

Calendar of Love

BY GREG THOMAS, 05.02.2024



Brandon Logan, Dog Rose, 2024, photograph courtesy of John McKenzie

Brandon Logan's (1996) work has a very particular grammar. It is made from acrylic-soaked lengths of string, arranged in close columns, with horizontal strips masked or freed from their clag of paint to provide a kind of visible skeleton or a series of line breaks. Like a lot of the most interesting minimalist painting, it yields multiple thematic resonances but evades reduction to language. Its colours are bold but never garish. Often it gently delights. Sometimes it thrills. Repeatedly, it reminds us that the best art doesn't need to follow fashion.

Logan, who won the Fleming Wyfold Foundation's Emerging Scottish Artist Award in 2020, was born in Orkney. We can sense something of the spirit of flat island sunsets in the colour flares and pronounced horizontals of his pieces. They also let the light in, and through, hanging just away from the wall on thin wooden batons. We can imagine them as open to the elements. In the patient arrangement of horizontals and verticals there is a suggestion of the regular march of time – of days, months, years – in an environment that still, in spite of the intersecting geopolitical catastrophes of the present, provides some kind of stable centre. Logan's work has been compared to tapestry and associated with Orkney's rich history of craft and textile art. Its warp and weft might also remind us of the rhythm of text on page, and thus of the extraordinary cast of writers from the Orkney Islands, or those who found a home there: Margaret Tait, George Mackay Brown, Ian Hamilton Finlay. Consider both readings. Let the work hang free of them.



Brandon Logan, 'Kiss 2', 2022, acrylic and string, 19.5 x 13cm, photograph courtesy of John McKenzie



Brandon Logan, 'Ribcage', 2023, acrylic and string, 195 x 117cm, photograph courtesy of John McKenzie

The pieces at Ingleby are realised on multiple scales, from the tall, metre-wide 'Later on a Pier' (2023), with its brickwork syncopation, to paintings the size of a pocket notebook. If there is a hint of serialism in the way each work is created according to an overarching, predetermined logic, there is lyricism, emotion, and play in the way the system is made to flow each time. Concretion and abstraction overlap. Here and there string is flecked with colour (as in 'Potentilla' [2023]), or diagonals are cut away to make big, mute letter-shapes framed by bare wall (see 'Ribcage', for example). Paint runs over its assigned boundaries, or it doesn't. The naming of works adds a further hermeneutic layer, suggesting the colours and movements of island flora and fauna, the ripples of seawater, or memories of pleasure and romance, even a gossamer-thin eroticism—as in 'Wet Friends', 'Visit Me', and 'the Kiss' series, in which wavy, vertical colour boundaries are introduced.

Logan says of painting, "I'm obsessed with the simple transformation of fluid, liquid colour, to solid, that can take place in my hands. It is like magic to me every time."

Dog Rose by Brandon Logan is exhibited at [Ingleby Gallery](#) until 9th March 2024