

Flowers Central
PRESS RELEASE



CLAERWEN JAMES

10 May – 3 June 2006

Private View: Tuesday 9th May 2006

Opening Times: Monday – Friday 10am until 6pm, Saturday 10am until 2pm

Flowers Central presents new, striking paintings by the recent Slade graduate Claerwen James in her first major solo show. These paintings of children and adolescents are deceptively simple. Plain and direct, the bold colours and forms offer up their subjects for our scrutiny. Closer attention uncovers a feeling of isolation and distance. The figures stand in generic spaces, removed from any context, caught between the muted colours of a backdrop and the flatness of their own costumes, which sit on them like cut-outs on a paper doll. There is a disconcerting watchfulness about the figures, and the powerful sense of an interior life: a particular, mute privacy. Most of the images originated as photographs: some scavenged; some taken by the artist, who believes that the awkwardness of the photographic moment is crucial to the painful, elegiac quality of the paintings. As a critic wrote of James's work in 2004, the photographic source "only intensifies the sense of distance: the subjects are taken not from life, but, like icons, from the image of a life."

James's work was first seen when she was an Artist of the Day at Flowers Central two years ago. The palette of this show is darker and more muted than that of those earlier paintings, and now many of the figures fail to meet our gaze, looking down or to one side, guarding their thoughts. As before, however, the subject of these quiet but powerful paintings is the profound strangeness of childhood, its unknowingness and its fears. "Every child is lonely," she has said. "It's not until you're an adult that you can articulate that loneliness."

The next exhibition at Flowers Central will be a group sculpture show, running from the 6th to the 17th June 2006.

For further information, please contact Di Poole or James Ulph on 020 7439 7766 or email central@flowerseast.com

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