

November 21, 2020 – January 23, 2021

Sikkema Jenkins & Co. is pleased to present *River*, a solo exhibition of new paintings by Merlin James, on view November 21, 2020 through January 23, 2021.

Central to James' recent work is the artist's daily, nuanced awareness of the view from his home in Glasgow, looking out to the River Clyde and surrounding environments. These paintings constitute a "familiar remembered image, a cumulative memory," incorporating all the "inaccuracies or approximations" of his own recollection.

Works like *Dredge* or *The Window* present very much a specific location, yet a sense of the artificial and the universal is carried through the imaginative scale and coloration. Painting neither directly from life nor from photographs, James draws on impressions and recollections over time to bring to life familiar spaces and the presences that populate them.

The physicality of painting remains a central focus. The raw material of canvas is frequently as integral to the complete work as the paint applied upon it. In some paintings James has made incisions to reveal the stretcher bars or contribute to imagery, while other works have semi-transparent surfaces, veiling information beneath. The stretcher (always fashioned by the artist himself) can become a visual, even sculptural feature. Idiosyncratic picture frames are also a frequent feature.

While acknowledging poetry and music as touchstones, James insists upon the medium of painting, and the range of genres inherent to it, as a distinct field of art production. Within his visual morphology, abstract shapes transform into landscape motifs, landscape and figure elements combine with still life objects. In these latest works, such complexities of form and convention articulate some of the artist's most candid statements to date. Writing of French painter Jean Siméon Chardin, he notes:

*Personal human narrative is in no way eclipsed by the formal and depictive work and play going on in the painting. It is continuous with them. Pictorial ambiguity and complexity prevents us from seeing the painting merely as a biographical document but, despite or because of that, permits us to entertain as full a human narrative as the picture will sustain.**

Born in Cardiff, Wales, in 1960, Merlin James studied in London at the Central School of Art and the Royal College of Art. He currently lives and works in Glasgow, Scotland. James' work has been exhibited widely, including in recent solo shows at A-M-G5, Glasgow, UK (2018); OCT Boxes Museum, Shunde & OCT Art and Design Gallery, Shenzhen (2018); Long Game, CCA Glasgow (2016); Kunstverein Freiburg (2014); Parasol Unit, London; KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin (2013). In 2007 James represented Wales at the 52nd Venice Biennale. He also curates the exhibition space 42 Carlton Place, in Glasgow.

For additional information please contact Scott Briscoe at 212.929.2262 or scott@sikkemajenkinsco.com.

UPCOMING ART FAIRS:

ART BASEL OVR: MIAMI BEACH DEC. 2 – 6, 2020

HOLIDAY CLOSINGS:

THANKSGIVING Nov. 26 – 30
WINTER BREAK DEC. 24, 2020 – JAN. 1, 2021

* Merlin James, *A Lady Taking Tea by Jean Siméon Chardin*, (London: Modern Art Press, 2020), 42-43.

530 WEST 22ND STREET
NEW YORK NY 10011
SIKKEMA
JENKINS&CO.

MERLIN JAMES

River

December 21, 2020 – January 23, 2021

ENTRY GALLERY (clockwise from left):

1.



Dredge, 2018
Acrylic and mixed materials
47.25 x 84.625 inches
120 x 214.9 cm
MJ 18904

2.



Between the House and the Studio, 2019
Acrylic and mixed materials
34.75 x 24.75 inches
88.3 x 62.9 cm
MJ 18827

3.



Two Figures, 2020
Acrylic and mixed materials
49 x 68.75 inches
124.5 x 174.6 cm
MJ 18823

MAIN GALLERY (clockwise from left):

4.



Figure, 2019-20
Acrylic and mixed materials
47 x 36.75 inches
119.4 x 93.3 cm
MJ 18819

5.



Birdcage, 2018
Acrylic and mixed materials
12.25 x 9 inches
31.1 x 22.9 cm
MJ 18849

6.



Indian Toys II, 2018-19
Acrylic and mixed materials
30.25 x 31.5 inches
76.8 x 80 cm
MJ 18836

7.



Twenty-Twenty, 2020
Acrylic and Mixed materials
49.625 x 49.625 inches
126 x 126 cm
MJ 18549

8.



Winter, 2019
Acrylic and mixed materials
30.25 x 24 inches
76.8 x 61 cm
MJ 18817

9.



Rosebush, 2020
Acrylic and mixed materials
50.5 x 40.5 inches
128.3 x 102.9 cm
MJ 18821

10.



Bridge and River, 2018
Acrylic and mixed materials
15.75 x 22.75 inches
40 x 57.8 cm
MJ 18834

11.



Day, 2018-19
Acrylic and mixed materials
57 x 77 inches
144.8 x 195.6 cm
MJ 18837

12.



Green, Blind, 2019
Acrylic and mixed materials
24 x 20 inches
61 x 50.8 cm
MJ 18830

13.



Far Bank, 2018
Acrylic and mixed materials
9 x 11.75 inches
22.9 x 29.8 cm
MJ 18847

14.



The Window, 2020
Acrylic and mixed materials
59.5 x 82.25 inches
151.1 x 208.9 cm
MJ 18822

15.



Slings, 2016-18
Acrylic and mixed materials
29.25 x 32.75 inches
74.3 x 83.2 cm
MJ 18832

16.



Indian Toys I, 2018-19
Acrylic and mixed materials
30 x 34.75 inches
76.2 x 88.3 cm
MJ 18824

17.



Night Window, 2017-18
Acrylic and mixed materials
17.25 x 21.5 inches
43.8 x 54.6 cm
MJ 18838

18.



The House, 2019-20
Acrylic and mixed materials
43.5 x 31 inches
110.5 x 78.7 cm
MJ 18820