

## Mike Pratt

### *Love Songs Dedicated to the Back of Somebody's Head*

Preview 29 April 6 - 8pm  
30 April - 28 May 2016

WORKPLACE Gateshead  
The Old Post Office  
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WORKPLACE is pleased to announce *Love Songs Dedicated to the Back of Somebody's Head* - the second solo exhibition of Mike Pratt at Workplace Gateshead.

Pratt's new paintings occupy a typically duplicitous territory. Pertaining to painting, sculpture, interior design and home décor, these new works transverse various strata of taste and class. Constructed initially from wood and Styrofoam, Pratt's paintings are thickly coated in layers of casting wax and pigmented archival resin to create seductive semi-opaque marbled glazes that shift the work away from their humble materiality towards a sensuous luxuriousness. Adorned with oversized reproductions of sea shells, bunches of grapes, or cascading arrangements of coloured watering cans, Pratt's semi-decorative utilitarian forms (those of the vacu-formed plastic garden pond or the decorative fountain) are enlarged and pimped with all the cornucopian baroque excess of a Rubens allegory painting. Hung on vertical steel scaffolding support poles the works reveal both their front and reverse, taking on figurative connotations of both builder and pole dancer.

Pratt's works maintain echoes of Art that has been rescued from a process of aesthetic cultural assimilation: The curvilinear forms of 'Modern Art' appropriated by the once fashionable designers of extravagant 1950s Miami hotels and pools, and endlessly re-appropriated since. Eventually trickling down to the aspirational forms of the garden centre or diy warehouse. His stickily saturated glazed surfaces oscillate between high finish and a scatological methodology; embodying the erotics of disgust through their equal propensity to repulse and entice.

*"When I first saw these paintings I thought they were like dried out fountains that once contained liquid but now have become colourful relics with no real purpose. Mike said he wanted to make a bunch of things that looked like they could be mistaken for musical instruments - I guess they do all have a home made folksy quality to them, and this makes me think they all produce a particular sound that maybe in some way joins together. Either way - I can't imagine that if they did in fact produce a sound, that it would be anything nice - maybe just a background noise to play on the other end of the phone or in a hotel lobby. Now when I think about them - I enjoyed the colourfulness."* Helen Pratt (Mike's Mam), 2016

Mike Pratt was born in 1987 in Seaham, North East England. He graduated from Northumbria University in 2009 where he was awarded the Paul Mason Sculpture Prize, and in 2014 he completed a two-year postgraduate programme at De Ateliers in Amsterdam, Netherlands where he currently lives and works. Solo exhibitions include *Deep Pond*, Galerie Juliette Jongma, Amsterdam, *Rubberhead/Rubbernecking* B.M.W. Edinburgh, *Good Mourning Bell* Workplace Gateshead, *Cumberland Sausage* Extraspazio, Rome, and *HUBBA HUBBA*, Satellite, Newcastle. Group Exhibitions include *Satellite Satellite* Workplace London, *Offspring* de Ateliers, Amsterdam, *Riff/Rift* Baltic39, Newcastle upon Tyne, *Right Eye, Left Eye* V8 Plattform für neue Kunst, Karlsruhe, Germany, *Theatrical Dynamics* Torrance Art Museum, Los Angeles, USA, *Jesmonite on Paper* Malgras Naudet, Manchester, *Nice Paintings* Grundy Art Gallery, *Captain of all Pleasures* EMBASSY Gallery Edinburgh, *Some people deserve everything they get* The Royal Standard, Liverpool.

For all enquiries regarding the works exhibited please contact [sales@workplacegallery.co.uk](mailto:sales@workplacegallery.co.uk)