

Niru Ratnam

JULIETTE BLIGHTMAN

&

JACQUELINE UTLEY

The Armory Show 2024

For 'Presents' at Armory 2024 we are showing two artists, Juliette Blightman (b.1980) and Jacqueline Utley (b.1964). Their work explores gendered spaces that women have occupied for living, working and making work. Through history this has often either been the home or places that have been designated as for women in implicit opposition to the 'proper' places of work that men have occupied such as the office or the studio. Often the places that women are expected to occupy have more than one function; the place of living (and bringing up children) also is a place of work. The domestic becomes the place of production, not by choice, but in a way that women have made work through necessity.

The loose starting point of the concept behind the booth is Virginia Woolf's extended essay 'A Room of One's Own' (1928), an account of Woolf's research into the history of women's creativity and her own experience as a woman writer. Following on from Woolf's observation that to make creative work a woman needs a space to themselves. The booth is a speculation on how the spatial limits imposed on women, in both workspaces and creative spaces, can still become productive spaces, where women work, make, contemplate and converse with each other. Blightman and Utley explore the implications of this; what are the limits of that patriarchal assumption that the domestic has been assumed to be female, but also what is the potential for making works that articulate the creative potential of the domestic and affirm or celebrate that space?

Juliette Blightman has been making work since the early 2000s that explores the relationship between art and life in her work. She works across different media capturing moments of daily life creating a sense of shared intimacy with the viewer that is by turns melancholy and voyeuristic. A strand of her practice is a series of portraits of her female friends, domestic interiors and views out of windows. Together they act as a visual diary which ask the viewer to consider both the female subject within the space they find themselves in, as well as the space beyond that interior.

These spaces are deliberately messy, filled with the detritus of everyday life, a contrast to the clean white blank spaces associated with male creativity. In doing this Blightman is also creating a link with 1970s feminist artists such as Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro in siting a feminist art practice within the domestic. Blightman's choice of medium, gouache and watercolour points to a sense of precariousness that mirrors the financial and everyday situation that has been the prevailing context for women artists. That precariousness, whilst very real in terms of financial hardships and being on the wrong end of exclusionary practices, can however lead to unexpectedly positive outcomes; an inviting in of people (and by extension, the viewer) into private or domestic spaces, an opening up of privacy, a blurring of practice and life.

Jacqueline Utley's paintings convey the sense of contingency of capturing a very private moment shared between female subjects. In her deceptively simple paintings women stand or talk with each other, do work such as weaving and knitting or sometimes turn towards contemplation. Utley went to art school as an undergraduate in the 1980s but got pregnant in her last year there. Subsequently she left art school and like many other women artists paused her career to bring up her children. She returned focusing on making art in her forties, completing an MFA.

A key strand in the work she has made since then is rooted in research work looking at archives about women working in the textile industry in the north of England at the beginning of the twentieth century. Jacqueline's mother, like many other working-class women in the north of England,

began her working life aged 14 in a textile mill in West Yorkshire. Utley also looked at Dutch 17th century paintings of lace-makers. The resultant paintings bring together women in interior spaces that might be front rooms or parlours. Whilst the women are sited in interior spaces they are not contained by these spaces, with figures sometimes half-in and half-out of the pictorial space suggesting that life goes on beyond the frame. We recognised the same figures in different paintings, linking them in a non-linear, non-hierarchical sequence.

In her essay 'The Architect and The Housewife' the artist Frances Stark asks: "*Were these men not unlike architects in that they were constantly carrying out plans—giving instructions, making constructions?*" before using the categories of the Architect and the Housewife to describe the gendered structures of the conditions of making art. The Architects with their grand plans, big studios and statements, the Housewife making work from a domestic situation in a way Stark likens to running the home. Stark acknowledges that the figures of "the architect" and "the housewife" are deliberately "simplistic and reductive" and yet these reductive metaphors are still relevant; society still pushes women artists into domestic spheres where they are expected to work, whilst pushing men into professional spaces. The juxtaposition of Blightman's work with Utley's work is a meditation on this, a critique of it as well as a tenuous celebration of the work that is still created from within those domestic spaces.





Jacqueline Utley
Her Room Gathering
2017
oil on linen
40 x 60 cm (15 3/4 x 23 5/8 in)
\$7,000 + applicable taxes

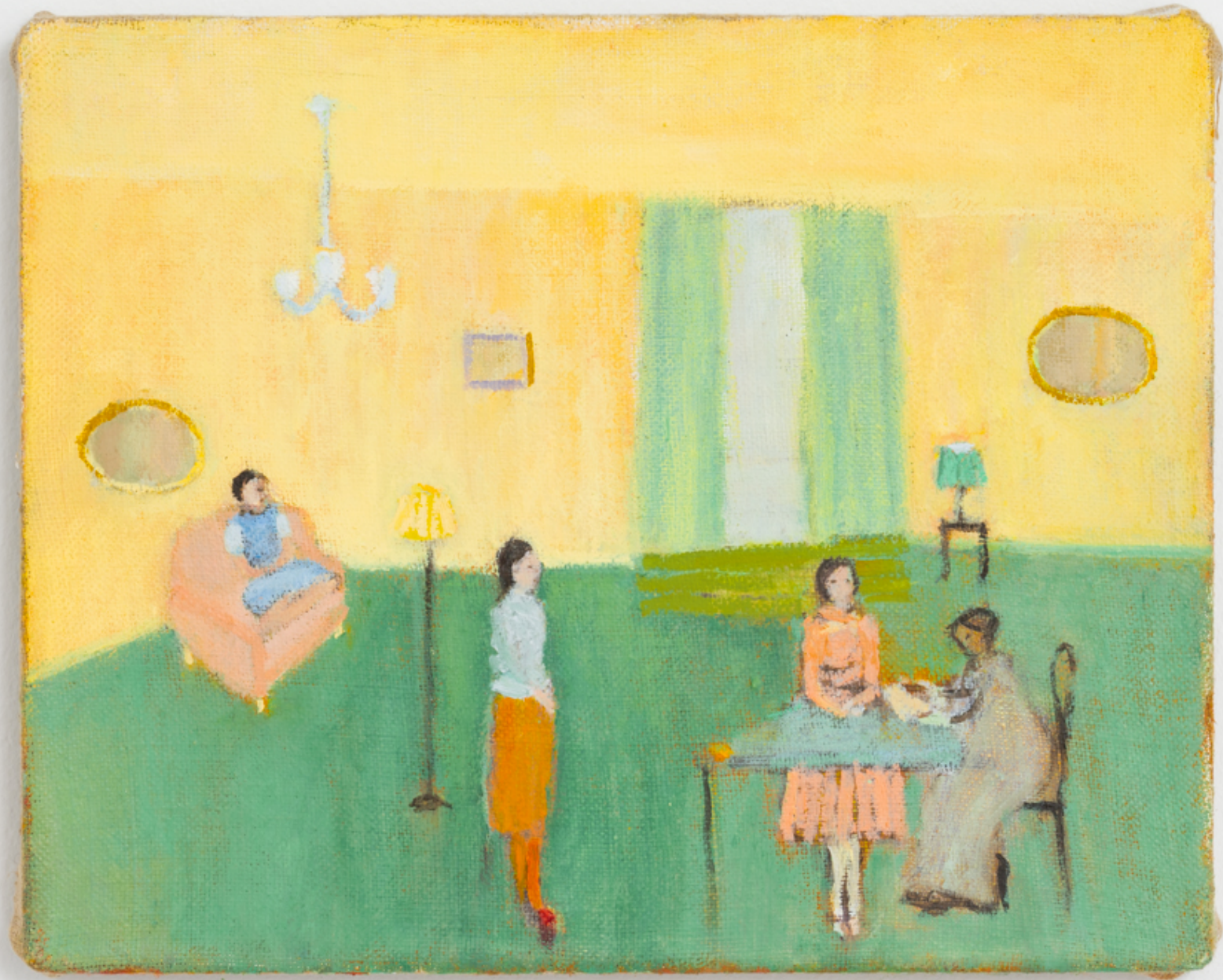


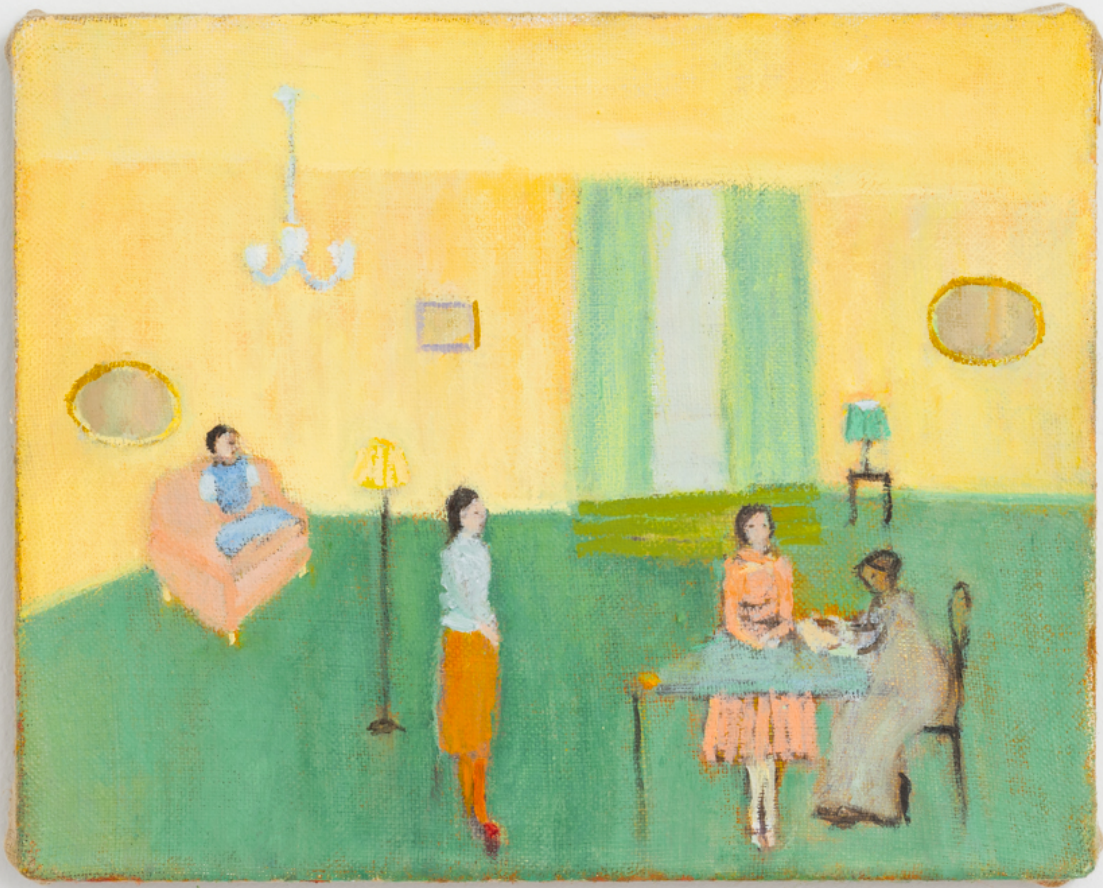
Jacqueline Utley
Front Room Joan's Cloth
2016
oil on linen
35 x 25 cm (13 ¾ x 9 ⅞ in)
\$4,000 + applicable taxes

Jacqueline Utley
Ledge Flowers Long
2020-2022
oil on linen
25 x 20 cm (9 7/8 x 7 7/8 in)

\$3,000 + applicable taxes







Jacqueline Utley
Front Room Performance Letters
2015
oil on linen
18 x 23 cm (7 1/8 x 9 in)

\$2,500 + applicable taxes



Jacqueline Utley
Hannah Lace Friends
2015
oil on linen
26 x 21 cm (10 ¼ x 8 ¼ in)
\$3,000 + applicable taxes





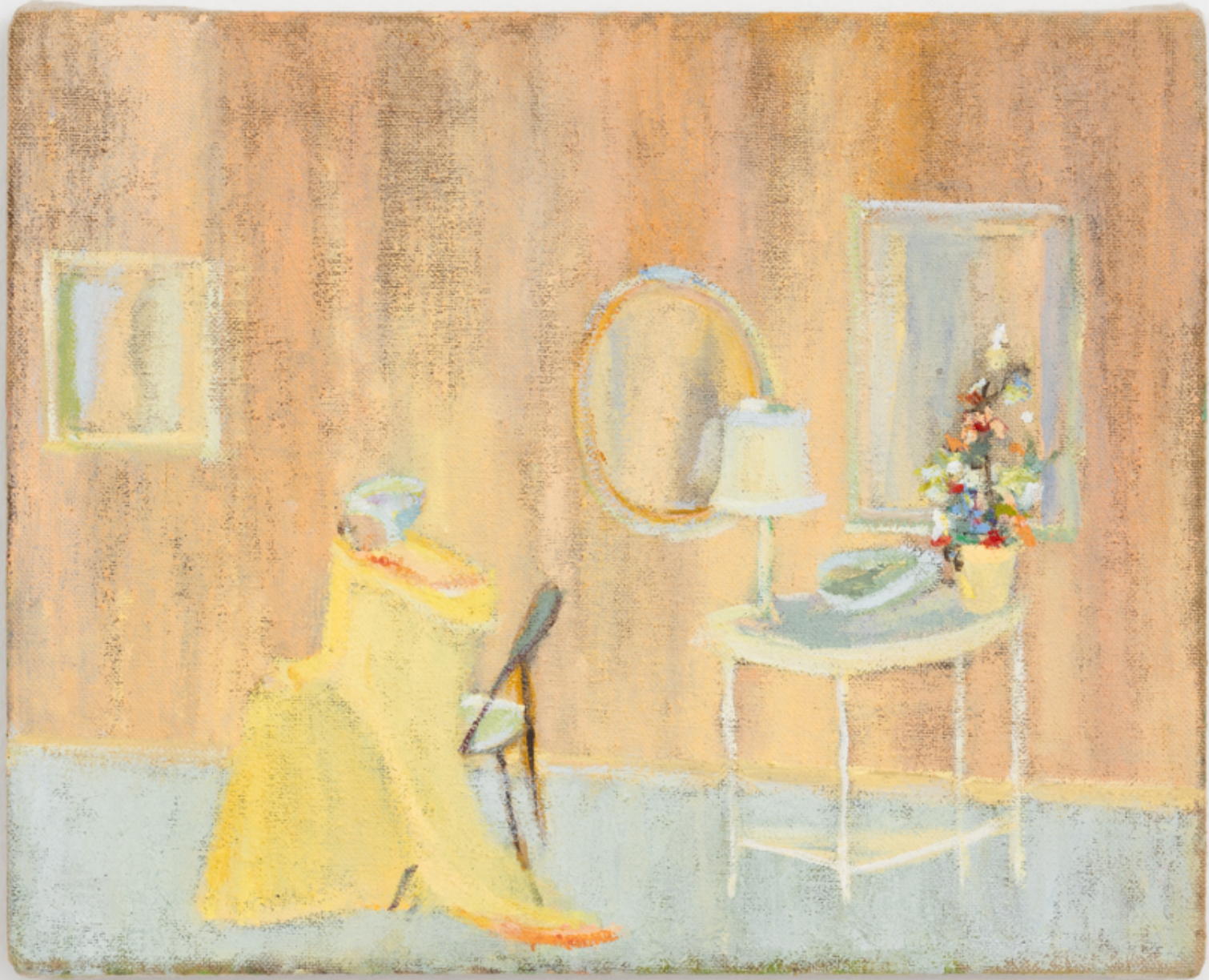
Jacqueline Utley
Waiting Living Room Waiting
2016
oil on linen
21 x 31 cm (8 ¼ x 12 ¼ in)
\$3,000 + applicable taxes

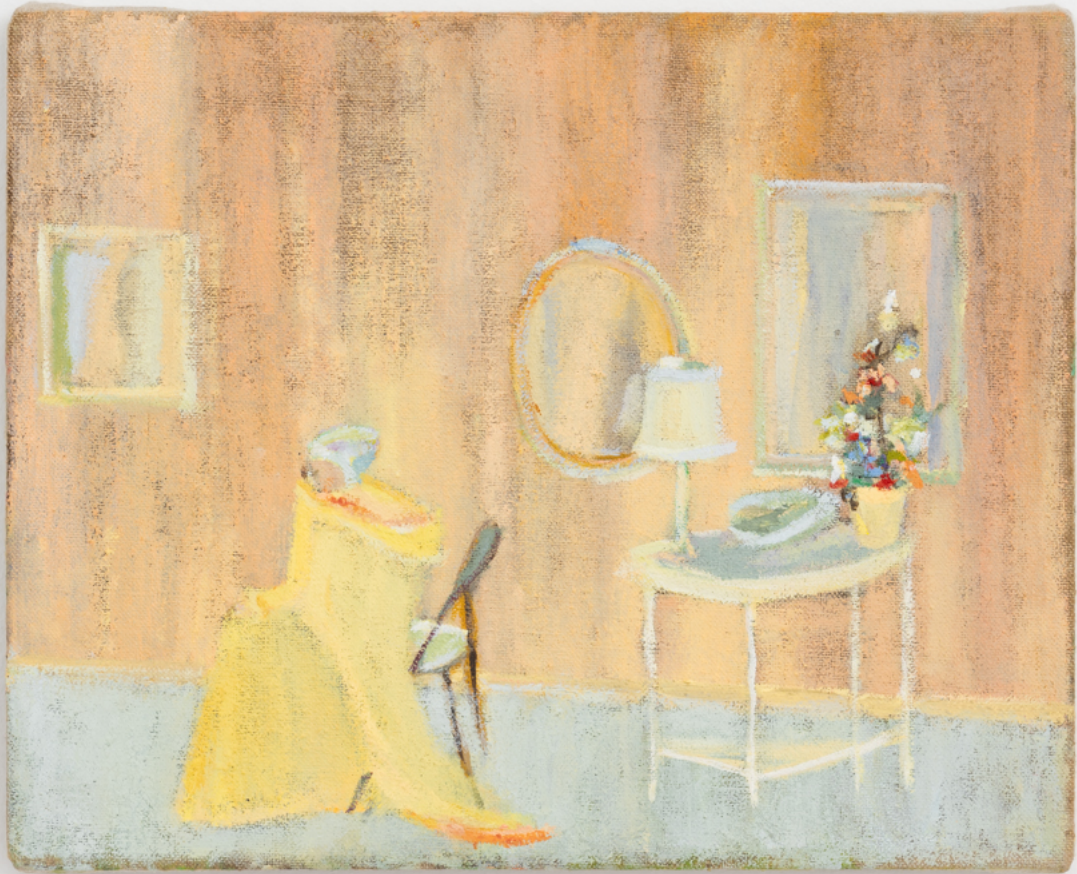




Jacqueline Utley
Front Room Performance Letters
2015
oil on linen
18 x 23 cm (7 1/8 x 9 in)

\$2,500 + applicable taxes





Jacqueline Utley
Front Room Flowers
2016
oil on linen
21 x 26 cm (8 ¼ x 10 ¼ in)
\$3,000 + applicable taxes



Jacqueline Utley
Nancy's Room
2012

oil on linen
23 x 18 cm (9 x 7 1/8 in)

\$2,500 + applicable taxes



Juliette Blightman
Untitled #3 (birds, boys and airplanes)
2022
gouache on paper, framed
68 x 50 cm (26 ³/₄ x 19 ³/₄ in)

\$3,500 + applicable taxes



Juliette Blightman
Untitled #3 (birds, boys and airplanes)
2022
gouache on paper, framed
68 x 50 cm (26 ³/₄ x 19 ³/₄ in)

\$3,500 + applicable taxes



Juliette Blightman
Untitled #2 (birds, boys and airplanes)
2022
gouache on paper, framed
68 x 50 cm (26 ³/₄ x 19 ³/₄ in)

\$3,500 + applicable taxes

Juliette Blightman
Paradise Lost, Arnsberg
2022-23
watercolour and pencil on paper
33 x 26 cm (13 x 10 ¼ in)

\$2,000 +applicable taxes







Juliette Blightman
Independence, Farnham
2022-23
gouache and pencil on paper
37 x 50 cm (14 ⁵/₈ x 19 ³/₄ in)

\$3,000 + applicable taxes

Juliette Blightman

Thea with carrot, St John

2019

gouache and pencil on paper, framed

50 x 37 cm (19 ¾ x 14 ⅝ in)

\$3,000 + applicable taxes





Juliette Blightman
(Co)dependence, New York
2022-23
watercolour on paper
33 x 26 cm (13 x 10 ¼ in)

\$2,000 + applicable taxes

Juliette Blightman
Behind the clock, Basel
2019
gouache and pencil on paper
50 x 37 cm (19 ¾ x 14 ⅝ in)

\$3,000 + applicable taxes



PRESS

Subscribe



THE ART NEWSPAPER

ePaper Newsletters

Art market Museums & heritage Exhibitions Books Podcasts Columns Technology Adventure

Venice Biennale Art on Location

Enjoy 8 weeks of The Art Newspaper for free // Unlock unrestricted digital access today

Art Basel in Miami Beach 2023
News

Women come to the fore at Untitled Art fair

An inclusive curatorial theme sees works by older female artists snapped up

Anny Shaw

6 December 2023

Share



Jacqueline Utley, *Hidden daughters* (2022)
Courtesy: Niru Ratnam gallery

The Art Newspaper
'Women come to the fore at Untitled Art fair'
By Anny Shaw
4 December 2023

At several galleries, older women are having their moment in the sun. The London dealer Niru Ratnam is showing three female artists from different generations, including the British painter Jacqueline Utley, who has only returned to painting now that her children are grown up.

Ratnam believes there is a "suspicion" among collectors when it comes to older female artists: "They might not have had solo shows with other galleries; there's no precedent, there's no algorithm," he says. "You really have to trust your eyes; the same goes for us as gallerists."

[Click here to read article in full.](#)



Featured in
Issue 126

Juliette Blightman

Quiet afternoons and meditations on the malleability of time



BY JENNIFER HIGGLE IN FEATURES | 01 OCT 09

Frieze
'Juliette Blightman'
by Jennifer Higgle
1 October 2009

Every object or image the artist uses has personal significance for herself or her family, a past lover, or friends; Blightman is less interested in scrutinizing individuals than in the traces they leave behind. Privileging observation over action, she wilfully disregards the more dynamic possibilities of film, slowing everything down until it almost stops, and regarding the minutiae of surfaces with the intensity of a still-life painter.

[Click here to read article in full.](#)

NEWSLETTERS

ARTFORUM



NEWS DIARY VIDEO CRITICS' PICKS REVIEWS COLUMNS FEATURES CURRENT ISSUE

CRITICS' PICKS LOS ANGELES

Juliette Blightman

Karma | Los Angeles

Karma International | Los Angeles

March 4, 2015 - March 27, 2015

By Andrew Berardini

Art Forum
'Juliette Blightman'
by Andrew Berardini
2015

The colors of these simple, bright compositions veil and unfurl, revealing an interlocking set of humans to which you may or may not belong, of lives lived and reported (even from afar) with a gentle lyricism and a licentious charm.

[Click here to read article in full.](#)