

## 1. Name

Dr Dale Christopher Holmes

### **Title of Project**

The Painting School 1 (New Materialities)

23/09/16 – 30/09/16

Bloc Projects

Eyre Street

Sheffield

## 2. Dates of the project

The project began in early 2014 and is a long term ongoing collaboration with Gary Simmonds (Course Leader for Creative Art Practice at Sheffield Hallam University), are working towards a three year plan for the research. The first public dissemination of the project was a gallery exhibition curated by Simmonds and myself at Bloc Projects between 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2016 and 30<sup>th</sup> September 2016.

## 3. Outline Description

The project began through the recognition of a group of shared interests in painting as research, both as practice and pedagogy. This led to a discussion about the idea that we could build up a research based conversation into painting. It was decided at this point that the process would equally recognise verbal discussion, email correspondence and paintings as part of the conversation.

The gallery, Bloc Projects is a highly respected gallery and project space in the centre of Sheffield with an international reputation. The gallery is one of the major venues for Art Sheffield the triennial of international contemporary art.

The exhibition received £1000.00 of funding from Sheffield Hallam University's Art and Design Research Centre to hire the venue and pay exhibition overheads, publicity and documentation.

The project extends and offers a new methodology for my historical and ongoing research into painting as the triangulation of practice, research and pedagogy. In this sense, it builds on the research I conducted for my PhD as well as the numerous gallery exhibitions I have been involved in since 1999 and lead to the making of a new original exhibition and two new paintings by myself.





Installation shots of the exhibition *The Painting School (New Materialities)*, Bloc Projects, Eyre Street, Sheffield, 23 -30<sup>th</sup> September 2016

#### 4. Research Problem / Question

This research strand is focused on creating a better understanding of the development of painting as material practice, research and pedagogy in the era of accelerated innovation in the related areas of digital technologies and materials science in an effort to move the understanding of painting practice beyond its general characterisation as a practice delimited by and entrenched in medium specificity. The project has a history in my own

research building significantly on the material philosophy I developed through my PhD.

The research has been informed by historical, current and ongoing developments in painting practices and in particular a close reading of Isabelle Graw's recent work into painting as a 'success medium' and its continuing importance in the post medium context of contemporary art found in *Thinking Through Painting: Reflexivity and Agency Beyond the Canvas* (2012) and *Painting Beyond Itself: The Medium in the Post Medium Condition* (2016).

## **5. Research Process / Methods.**

Studio and workshop processes include the making of paintings that are constructed through and develop the range of materials and processes of application, abstraction and image development.

Over the period Gary Simmonds and myself developed a regular visual back and forth conversation centred on pattern, decoration and surface in painting. The conversation included images of works made in both our studio settings, current exhibitions and works by others. This methodology was developed in order that each could respond with a studio output that addressed directly or indirectly the work of each other. We also meet on regular occasions to discuss shared reading in order to develop a functioning language for the research. This process was then opened up to the four artists that were curated into the exhibition – Paul Barlow, Chris Shaw, Lizzie Taylor-Hall and Megan Bonser all of who made responses that were subsequently exhibited in the show.

## **6. Significance.**

A major part of the intention behind this project is the innovation and development of a collaborative methodology for practice led research in the area of studio art practices. Through opening up the methodology being developed through the project as a practical application for making painting, to a wide range of participants it is possible that some influence on creativity is being initiated, this though remains to be seen and will be developed further over the three year research period. The exhibition was very well attended and generated a fruitful and generative conversation from artists, academics from both the University of Huddersfield, Sheffield Hallam University and other gallery visitors.

## **7. Originality and Rigour**

The project is intended to produce evidence for the currency of painting practice in what Graw calls 'the post medium condition' and to reinvigorate the hackneyed view of painting as an individual and commercial process through a reconsideration of painting as a space for research, collaboration as distanced and technologically facilitated. The project contributes new thinking to this debate through its development of the 'painting conversation' methodology and the impact this has upon the practice of painting as a studio based endeavor in contemporary art production.

