

Press Release

"The reality of human interaction that occurs at a level below language. I'm interested in the way people relate, penetrate and transform each other's consciousness and I'm trying to show the figure as part of a total matrix of other figures." - Dan Coombs

Aleph Contemporary is pleased to present UNFOLDING MAN, a virtual solo exhibition of paintings by **Dan Coombs**.

1st April - 15th April 2020

Having moved between figuration and abstraction, painting and assemblage, Coombs began painting from collage studies in 2003. Working from collage allows him to be both gestural and painterly and at the same time classically ordered in his compositions.



DAN COOMBS, 'UNFOLDING MAN' 2019, 150 X 200 CM

Collage enables me to hold the form of each figure, yet to move them in relation to each other within a field space. It also brings in an element that exists outside of myself, that is found rather than invented. Though I invent environments and relationships around the figures, and the paintings intentionally blur the relation of the real and the imaginary, there has to be a tension.

The figures are painted from photographs distorted by vibrating and shaking the image of the nude on a photocopier. I have to make hundreds, and from those choose ones to paint from. This random process generates figures that are both grotesque and beautiful, alien and familiar - Dan Coombs

Coombs notes particular admiration for German Expressionism, with its the tendency to fuse figuration and abstraction. He is fascinated by how we are interconnected. As with abstract expressionism, the compositions are formed entirely intuitively, and the relations of figures to each other and to the intervals between them become for him a kind of visual music. Each painting seems to echo his internal state of mind.

At the moment I'm more interested in a relationship to music than to narrative. Musical structure is created through colour, interval and radiance. The archetype is Matisse's painting "Music " (1910), where the figures are composed like a chord. Matisse was thinking about Stravinsky, whereas I'm thinking about Aphex Twin. Dan Coombs

Coombs describes Unfolding Man as shedding layers of the self, a bit like a new creature emerging from a chrysalis. He quotes the haiku poem by Matsuo Basho:

*A cicada shell
It sang itself
Utterly away*

Coombs's most recent paintings in black and white are part of an on-going series, the simplified colour stripping the compositions back to an essence from the unconscious. Some of these paintings seem to be dividing, like the fragmented parts of the psyche.



DAN COOMBS, CASSIOPEIA 2020, 90 X 120 CM

Born in 1971, Coombs holds his MA Painting, Royal College of Art, and BA, Ruskin School, Oxford University. He is the recipient of various awards and honours including the Mark Rothko Foundation Travel Award, 2004, and the Rome Scholar in Painting Award, British School in Rome 1994-1995, and the St. Peter's Church Commission, Brighton, 2000. He has held solo exhibitions in the UK and collections include Saatchi Collection, Arts Council, V22, and many private collections in UK, Europe and USA.

www.alephcontemporary.com

