

PRESS RELEASE***Spring without End*****23 February – 15 April 2023****Stevie Dix, Danny Fox, Norman Hyams**

*...And then suddenly, in the sunshine  
the world began to sparkle.  
All, all grew in sound and colour  
in the sunshine.*

- Gustav Mahler, 1897

The paintings of Stevie Dix, Danny Fox and Norman Hyams are in a real sense true to themselves: they share an honesty and emotional realism that speaks to an authentic sense of self - fraught, shifting, hard won. Coloured by signature shades of magical thinking, mythology and memoir, these painters pursue subjects close to their own hearts, carrying with them a spirit or essence hard put into words but felt instinctively. Made principally during the present winter months in their respective homes of London, St. Ives and Genk, *Spring without End* brings together new works by three artists that capture the mood and character of their intimate worlds during this time, foregrounding their shared and committed approach to painting and its ability to capture the grave and mysterious beauty of our daily lives.

Broadly inspired by a discarded working title for the first section of Gustav Mahler's first symphonic poem (written in his late 20s) - a sonic examination of nature, the human spirit and its ultimate search for meaning - *Spring without End* is in similarly reflective mode. In their own ways each artist touches on these themes at a close and enveloping scale, pursuing subjects close to their own heart and in places of long-standing personal resonance — whether in the seaside enclaves of Penwith in Cornwall, the hard-edged nightlife of urban Belgium or the bustling streets of East London these works portray a complex and shifting image of home and identity set against the ambient and optimistic transition from winter to spring.

The paintings of Danny Fox are clear to index their particular sites through snippets of text applied directly to the work itself and through clues hidden in artwork titles, here including references to Cornish landmark St. Michaels Mount, Baden House pharmacy in Marazion and a historical tin mine in St. Ives. Bold, near-crude passages of flat vibrant colour are infused with quick, worn-out mark-making to conjure heartfelt and poetic portrayals of love, dependency and home; at times used as a means of contemporary allegory, these works also use their spontaneous, vernacular energy to reflect on difficult or constrained relationships present in the artist's own life, creating a field of emotion that ranges from warmth and good cheer to cold and bitter detachment.

Alongside these rural English scenes, Norman Hyams and Stevie Dix present imagery that speaks to the boisterous and nocturnal energy of the city, as well as more overtly solemn and inward-looking scenes. For Hyams, it is the good, the bad and the ugly of growing up in London's east end that is reflected in his evocative portraits of boxing tournaments or cropped tennis-courts, spectacles frequented as a teenager with his father and older brother and cherished for their lasting cinematic intensity. Rasterized in feverish light brushstrokes or crisp, contemplative

colour-fields, these snapshots stand shoulder to shoulder with party scenes and sanguine landscapes of Greek islands, quietly trembling between a childhood memory and a dream.

With iconography as diverse as Margiela Tabi Toe boots, decorative security grills and rebellious, protruding tongues, the thick and richly mottled canvases of Dix equally point to a coming-of-age world reflected through the darker years of maturity. Taking influence from her Belgian heritage and the work of surrealist animators such as Rene Laloux, Suzan Pitt and Mary Beam, Dix's recent work combines themes of youthful angst, escapism, and melancholy to create an introspective and deeply sensitive emotional landscape. Composed as singular vignettes or as abstracted storyboards, her characteristic hand-made frames embellish each piece with dulcet beauty and accentuate the homespun sincerity they evoke.

Together these three artists present a multi-layered and affective set of characters and stories that celebrate the intensity and complexity of lives lived against the grain. Their work moves from overtures of effervescence and optimism to darker scores of ominous and brooding textures, and in each case, we are left tentatively short of a final movement. Here is the soft and enduring complexion of the human spirit in all its modest and unassuming beauty. One which fulfils itself in spite, or precisely because of the hardship it faces along the way.