

Rachel Jones

a shorn root

18 March—28 May 2023
Long Museum, Shanghai, China



Rachel Jones, *a shorn root*, 2022. Oil stick, oil pastel on canvas (unstretched). 185 x 316 cm (72.83 x 124.40 in).
© Rachel Jones. Courtesy Thaddaeus Ropac gallery. Photo: Eva Herzog.

An exhibition of 20 works by British artist Rachel Jones will open at the Long Museum, Shanghai on 18 March 2023. Titled *a shorn root*, this major presentation of paintings on canvas and the artist's signature stickers is Jones's first solo exhibition in China.

Working primarily upon unstretched canvases in her chosen mediums of oil stick and pastel, Jones has gained an international reputation with her striking, kaleidoscopic worlds that juxtapose abstracted motifs, colours and textures in a manner that is, at once, dynamic and confrontational. Presented in numerous solo and group exhibitions in Europe and the USA, Jones's work is also housed in prominent institutional collections, including those of the Long

Museum, Shanghai; Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam; Baltimore Museum of Art, Maryland; Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA), Los Angeles; The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York; and Tate, London.

This new group of paintings, made specifically for the exhibition at the Long Museum, marks a significant development in Jones's ongoing interest in the mouth as a central motif in her work. In these paintings, the focus shifts from the rows of teeth that have previously run across Jones's canvases to the lone structure of a single tooth belonging to her close friend. The isolation of the craggy form emphasises its potential to become a material focus for the artist's investigation into the cultural, historical, bodily and psychological complexities of identity. The mouth

functions as a site of contact between distinct realms – the interior and the exterior, the psychological and the bodily, the figurative and the metaphorical. Activated by the cacophonies of colour laid down beneath, the outlined shape of the tooth is repeated across the paintings as a symbolic shorthand for interior experience, particularly the interiority of Black lived experience, in a mode that is untethered from direct bodily representation.

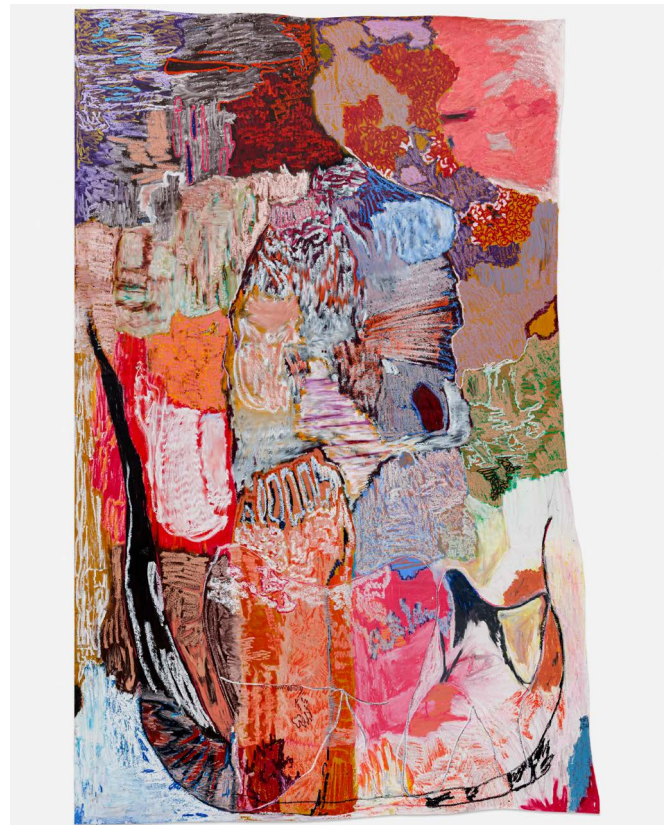


Rachel Jones, *a shorn root*, 2022. Oil stick, oil pastel on canvas (mounted). 26 x 60 cm (10.23 x 23.62 in). © Rachel Jones. Courtesy Thaddaeus Ropac gallery. Photo: Eva Herzog.

Entangled with historical and personal resonances – those of the artist and the viewer – the colours and forms of Jones’s paintings are not didactic in nature, and she instead encourages individuals to bring their own set of experiences and associations to the work. The palettes of the new works oscillate between vibrant corals, reds, blues and purples and muddier hues of green, brown and beige, offset with gestural applications of black oil stick. The colours jolt against each other in the layered landscapes of opaque fields, violent scribbles and looping gestures to trouble the received cultural significance of different hues. Colours are contradictory and their meanings understood as multifaceted and ever-evolving, continuously shifting in the eyes of the creator and beholder alike.

Jones’s desire to prevent her colours, motifs and compositions crystallising into resolved forms begins with the frayed, uneven edges of the unstretched canvases upon which she typically works. Embracing the expansive architecture of the Long Museum galleries, the presentation of the new paintings is conceived as an extension of the contrasts explored in the works themselves. The differing scales and

formats of the canvases are emphasised by the vast volume of the exhibition space. Colossal paintings are presented alongside small-scale works, while the vibrant hues and tactile surfaces of the paintings are accentuated by the soft, grey concrete of the walls behind. Establishing a dynamic to-and-fro as viewers move from painting to painting, the space is transformed into one of conversation, as each individual brings their own perspective into dialogue with the works on show, allowing memories, experiences and feelings to circulate freely, unrestrained from prescriptive narrative readings.



Rachel Jones, *a shorn root*, 2022. Oil stick, oil pastel on canvas (unstretched). 308 x 195 cm (121.26 x 76.77 in). © Rachel Jones. Courtesy Thaddaeus Ropac gallery. Photo: Eva Herzog.

The exhibition is accompanied by a dual language catalogue which will be published during the course of the show.

About the artist



Rachel Jones © Rachel Jones.

Rachel Jones completed her BA Fine Art at Glasgow School of Art in 2013 and an MA Fine Art at the Royal Academy Schools, London in 2019. She was included in *Mixing It Up: Painting Today* at the Hayward Gallery, London (2021), which was followed by a solo exhibition at the Chisenhale Gallery, London (2022). In 2022, her work was exhibited at the Hirshhorn Museum, Washington, D.C., and Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art, Arizona, among other institutional group exhibitions. She was an artist in residence at The Chinati Foundation, Marfa, Texas in 2019 and the Masterworks Museum of Bermuda Art in 2016.