



Thackeray Gallery is home to some of Britain's most colourful and vibrant artists



BEST OF BRITISH

Sarah Macdonald-Brown, Owner and Director of Thackeray Gallery, on offering a platform for artists

Why does the gallery work exclusively with living British artists? Since the gallery was founded in 1968, we have always specialised in this field mainly because, in the 1970s, the world was a smaller place, and businesses operated much more locally than. It was further driven by the extraordinary talent and excellent quality that was coming out of the UK art schools, in particular in Scotland. They were in a different league from most other art schools in the 1970s, and today still continue to break new ground, whilst retaining the importance of Drawing and Fine Art. We have never seen any reason to dilute our niche as there is such a pool of talent and excitement out there within our field that we have so much to choose from. We also believe passionately in being 'specialists', never more so than now. With the rise of the internet, and the world being so much more accessible, the idea of specialising in something 'local' feels important.

How would you say British art has evolved over time? We have witnessed, in the last ten years alone, the most enormous growth of modern art (quality debatable), of the accessibility of art (which is an important thing) and the rise of the galleries from the 1960s to now is incredible. When Thackeray Gallery opened in 1968 there were about 70 galleries in the UK – now

there are more like 700. However, this may have dropped off in the last five years, as the 'online' platform grows and more galleries,

particularly in London, are not renewing leases and selling online only, a big worry for the future of the art world when it comes to supporting and building up young artists throughout their careers. Galleries need to exist as a neutral space that people can visit with exhibitions to promote the next generation.

Today, what do you look for in an artist? We look for something original, something that makes us look twice. The acid test is whether we can imagine living with that painting, that sculpture, that drawing, every day – if yes, then we start to feel that excitement of a new artist becoming part of our fold.

Is your Summer Show a real highlight on the artistic calendar? We have hosted our Summer Show every year for the last five years, and it has come to represent a diverse and interesting selection of new and unseen work by at least 50% of our artists. It is an important show for clients, to get a good idea of who we look after, and an opportunity to be introduced to artists they may not have noticed before.

Is Kensington the ideal place for you to be based – and if so, why? It is difficult to answer this question as we have always been here, so it is what we know. We like the fact that we have always been in the same space, that we have created our own 'thing'. The locals are amazing and Thackeray Street is the unsung hero of Kensington as a producer and supporter of the independently owner managed business here. We love it here, and are delighted to say we have signed a new ten year lease to continue to represent some of the best of contemporary living British Artists – a rare thing in the art world today!

The Summer Show runs from 5-22 July. 18 Thackeray Street W8 5ET; 020 7937 5883; thackeraygallery.com

