

PRESS RELEASE

100 Years: Translation as Invention

Vivienne Roberts Projects and Fairhead Fine Arts present works by Modern Masters alongside contemporary artists

29 September – 30 October 2026

The Bindery, 53 Hatton Garden, London EC1N 8HN

Private View: 30 September, 6.15pm – 8.15pm

Vivienne Roberts Projects, together with Niall Fairhead, specialist in works on paper by Modern Masters, presents *100 Years: Translation as Invention*, bringing together works by Francis Bacon, David Hockney, Henri Matisse and Pablo Picasso alongside contemporary artists Ann Dowker, Andrew Graves, Humphrey Ocean RA and Sara Lee Roberts.

The exhibition explores painting as a continuous process of translation, transformation and reinvention. Rather than tracing a history of styles or influences, it considers how artists look at what has come before and reconfigure it into new visual languages.

Across the twentieth century and into the present, artists have drawn upon existing images, structures and ways of seeing, not through imitation but through transformation. Picasso reworked the compositional structures of earlier masters into wholly original pictorial realities. Matisse translated visual languages encountered in Morocco into his own system of colour, pattern and space, before reinventing his own practice through his radical gouache cut-outs. Bacon returned repeatedly to historical images, transforming them into fields of sensation, while Hockney's engagement with artists such as Piero della Francesca became a way of thinking through questions of space, clarity and perception.

The exhibition's ethos also finds a natural resonance in the work of Paul Klee, whose deeply personal and spiritual vision exemplifies the freedom to discover an individual visual language. Although Klee is not represented in the exhibition, his influence is present in the work of Andrew Graves, whose particular sensibility towards colour and form reflects his longstanding engagement with Klee's paintings. For Graves, as for Klee, colour is not simply descriptive but an active force in the construction of the image.

The contemporary artists extend these questions in distinct ways. Ann Dowker's exhaustive study and sketching of the Old Masters in museums around the world has informed a practice in which landscape and the human figure are gradually distilled towards abstraction. Sara Lee Roberts reinterprets the Old Masters through light, colour and pictorial structure, removing narrative and descriptive elements to reveal the abstract musicality of interacting forms and colour. Andrew Graves constructs poetic pictorial situations in which perception is reorganised through colour and surface. Humphrey Ocean RA, often described as a 'painter of contemporary life', approaches painting through direct attention to what is seen and experienced. His work makes the familiar newly visible, translating perception into a language of remarkable economy and clarity.

Seen together, these works propose not a linear history of styles, but an ongoing conversation across time. Painting returns, reworks and reimagines itself, continually creating new forms of reality through pictorial means.

100 Years: Translation as Invention invites us to look beyond chronology and consider painting as a living language, renewed through the freedom to look again.