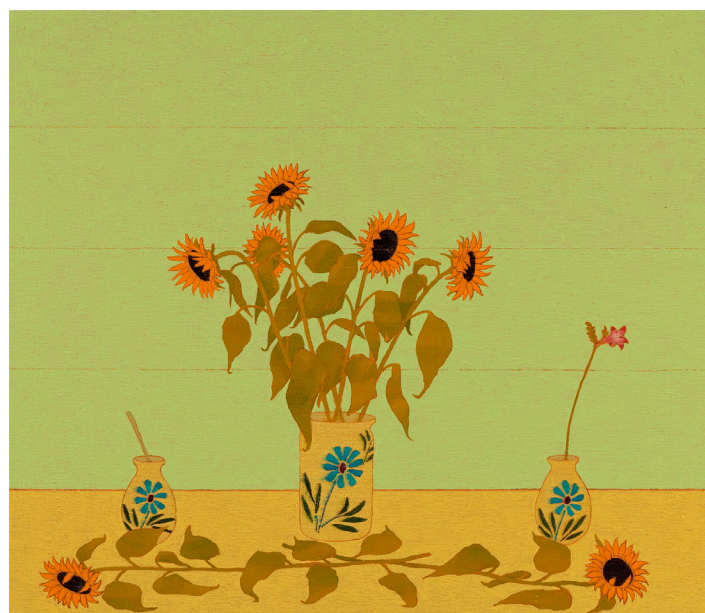


STEPHEN CHAMBERS

FLOWERS

ONE AND A HALF CORNERS



Sunflowers 2 2009, Oil on linen, 65 x 76 cm

17 November - 11 December 2010

Private View Tuesday 16 November 6 - 8pm

Flowers 21 Cork Street London W1S 3LZ T +44 (0)20 7439 7766 www.flowersgalleries.com

A perfected compositional calculus underscores Stephen Chambers' art, a harmonising of contraries that leads to a quality of suspension. (Not for nothing, for instance, has he made drawings of falling figures, endlessly hanging in mid-air; such an image might be his crest.) It would be easy to characterise his paintings as smoothly humming machines, their mechanisms set in train by looking, their stacked dynamics perpetually whirring away, refusing resolution or closure. It would be easy to see everything within them as part of an airless world, down to the illusory conferring of significance on specific objects by painting them repeatedly. Indeed, the context of postmodernist painting from which Chambers emerged in the 1980s might set up the condition for such a reading. But painting won't easily stay closed in that way, and these taut, systemic works can be considered to trap feeling in their folds as carefully, and unexpectedly, as do, say, the Nouveau Romains of Georges Perec and Alain Robbe-Grillet.

If whatever one looks at in a Chambers painting collapses into its opposite (order into chaos and vice versa, figure into abstraction, indoor and outdoor, etc), then accordingly what might emerge from them — from the experience of feeling that happen — is a poetics, a mindset, which admits that nothing can be fully grasped or depended on, whatever bulwarks we might be secretly building. There were rabbits in his earlier paintings and he saw them, he says, as anarchic forces, messing with whatever order had been fragilely constructed. There is playfulness in this, of course. But, as ever with Stephen Chambers, there is also that quality's inverse.

Martin Herbert

Extract from 'The View From Outside', an essay by Martin Herbert which forms part of a fully illustrated catalogue that will accompany the exhibition.

Stephen Chambers was born in 1960. He trained at Central St Martin's and Chelsea School of Art in London. He first showed with Flowers in 1989, and has exhibited extensively in Europe and the USA. Chambers was elected a Royal Academician in 2005.

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