

Richard Magee

*Trouble Frees*

11 September — 19 December 2021

Press Release

Gao is pleased to present *Trouble Frees*, the first solo exhibition of Irish painter Richard Magee.

For the last four years, Magee has experimented with Artex, an epoxy render, as a way of embossing drawings and pieces of text onto his painting's surfaces. Alongside this, Magee has deconstructed and rebuilt works, masking and repainting areas, sticking parts of one painting to another and cropping larger paintings into smaller ones. Recently, he has begun to expand his material vocabulary using bog peat from Ireland to make a ground.

Just as he has dissected the material process of painting, the references of Magee's work are fragmented and estranged from their source. Bucolic landscapes recur, framing warped prehistoric landmarks and illustrations of labour from an outdated encyclopaedia, a mammoth approaches a indistinct earth from behind, toy soldiers arranged into a crude heart patrol a sunburnt vista. Others are noted in the titles, *Acre of Skin* (2020), takes its name from a book that describes a pharmaceutical company's experimentation on prisoners to research acne medication. These references layer as if the paintings are apertures into an anxious mind's eye, a solemn appraisal of the ongoing systemic collapse we are caught within.

Magee is keen on the subtextual possibilities of painting. How new meanings can be produced through the collision and cohesion of image, surface and material. In *Trouble Frees* he undertakes an engaged and critical response to the theoretical and formal problems of contemporary painting.

Opening reception:  
6-9 pm, Friday 10th  
September 2020

For any enquiries please  
contact the gallery at  
info@gao.gallery

Richard Magee (b.1994), Derry. The title, "Trouble Frees", is taken from a hopeful name found in research for the generation the artist belongs to born in the North of Ireland during the decade of the Good Friday Agreement, 1998. He studied at the Slade School, London, 2013-17 and Kuva, Helsinki, 2015 after being introduced to art practice while a teenager in Derry by Void Art School. Recently he has been working between Manchester and the North East of England and is about to begin MA studies at HFBK, Hamburg. Magee's recent paintings were made possible by SIAP funding through the ACNI.