 55x40x3cm inc. frame.

While the sanded works required the viewer to imagine a completed image, Stone became more intentional in his own conjuring as he began to whitewash sanded surfaces. These were featured at Stone's exhibition *gleam* in 2014.

Stone says, "What emerged were misty, indeterminate scenes. This touched on both on my interests in the Turner-esque tradition, particularly the later unfinished works, and at the same time De Kooning's constantly re-worked surfaces that seem to exist in a continual state of becoming". In this way, Stone created abstracted landscapes which evoke a haunting, nuanced sensation of a world that exists beyond concrete reality.



From left: *only in the ruins will you be free* (private collection) 2014, statuario marble. *There were fireworks in the sky (riffing on polke, turner too)* (private collection) 2014, oil on antique oil paintings, lime wood moulding, waterwhite mirorguard AR glazing.



Stone, also an established sculptor, works iteratively between media. "There is a conversation which happens between painting and sculpture. I often work on both at the same time". This flitting means that the conceptual movement in his practice is often rapid, and that only a few paintings are created before his conceptual syntax advances.

Some paintings can be seen for their influence not only on the development of painting, but as to how they informed further sculptural work. The 2014 unreleased painting *waiting for the storm* evidences this: white washed scenes were replaced with smudgy strokes which, layer upon layer, began to build scenes of sea and sky, within a darkened landscape.



*waiting for the storm* (unreleased work) oil on plywood panel

This marks a notable turning point in Stone's expression: he introduced new, rather than obfuscating old. This transition emerged during two residences at L'atelier Salzamt in Linz, Austria, where Stone connected with painters from Europe and the US. He says, "The freedom I encountered in their work gave me a new confidence to experiment in my own, refining existing elements into a bolder style". In turn, through 2016-2017 a new, bold series of abstract works would emerge.

Herculean colour would offer a glimpse of a new, powerful mark making narrative. The swirling at first took hold in signs and symbols, from heraldic shields, nature emblems to simplified abstracts. These motifs had been in the background of Stone's work but through this new confidence could move to the foreground.



*another place ii* (unreleased work) oil on plywood panel

Stone's previous figurative sculptural works largely disrupted historical notions of the heroic, however this freedom meant a deeper level of abstraction could emerge. By drawing upon classical references, and delving deeper into his own creative processes, the transformational narrative could also advance.

But to articulate the potential for transformation to be discombobulating, Stone also had to locate and articulate a counterforce of hope. Something seen, but also unseen. Something not yet fully known.



From left: *fenix* 2017, terracotta jesmonite composite, 40x25x20cm (ed. 1/3 +1AP). *moonlight in the fire garden* (private collection) 2017, oil, oil stick on canvas, tulip wood moulding, dark oak finish, 90x120x4cm

In his 2017 exhibition *everywhen*, these themes were shouted throughout the exhibition space. Birds fell from the sky, a world hope was rendered nearly lost. Yet, bursts of colour and movement also portrayed this new but unknowable hope.

In Stone's eccentric, contrary manner, *everywhen* also contained a group of works of a more ephemeral, layered style. Revisiting earlier veiled mists, this time across



*how to conduct a war* (private collection) 2017, oil on plywood panel, tulip wood moulding, dark oak finish, 62x52x4cm

imagined landscapes, notions of liminality and transparency were explored. It may be that this is a nod to the obscurity often associated with transformation: that when travelling across a great sea, there may be times when neither shore is visible. Yet transformational journeys are often ones which when set off upon, we are never to be the same again.

In this sense, this obscurity helps viewers subtly connect with our collective cultural journey: neither the way through, nor the end point, is clear. Instead, we are invited to sit within the chaos, noticing what emerges and choosing whether to mourn, to hope, or to stand up.

Stone is, inherently an artist interested in depth. Depth of aesthetic complexity and depth of cultural reference. This depth, coupled with the haunting beauty of his works, enables the message to be experienced near subliminally. It is of note and perhaps reflective of Stone's talent, that despite the conceptual development of his work, beauty still shines brightly through.



From left: *I want to be a sufi dancer* (private collection) 2017, statuario marble. *passing through a parlour of winter trees* 2017, oil, oil stick on linen, tulip wood moulding, white finish, 62x82x4cm.





**RICHARD STONE**, Fellow and Trustee of the Royal Society of Sculptors, is based in Pietrasanta, Italy and London, United Kingdom. He has an established practice in sculpture and painting, exploring notions of statelessness, collapse and transformation.

His sculptural works illustrate the continued relevance of classical materials and forms whilst in his paintings, hypnotic mark making captures depth, movement and evocations of nature. His work moves in and out of art historical movements whilst displaying its own unique contemporary viewpoints and eccentricity, resulting in works which are distinctly of his, and, our time.

His work is collected internationally and has been recently published alongside Vija Celmins, Kris Martin and Gabriel Orozco and exhibited with Matt Collishaw, Derek Jarman and Michael Raedecker.

#### SELECTED RECENT SHOWS

*Sweep ~ Landskip*, (2018, group), Kinokino, Sandnes, Norway.

Art Brussels (2018, group, with Kristin Hjellegjerde)

*everywhen* (2017, solo, with Kristin Hjellegjerde)

*Nature Morte*, Guildhall, London (2018), the Four Domes Pavillions | National Museum of Wrocław (2017), Konsthallen - Bohusläns, Sweden (2016) and Ha gamle prestegard, Norway (2015).

*volta* (2016, group with Kristin Hjellegjerde)

*gleam* (2014, solo with Kristin Hjellegjerde)

#### RECENT PRESS

[Statelessness, Collapse and Transformation in Richard Stones Work](#) – (2018, Artdependence Magazine).

[Hard Beauty, Helaine Blumenfeld, OBE](#) – (2018, Sky Arts TV, UK)

[Richard Stone on Marble, Movement and Multitasking](#) – (2018, Elephant Magazine)