

FEATURES

Dragomir Misina is a painter whose exuberant, vibrant swirls of pigment, looping thin lines and hastily scribbled text proclaim an artist for whom improvisation is a way of life. As a child, growing up in Croatia, he was always making things: toys, basketball hoops, tricycles out of scrap metal, getting help from older friends with welding equipment. Given his passion for manipulating materials it is perhaps surprising that he has ended up painting rather than making sculpture. However his work has a strong sense of structure and his working method, layering, building up and breaking down surfaces and texture are akin to sculptural processes despite their application on a two-dimensional surface.

Arriving in the UK in 1989 he initially studied photography but his yearning for a more physical and immediate approach to expressing his ideas moved him towards painting. His work is abstract though based on the visual. Things seen in his day-to-day life, signs, objects, popular culture but also fairy stories and children's books like *Alice in Wonderland*. He will take a visual idea, an element of a story and use this as a starting point for one of his large paintings. However once the repetitive processes of applying paint, allowing it to dry, sanding and contemplating it, have begun, the narrative of the painting becomes self-referential, responding to the marks, materials, colours and the element of chance associated with the process of deliberate destruction.

Dragomir's working method and his materials: acrylic, coloured pencil, graphite, permanent markers, are closely aligned to the subject of his paintings. When working on ideas of decay he built elements of decay into the work in progress. In his *Alice in Wonderland* series it was the colours suggested by the actual story, which he built up into the finished composition. In his *Fairy Tales* series, loosely based on stories like *Rapunzel* and *The Princess and the Pea*, he sets the memory of the time in which the tales were written within the context of the present, using marks and colours suggested by the narrative. In other paintings and more specifically where there is a lot of drawing he records the passage of time in lines and marks, and this recording of the passage of time becomes a crucial element of how the work develops.



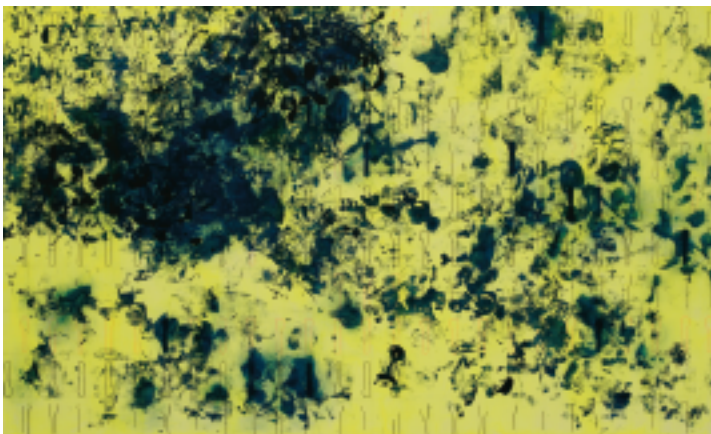
DRAGOMIR MISINA

Dragomir's influences are eclectic, Turner, Jackson Pollock, Rothko, Cy Twombly, Anselm Keifer etc. and understandable, given his expressionist tendencies and the freedom with which he applies paint. His admiration for Julie Mehretu is perhaps less immediately obvious until he explains, that he is, "interested in the relationship between gestural painting and drawing in Mehretu's work". It was this marriage of painting and drawing in Misina's painting, *Dust to Dust 3*, which led to it being awarded the Evolver Feature prize at the Royal West of England Academy Autumn Exhibition in 2013. Based on his researches into Dead Star phenomena and visually referencing images of the universe, its size, 200 cm wide by 120 cm high fulfilled his aim of "immersing and

engaging the viewer". Its web of fine interlocking lines replicate the passage of time through the repeated building up and subsequent destruction of layers during the process of making. It is the combining of vibrantly coloured gestural marks with a geometric framework which makes Misina's work arresting. The wildness in the handling of materials and subject matter is deceptive and far from indicating a lack of control is in fact carefully considered and orchestrated and further balanced by the restraint of an occasional hard edged line.

Fiona Robinson

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'WHO IS ALICE? 3' (Acrylic and permanent marker on canvas, 200 x 120 cm (2014))



'WHO IS ALICE? 2' (Acrylic on canvas, 200 x 120 cm) 2014

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