

JOHNNY IZATT-LOWRY

Around dusk, or thereabouts

We are proud to present *Around dusk, or thereabouts* – Johnny Izatt-Lowry's first solo exhibition outside of the UK.

Describing scenes both incidental and assembled, this new series of still lifes is coloured by the half-light of dusk. The sense of the uncanny central to his work is heightened by one of uncertainty as objects resolve themselves out of the darkness. The images are not without levity though, and the playfulness of subject and scale that is perhaps his signature remains, even in the gloaming.

As quotidian as the subjects of these works may appear, they reach the viewer from a considerable distance. Growing up in rural England, Izatt-Lowry has long looked beyond his immediate surroundings for source material. Each of these works is composed of collaged elements taken from the internet, composed in Photoshop and subsequently drawn from a number of times before being committed to in layers of pigment and soft pastel on delicate crepe fabric.

This process creates a remarkably delicate, textured surface, upon which the dry pigment seems to sit in a pure state. The haziness and depth this achieves effects a dreamlike uncertainty in the images, which feel like they may dissolve if interrogated too closely. This tangible quality is somehow the perfect ground for the naïvely awkward use of perspective and joyously uncompromising fullness of framing. A sleeping dog that might be the faithful dozing companion of a renaissance scene cannot be contained by the stretcher, while elsewhere a grotesquely sized cabbage is treated with no less humanity.

The occurrence of mass-mediated reproductions of modern art is here as in his previous work; Leger and Braque lie open on the table; a sunflower lies nearby. Homages perhaps to masters of re-rendering the familiar in unexpected ways. In other works we see pattern-making employed, often with the effect of pushing the reference material further away from its source and towards the dreamlike, where new meanings seem to want to will themselves into being.

Is there psychological or creative significance to the scattered pencils and lit cigarettes? Am I wishful in seeing a constructivist textile motif where really there are ranks of American cars? This work is not didactic; it is mischievous and refuses to be resolved so easily. It sits somewhere between our own world and the world of representation. Like a dream it feels like it could too easily be lost, leaving only slight but nagging recollections.

These pictures speak intimately to various art histories, from Quodlibet *trompe-l'oeil* to seventeenth century Dutch flower painting; from Cubism to the pristine surrealism of Domenico Gnoli. Fundamentally they are concerned with the long-standing search for new ways of representing in painting even the most everyday of objects. Johnny Izatt-Lowry has found not just a uniquely personal style in which to do this, but a remarkable technique with which to express it.