

CLARE WOODS : THE DARK MATTER

Opening: Friday, September 14, 6-9 pm
Dates: September 14 - November 10, 2012



Stop Stick, 2012
oil on aluminium
100 x 70 cm



Dark View, 2012
oil on aluminium
70 x 55 cm



The End, 2012
oil on aluminium
50 x 70 cm

The Buchmann Galerie is pleased to present a new series of paintings by the British artist Clare Woods (b. 1972) titled *The Dark Matter*.

This work is the result of a complex creative process that often uses photographs as sketches, focusing on rural and abandoned parts of land lying somewhere between urbanized cities and deserted country areas. Clare Woods often uses a flash gun while shooting her night sketches. The overexposure then helps defamiliarize the reality of the photography. Then comes the drawing step, in which Clare Woods draws her pen around the image, selecting interesting details and creating thus a black-and-white pattern. This leads to the third stage, which has the spontaneity of the painting, open to accidents or hazardous blobs and streaks.

The aluminum support reinforces the metallic and yet smooth tone of the lucent colors. It is the contrast between those highly artificial colors and the subject chosen – nature – giving the images their supernatural and threatening look.

Nature appears unfamiliar in Clare Woods's works, sometimes even uncanny. This conception has to be seen from the perspective of the British romantic landscape tradition (by John Constable for instance) as in the modernist one (by Paul Nash or Jean Fautrier, whose *Large Tragic Head*, 1942, might have inspired Woods's *The Unreturning*, 2012).

This long tradition questions the relationship between urbanism and countryside and later on—in a postindustrial society—the bond between human technique and nature. However, unlike in academic landscapes, there is no horizon line to be seen in Woods's pictures. They surround and absorb our perception; they overwhelm the intellect in order to let the affect speak.

When considering the interest of Clare Woods for English modernism (especially poetry and art), we might consider the importance of the title's power to evoke: Dark matter is imperceptible matter hypothesized by physicists to account for much of the mass of the universe. It's something related to chaos and darkness and describes quite well Clare Woods's idea of representation in art: energetic forces running across the canvas, oscillating between abstraction and figuration.

Taken together, her titles create an ominous semantic web that magnificently echoes T. S. Eliot's most famous poem, *The Waste Land*, as a tribute to the master of modernism: "What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow / Out of this stony rubbish? Son of man / You cannot say, or guess, for you know only / A heap of broken images, where the sun beats, / And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief, / And the dry stone no sound of water."

Clare Woods recently had solo shows at the Hepworth Wakefield and the Southampton City Art Gallery. She has created a large-scale work integrated into the façades of a utilities building in the south of the Olympic Park in London, which will be highly visible in legacy. Her work is amongst others in the public collection of the Margulies Collection, Miami, the British Council, London, the National Collection of Wales, the Arken Museum of Modern Art, Copenhagen and the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo.

For further information on the artist or for images of the works in the exhibition, please do not hesitate to contact the gallery at any time.