

PRESS RELEASE

PAUL HAMLYN Paintings - *Petrified Forest*- 27 March – 24 April 2015



The Ruminator, 2014, Oil and acrylic on canvas, 115 x 92 cm

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Paul Hamlyn's paintings involve close encounters between the natural and supernatural world. Marine and plant life, micro-organisms and cosmic phenomena are orchestrated into rhythmic association, each element distinct and sharply focussed, but each seemingly on the verge of change or mutation.

Petrified Forest is Hamlyn's third exhibition at Art Space Gallery. Themes from his earlier shows are taken up and developed - notably those from the Suffolk landscape: from around Rendlesham Forest and the coast at Orford Ness, that strange spit of land which was drained during World War I and later became an atomic bomb testing site. In this recent body of work, the mysteries at the heart of the natural world - its growth, its cellular

multiplication, its dappled splendours and inexplicable formations - are magnified; almost literally so as the paintings project a world of rocks and tree boles, bladders and molecular structures, the harsh blue of space and deep greens of the forest floor. Hamlyn's familiarity with this part of Suffolk breeds guidelines: features of the landscape so well known they extend like contours repeating over and over again until the original shapes take on the colouring of something else altogether. In works such as 'Growing Round' and 'Fall', stones and leaves are virtually interchangeable; in 'World of Difference' the pebbles have become porous membranes, their veins and blotches mirroring other life forms; and in 'The Ruminator', an extraordinary gut-like sack floats above a vermiform tube, a blood red coil joining the two. These are Hamlyn's meditations on the place of landscape in our physical and psychic history; and the way our history is forever shaping and evolving into our future.

Though spending much of his time in Suffolk, Hamlyn also lives and works in London, based at Cubitt Studios. London contributes a different element to his paintings - discordant, energetic - a place where an implosion of timber, rubble and tangled wire suggests that what once stood solidly in the ground is now as rootless as the tree trunks that weave through his forest landscapes. Added to this is the imagery he uses from NASA and the ESA: the infinite depth of space; the infinitesimal scale of nuclear materials. Hamlyn uses this largesse of scale and space to create paintings of great invention; they flow with the possibility inherent in all animate and inanimate objects. They weave new narratives about the world we occupy.

Paul Hamlyn was born in Stockport in 1953 and studied Art at St Martin's (1981- 84) and Goldsmith's MA (1986-87). He has shown regularly in the UK and his portrait illustrations have appeared in newspapers and magazines throughout Europe and America.