

CHRIS COOK CV

EDUCATION

- 2006 - 2008 Imperial College London
Msc in Translation (Merit)
- 1998 - 2001 Royal Academy Schools of Art, London, UK
Postgraduate Painting Diploma (MA)
- 1995 - 1998 De Montfort University, Leicester, UK
BA Hons Fine Art (1st class)

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2016 CHANGES, Anita Chan Lai-ling Gallery, Fringe Club, Hong Kong
- 2003 TONIC, Keith Talent Gallery, London
- 2002 TEN DAYS, Morley Gallery, London
- 1998 RECENT PAINTINGS, Phoenix Arts Centre, Leicester, UK
- 1997 RECENT PAINTINGS, Stamford Arts Centre, Stamford, UK

SELECTED GROUP SHOWS

- 2011 'Primitive Craftsmanship – Contemporary Sculpture', C&G Art Garden, HK
'Visual AIDS - Postcard from the Edge', CRG Gallery, New York
- 2010 'West Kowloon Cultural Revolution District', C & G Artpartment, HK
'Miniscale', Oblong Gallery, London
'Barbican Arts Group Trust – Artworks Open 2010', London
Troubadour Gallery, London
- 2009 'Euroart Open Studios', London
- 2007 'Print 2007', The Walk Gallery, London
- 2005 ART NEWS, Raid Project, Los Angeles, USA
MY FAIR LADY, Art Centre, Hong Kong
ARTMART, Para/Site Art Space, Hong Kong
- 2003 BAD TOUCH, Keith Talent Gallery, London
- 2001 RA SCHOOLS SHOW, Royal Academy, London
- 2000 SUMMER EXHIBITION, Royal Academy of Arts, London
PREMIUM 2000, Royal Academy of Arts
PRINT 2000, Morley Gallery, London
- 1999 SUMMER EXHIBITION, Royal Academy of Arts, London

PUBLICATIONS

- 2014 Chris Cook - Artworks 1997-2014
- 2005 'Meditated Spaces' by Michael Freeman

AWARDS

- 2001 Andre Dunoyer de Segonzac Travel Award
- 2000 Vincent Harris Award, RA Schools of Art

VISITING ARTIST

- 2010 Lingnan University, Hong Kong
De Montfort University, Leicester, UK
- 2005 Hong Kong Art School, the Art Centre, Wanchai, Hong Kong
- 2002 Loughborough College of Art & Design, Loughborough, UK
- 2001 De Montfort University, Leicester, UK

WORKSHOP

- 2010 'Travel to Learn in the City' Project organised by 1a Space, Hong Kong

Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe (2003)

When I first saw Chris Cook's work, two or three years ago, it struck me that the red I was seeing in it was both familiar and unfamiliar. The reds found in Matisse's *Red Studio* or Rothko or Newman's *Vir Heroicus Sublimis* would actually look a bit restrained and even brown placed beside the red Cook uses, but while unfamiliar within the lists of greatest hits of modern art it was familiar to me as a version of the reds one sees all over the place in New York's Chinatown, where I once lived. Much more intense and also slightly more crimson than the others I've mentioned, most thoroughly itself when the property of a lacquered surface, Cook has used it to find a starting point of her own which is in that respect and also another outside the rules observed in or set down for western painting by Goethe.

Goethe says there are reds that are aggressive, on their way to being orange, which he identifies with French painting, and ones that are passive because they contain blue, which recedes rather than advances, and which he says to be characteristic of Italian painting, but Cook's reds are neither of these. Rather, hers is a red with which one is also familiar because of its ubiquity in cosmetics, which is the other respect in which it suggests not just one but two starting points for Cook's work outside of the multiplicity of possibilities that we once sought to organize into a tradition. This red, which has proliferated into many versions of itself in Cook's work, was most precisely described to me by another young artist, Olivia Booth, who said it was a red which had hot pink behind it. Goethe, beloved of art historians and philosophers because he clung to the belief that black and white were continuous with, and indeed fundamental to, colour, perhaps didn't allow for a red which can't reasonably be described as aggressive—unless one finds having one's sensations aroused oppressive, but people who do should surely consider staying away from art galleries except when accompanied by those who can help them—and is certainly not retiring, but is instead assertive in a different way—a difference underscored by 'assertive' obviously and immediately being clearly not quite the right word—than those offered by Goethe's (masculinist) oppositions. It's what you have instead of assertion when hot pink's behind everything.

Cook's work is made out of surfaces that are flatly but sensitively painted with intense colour. In that they are not stretched but suspended and overlap they are in their individuation and verticality active in the space like figures in a crowd, although unlike them in that the action is as independent of the floor as of the wall. But of course humans too assume an at least comparable independence, one lives in the world through the weightless mobility of the eyes rather than through one's feet, and Cook's work reminds one of this. One looks at and up as one looks from side to side and around and to some extent past. I have talked about origination in one sense but cutting across that is how the colour works in these works, or indeed in painting as such. In painting one is always seeing colour as more and less and other than what it is elsewhere in the painting, in a context where there is no first colour with which to compare ones seen as succeeding it, and this is the sense in which Cook uses red to make, and other colours to punctuate and redirect, what Gilles Deleuze (who uses red as an example) called a series in which repetition occurs without origin being an issue. Once one is responding to what it does its possible socio-anthropological origins have been further de-originated than they were before, having been detached from China and cosmetics they now find themselves properties of paintings but in that attached to a use of the idea of painting that detaches it from the wall in order to reconnect it differently to the room, and displaces or even replaces index, origin, and connotation with immediate sensation. In making the idea and experience of the provisional converge with the painted surface—by definition at once both weightless and tactile, product of eye and hand—Cook has found her own way of making painting's weightless and mobile complexity (or a practice which uses it, which comes to the same thing) engage the body's own complex relationship to visual and material difference through movements between and within discrete areas of colour—which is itself at once familiar and unfamiliar—that fold painting into the same space as that of its spectator, who will immediately realise that not the least hot thing about this work is that one can't be outside of it—because one's caught up in and shares its temporality as one shares space with it—but is instead caught up in a play with as much as of difference and immediacy. Cook's work produces the excitement (some) bodies involuntarily and irresistibly associate with pleasure rather than the alternative and, traditionally and still generally but not here, with the colours of cosmetics rather than of art.

The Persistence of Red (2005)

Michael Freeman

Overlapping paper banners in a range of powerful, intense reds are suspended from floor to ceiling to transform an interior into a mesmerizing and fragile space. The arrangement of these gently moving walls by artist Chris Cook is site-specific, creating a unique environment each time.

Cook draws heavily on her Chinese cultural heritage, and the colours are based on her memories of places, events, and objects from her childhood in East Asia, in particular “the smell of burning incense, the dimness of temple interiors, the scared environment filled with noises and the ever-present colour of red, forming a continuous background to ceremony and prayers, social and spiritual connections.” She takes large-scale paper monochrome banners and paints them with layers of acrylic to create a specific hue, shade, and density for each one. By overlapping them in depth and allowing the lightweight paper to float and move, she makes an architectural space that, while ephemeral, manages to close off the outside environment completely. The modulation of reds – some hotter and advancing, others cooler and receding – adds to the three-dimensional effect. As Cook writes, “The physical presence is created to overwhelm and to create an atmosphere of silence and contemplation.”