

**LOUKAS MORLEY**  
**In Pursuit of Beauty – Perfect Imperfections**

22<sup>nd</sup> August – 18<sup>th</sup> October



*“When I think of art I think of beauty. Beauty is the mystery of life. It is not in the eye it is in the mind. In our minds there is awareness of perfection” – Agnes Martin*

*“His practice recognises the value of not knowing where the creative process is leading him” - Bridget Cusack*

Loukas Morley was born in 1973 and lives and works in Cambridge. He has exhibited widely, recently - *What Cannot Be Contained: Contemporary British Painting*, Smiths Row, Bury St Edmunds; *The Fall Of The Rebel Angels - VENEZIA 56*, 56<sup>th</sup> International Biennale, Venice; *Sunday in the Park with Ed*, Display Gallery, London, Espresso Library Café, Cambridge and Churchill College, Cambridge. His work is held in a number of private collections and the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

This exhibition is a survey of work from the past 5 years and focuses on his longstanding interest in the materiality of paint and love of wood and the exploration of the act of creativity.

Morley presents a series of sensual and often romantic encounters with material. Often using found objects, Loukas utilises a wide range of materials in the construction of his work, where wood, resin, paint, paper, cloth and furniture are assembled as individual notes painstakingly built up to create a score that has a calculated precision, disciplined yet playful.

His inspiration is derived from the material itself, he searches for beauty through the arrangements of line, mark and tone that spark a resonance or language that harmonise to form an overall work. His work is the exploration into the poetry of form and material, choreographically noting the art object’s relationship to the exhibition space.

Morley’s sculptures explore materiality. He points to the virtues and qualities of materials that often prescribe their own conclusion. Weight and gravity are important elements in his practice, key components that hinge his practice together. He positions carefully considered assemblages alongside the raw creative moment when art comes into being. There is a refined poetic in his work that has a distinct language of its own, and the consideration of the possibility and restrictions of the unknown.

He is interested in ideas of play and risk –from balancing a metal structure (*That way in Yellow*, 2010, steel and yellow pigment) so ready to topple; positioning a lemon on a plinth, full of art historical reference and meaning (*Still life*, 2015); and a series of used and discarded sanding belts that draws the eye up and across the delicate but loaded surface of powdered metal.

*“Loukas uses reclaimed materials and found objects and frames them so that they become the starting point for something else, or can be looked at as they are now but in a cool, calm setting so that a discarded and squashed shopping basket is made central. Its setting lets us see and recognise it again, and differently...”*

*Loukas rescues materials and shows us what we have let happen to them, and if we see with proper eyes we recognise what they were before, and the recognition causes a deeper feeling to open its eye inside us so that we are more sensible to things and to ourselves. Some call this feeling humanity and others call it God, but whatever we call it we're generally better for having it."*

*Judith Liddell-King*

He is spare and precise in his work, and his paintings are like traces of a performance that took place in his studio. The materiality of paint and its physical relationship with the body, enable him to choreograph compositions that are the tangible placements of his mark making, and with playful spontaneity that capture energetic moments held fast in translucent resin.

There is a tipping point for everything within his work, the turning, locating and movement creates a latent energy – sense of intentionality and disruption –that is an orchestrated vitality. He works in a space of uncertainty, encountering the unknown through the process of making. Morley's work is about the exploration of the creative process of an artist. He studied photography and cinematography at college and the multiple layers found, in particular, in his paintings bear reference to the layering of narratives, colour the compilation and framing. His work on resin allows him to edit, sand back and wipe off, the colour palette on each series of work is similar yet not exactly the same, the palette adapted but attributes the work before and after.

The gloss of the resin is a desirable medium, layered to create depth and distance with the wooden base visible and integral to the composition. These paintings are built up over time through pouring, rubbing, sanding, waiting and watching. To create each work is a physical act of moving, controlled yet spontaneous. They are a contained response, a captured moment of movement and the paint held static. The history of the process of making a painting is laid bare, nothing is hidden, except the perfectly built structure on which the paint sits. The edges are revealed even on the framed works which allow a gap to see the drips.

His artwork is about beauty. He is aware of perfection and within the creative process, his mental and emotional response to the materials go beyond vocalisation. His practice recognises the value of not knowing where the creative process is leading him and enjoys it as a space of possibilities, allowing for more scope of the unexpected, fluid and constantly changing nature. This affect enables him to enter a meditative state exploring the capabilities of materials, their versatility as a medium, the process and act of the making art.

**Text written by Bridget Cusack**