

Cranford Collection is the result of ten years of engagement by Muriel and Freddy Salem together with Andrew Renton. To work with it and from it is to encounter ten years of debate and discoveries, knowledge and intuition, an intense commitment to art in its most contemporary form. I could not tiptoe. Among the most recent acquisitions were fantastic works by Sigmar Polke and Christopher Wool, which came to reinforce Cranford's history with painting and with a generation of artists who, from the early 80s, worked at finding new space to expand from a Modern project that they were also dismantling. I am thinking of Franz West, Rosemarie Trockel, Martin Kippenberger, Albert Oehlen, Christopher Wool, Raymond Pettibon, Cindy Sherman and Richard Prince, around whose works I have organized this year's hang. And as I see it, Rachel Harrison, Michael Krebber, Gedi Sibony, Jim Drain, Sophie von Hellermann, Karen Kilimnik, Josh Smith, Kelley Walker, and Guyton/Walker are direct heirs to that groundbreaking generation, pushing further the emancipation initiated by the latest.

Cranford is a multi-layered collection, and I used photography to introduce figuration in a hang dominated by abstraction. The works of Esko Männikkö, Gabriel Orozco, Rineke Dijkstra and Wolfgang Tillmans carry the frailty, diversity and preciousness of the everyday. Modest in both format and subject matter, they open the house towards the outside world.

And I could not have disregarded the strong commitment to a British reality that the Collection has always acknowledged and supported. Magnificent works by Rebecca Warren, Damien Hirst, Bridget Riley, Fiona Banner and Phil Collins are witness to that ongoing history.

The main question was to create enough dialogue and tension to inhabit a private space with respect both for the people who inhabit it and for the artworks that will share their life. No conceptual idea could achieve that, and in the end, colours, shapes, mediums and formats were determinant in creating a context for life and for art. Michael Krebber's acid green came alive when paired with Franz West's yellow mask, Gedi Sibony's intended muteness made sense close to Christopher Wool's controlled expression, Bridget Riley's poetic geometry was best answered by Kippenberger's humour and Sophie von Hellermann's loose landscape. It is those moments of happy coincidences that I tried, with much assistance from Muriel Salem and Bethany Childs, to create from room to room - hoping to keep the art alive, and the lives enriched.

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