

# NICHOLAS BYRNE

## STATEMENT

Nicholas Byrne makes composite images, incorporating the stopping and reactivation of flows or fluxes, both representational and material. The works reverse-engineer images by a technical invocation of traditional painting. Arguing for the use-value of muscle memory in craft objects as a way into new spaces of physical understanding. The works show how they are produced simultaneously in the process of reading and learning to write. Composed of superimpositions of febrile surfaces; built up, scratched into and layered over again. Curves, spirals and loops recur in dynamic forms, leading the gaze to the surface. Occasionally, where uniform planes of colour impose themselves across the surface they don't allow the eye to rest. Rather than providing a ground, planes of pure colour serve to obscure or colour-match forms and thus agitate perception.

Byrne makes use of a finite range of representational images, interfused with the formal language of gestural abstraction and the ground. The images perform body-language: showing teeth. In these works organs float in an undulating field, etched in circuits onto copper (a medium of electromagnetic flux). Arrested before they reach the point of representational stability, the purposeful misuse of tools: sign-writers brushes not signing, gesturing, and surgical blades drawing by cutting, dividing the paint, the alchemical logic of the process animates an uneasy relationship with desire and value. The shiny copper of the drawing cut into the surface will oxidise, changing in reaction to the space around it. Over a long time, growing black before turning Statue of Liberty green. Attempting to connect a picture physically to who is breathing in front of it. The slow undermining transformation of the work from the inside out mirrors Byrne's intention to get to the bottom of a medium.

Early works figured combs, collars and fans. Shapes that diagram self-care and how attention-spans move in and out of focus. The artist has employed architectural additions to animate the works. The corporeal scale of the paintings sometimes expanded beyond the frame into objects and large spatial tests. The artist has previously opted to make more two-person presentations and collaborative works than solo ones, notably with Anthea Hamilton, Cold Shower, Schinkel Pavillion, 2015, Gili Tal, Gib's Mir, OUTPOST, Norwich, UK, 2013. The artist was represented by Vilma Gold, London and makes a solo presentation for the first time in Italy with Federica Schiavo Gallery in 2018.