

PRESS RELEASE



Merlyn Driver recording, 2014; oil on canvas, 51 x 41 cm.

STEPHEN FINER

*Merlyn Driver recording
and other paintings*

15 May – 12 June 2015

[View Exhibition catalogue on line](#)

Stephen Finer's paintings take the study of the human head or figure as their subject. He is extremely secretive about his way of working and resists discussion about his aims and methods but what is clear is that he relishes close human contact and that this is an absolute part of his activity as a painter.

'Merlyn Driver recording and other paintings' is Finer's fourth exhibition at Art Space Gallery and, along with the usual group of anonymous subjects, there is a central character: the musician Merlyn Driver. Following a chance encounter an unexpected friendship took root that involved a professional collaboration with the painter painting the musician in the act of making his music. These 'portraits of music' form the core of this exhibition.

In his description of the process for the exhibition catalogue Merlyn Driver writes that: ... *he watched, listened, and took photographs as I played my songs and spoke about influences and inspiration. Although I'm sure the photographs were useful, I got the idea that this was much more about Stephen experiencing my 'musical presence' first hand – something which he has done time and time again over the following two years!*

... *I'd now say that his creative process is in fact surprisingly similar to my own. Rather than an explosion of sudden and divine inspiration, most of these pieces seem to emerge from a longer journey, punctuated by sporadic bursts of activity but characterized more by contemplation. Perhaps this is all ultimately about making our artistic efforts look effortless.*

Some are dense and heavily painted, some more spontaneous, the paint laid on with a vigour and directness that probe the limits between representation and the abstract qualities of the paint itself. We may not always be able to identify individual features but there is a conspicuous and striking human presence.

Stephen Finer (b. 1949) has exhibited regularly in London and abroad since the eighties, including several prestigious group shows at the National Portrait Gallery. His work is held in the permanent collections of the National Portrait Gallery, The British Council and Arts Council together with other museums and private collections in Great Britain and the USA.

If you wish to receive a hard copy of the Catalogue please contact the Gallery.

Gallery hours: 11am - 6pm Tuesday to Saturday during exhibitions