

RACHEL NICHOLSON: A ROOM WITH A VIEW

ONLINE VIEWING ROOM | 15 FEB - 15 MARCH 2021

Georgia Stoneman Fine Art is pleased to present an exhibition by Rachel Nicholson, the first solo presentation of the artist's work since 2016. Focusing on paintings and works on paper from 1975-2014, the selection includes key works which exemplify Nicholson's fascination with still life, her draw to the natural landscape and meticulous attention to detail. As art historian Alan Wilkinson sees it, 'as one of the third generation of Nicholson artists, Rachel has not only extended and enriched the family tradition, she has altered our perception of it'.

Rachel began to paint in her early forties; as the daughter of two of the titans of Modern British Art, Barbara Hepworth and Ben Nicholson, she was deterred from pursuing a career as an artist in her youth due to the weight of her family's artistic heritage. Once her youngest child had started school however, she finally had the space and time to process her own thoughts on painting, she had, as she puts it, 'a little bit of time, a little window of opportunity'. This turned her to reflect upon the objects in her domestic environment which became the focal point of her paintings, landing her first solo London exhibition at Montpelier Studio in 1980, where her father commented on one painting, *Still Life on Navy Blue* (1979), 'I never realised she could paint so well, I would have been happy to have painted that one myself'.

'Rachel Nicholson: A Room with a View' presents thirty seven paintings and works on paper made over the course of five decades, acknowledging the influence of her parents, particularly of her father upon her work, but clearly expressing an artistic voice of her own. Nicholson's still life paintings feature objects chosen for their quirks, meticulously positioned, appearing to both attract and repel one another, in conversation, but rarely in contact. With many of the objects inherited or gifted, her paintings not only relate to the work of her father and Grandfather, painter William Nicholson in subject, but in the family history of the objects themselves.



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# GEORGIA STONEMAN

The objects in Rachel's paintings follow a non-linear arrangement, a sense of balance achieved by the use of sections of colour, which frame the mugs, jugs, spoons and teapots within the composition, as carefully painted as they are positioned. Choosing to work predominantly in oil or acrylic, but also in gouache or oil pastel on occasion, Rachel says that her 'paintings are a way of trying to bring about a sense of peace, and the hope that this will end to the viewer.'

Rachel soon developed into painting landscapes, ranging from Cumbria to Derbyshire and Cornwall, some with objects perched on the edge of the composition as with *Derbyshire with Jug* (1991), where the spoon and jugs extend into the scene, a charming and surprising addition. Rachel's most spatially complex works incorporate both interior and exterior scenes, as with *Towards the Quay* (2001/13), painted in St Ives, which Rachel has frequented, having moved to St Ives from London with her parents to escape the imminent threat of war as a child. These works not only present a view through a window, but map out an entire interior setting, whilst framing the exterior landscape, a style which is distinctive of Nicholson's work.

Rachel Nicholson was born in London in 1934. She has exhibited at numerous prestigious public and private galleries, including Beaux Arts Bath, Crane Kalman (*The Nicholsons*) and Tate St Ives.

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