

PASSAGES OF TRANSFORMATION

NICK MALONE

Bermondsey Project Space

25 to 29 October 2022

EXHIBITION ESSAY

'Paradox reconciles all contradictions'

- Patrick Leigh Fermor: *A Time of Gifts*



In a time of uncertainty and change Nick Malone's work straddles a doorway looking both inside and out – an interior of lingering memories, ghosts and indecipherable sensations interrupted by perceptual interventions from the 'real' world.

Malone is finding a solution without compromising either. From the inner world suddenly a horse's head or a dragonfly leap out, (often literally), from a series of forms and marks which are more personal and difficult to assess. How we interpret these images is very often open to ambiguous alternatives, as in Stevie Smith's poem *Not Waving but Drowning*. Which meaning do we see? It is this tension which energises his work and creates a sense of mystery which keeps growing the longer you look. As Gregor Samsa asks in Kafka's *Metamorphosis* 'Birth appearance from where? And death to where?'

The formal qualities of these images often break free from the flat surface of the canvas and interrupt literal space, creating a parallel dialogue between inside and out. Looking at Nick Malone's notebooks gives us insight into the range of experiences these works take their meaning from – obviously personal, but also from literature, ecology, human behaviour, and from explorers and adventurers of all kinds. How he weaves the multiple ideas together is evident in the success and progress of these images. His process is best summarised in a quote from his book *Jason Smith's Nocturnal Opera*:

"Ice to leaves. The owls are rain. The cave streams rise. The snow cap dreams.

All things metamorphosise. All spins as one in the dance of change."

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