

Billy Bagilhole

Juncture

8 - 23 February 2019

'Juncture' is Welsh artist and filmmaker Billy Bagilhole's debut solo exhibition, presented at Hoxton 253 Gallery in London.

Bagilhole grew up on a remote farmhouse in North West Wales, surrounded not only by the expansive landscape of granite hills, salt marshes, slurry pits and views of the Irish Sea, but also by the many paintings created by his father Robin, an artist and educator who passed away in 2001. From a young age Bagilhole would attempt to imitate the artworks of his father, and after inheriting the late artists home studio began to develop a lasting artistic empathy based on textured mark-making, staged subject matter and choice of colour.

Having completed his foundation in art and design from Coleg Menai in Bangor, Wales, Bagilhole followed in his father's footsteps by moving to London to pursue art, where he graduated from Chelsea College of Arts in 2017 with a first class BA honours in Fine Art.

The body of work presented in 'Juncture' continues Bagilhole's conceptual investigation into narrative that began during his studies at Chelsea, examining paintings ability to create and capture imagined moments. With 'Juncture' by definition implying the reaching of a significant event or moment in time, each of Bagilhole's paintings could be seen as snapshots extricated from a wider narrative, each depicting a point of importance during a progression of which the viewer is unaware. Despite recurring motifs and iconography such as lone figures/animals, bones, arrows, rain and snippets of text, Bagilhole restrains from providing a prescribed narrative, instead openly encouraging the audience to construct their own stories while encountering the works. Aware of the inherent power of people's curiosity, Bagilhole's paintings offer an outlet through which we can make our own metaphors, create our own connotations and invent our own interpretations.

Bagilhole's painting style combines and contrasts the expressionist mark-making and rich, saturated colour palate inherited from his father with a measured command of subject derived from his experience with filmmaking. Thickly applied paint on canvas create textured abstract environments in which to stage his visual vignettes, while the use of bold, primary coloured backgrounds subconsciously assemble works into groups imbued with the analogous emotions. In contrast, the representational scenes within the works are delicately choreographed, with attention paid to both line and form. Finally, additional subtextual elements, such as symbols or writing, are added, completing Bagilhole's cinematic composition of the works.

The exhibition's title, 'Juncture', could not only be applied to the paintings on display but also to Bagilhole's personal life and the paths he himself has taken as an artist. After leaving school he was presented with his first juncture, a choice between his two passions of music and art, more specifically whether to study music production in Leicester or pursue art school applications backed only by his 'C' in art A-Level. Having chosen art and excelled at Coleg Menai, he approached another juncture, which led to his move away from home, to London and to Chelsea College of Arts. Finally, upon leaving Chelsea and facing the often unclear and uncertain juncture that all recent graduates encounter, Bagilhole has continued to follow the artistic path. A path which this, his debut solo exhibition, affirms is the correct one.

- Hector Campbell, Art Historian, Writer, Curator and Consultant