

CONNAUGHT BROWN

2 ALBEMARLE STREET, LONDON W1S 4HD

TEL 020-7408 0362, FAX 020-7495 3137

art@connaughtbrown.co.uk www.connaughtbrown.co.uk

Shani Rhys James

Caught in the Mirror

10th September – 2nd October, 2015



Shani Rhys James, *Caught in the Mirror* (2015) oil on gesso on board, 12 1/8 x 12 in, 30.6 x 30.4 cm

Following her highly acclaimed retrospective *Distillation* at the National Library in Wales and *Cassandra's Rant* at Ceredigion Museum, Shani Rhys James MBE (b.1953) returns to London with this exhibition of her most recent work: a selection of powerful still lifes, interiors and portraits. The show will also coincide with an exciting residency for the artist at Columbia University in New York. Long recognised as an eminent Welsh artist, Rhys James' is beginning to assert her position as one of Britain's most important painters on the international stage.

This exhibition shows Rhys James continuing to work with an uncompromising autobiographical approach, whilst addressing universal themes including sexuality, domesticity and identity with her strong feminist voice. The self-portrait is a recurring

motif, explored in the recent BBC documentary on Rhys James' practice *What Do Artists Do All Day* (2014). One of the highlights of this show will be the large canvas *Lilies on red wallpaper*. Set against her characteristic patterned wallpaper, the figure captures Rhys James' belief that in our culture women "become just another decorative interior thing".

Working in new directions, Rhys James has also begun to create increasingly simplified domestic interiors. Like Bacon and Freud, she creates images charged with intense psychological dramas. From leaving Australia with her mother as a small child to her theatrical existence in London, Rhys James distils her strong memories. With an array of props, she also explores the meanings that certain significant objects hold for her. Included in the show will be a number of still lifes in which Rhys James deliberately paints wild, untamed flowers, which contrast with the cultivated bouquets usually associated with the genre.

Shani Rhys James has won many prestigious awards for painting, including the 2003 Jerwood Painting Prize, the Hunting Art Prize in 1993, Gold medal at the 1992 National Eisteddfod, and in 2006 she was awarded an MBE for services to Welsh art. This is the third solo exhibition of her work at Connaught Brown, following on from the *Two Ateliers* in 2009 and *Floribunda* in 2012.

For more information and images please contact Ruth Millington at art@connaughtbrown.co.uk