

**Penny Davenport**  
**Galaxy Paintings**

20 September – 19 October 2024

OTP Copenhagen is proud to present *Galaxy Paintings* a solo exhibition by the British artist Penny Davenport. Featuring a series of new watercolour and acrylic paintings on velvet, the exhibition explores the relationship between consciousness and the cosmos and is the first to be held in the gallery's new location at Vester Farimagsgade 6.

*All our science, measured against reality, is primitive and childlike - and yet it is the most precious thing we have.* – Albert Einstein

Art and science have little in common but both begin with observation. This exhibition begins with the suggestion that there is a connection between the human mind and the universe at large. Physically linked via the eyes and the nerve endings which allow us to see the sky at night, the world beyond our Earth and the world inside other peoples' heads share a sense of inaccessible mystery – however close we get, we still stand at an incredible distance.

To understand something is to be able to predict it accurately. Human behaviour, or at least the impulse that guides it, is often chaotic. Whether they involve subconscious urges and rational decisions, genetic predisposition, or the alignment of planets at the time of our birth, explanations towards what guides our actions and destinies are always partial. The surprising fact of our existence is wrapped up in a complex arrangement of circumstances. With an air of knowing, these paintings seem to hint at the infinite number of different paths our lives could have taken.

For the artist, certainty can be crushing. These paintings are deliberately non-specific, like a Hubble telescope turned inwards and twisted out of focus. The small format of these works locates them in the realm of the intimate and the psychological, whilst their subject matter points towards the infinite and the overwhelmingly expansive. Clusters of colourful dots suggest a web of neural connections under a microscope, as well as the familiar pattern of a constellation, seen from a million miles away. Repetitive mark-making can be therapeutic or maddening, just as the recognition of our place in the universe can be energising or depressive.

Davenport's human-animal figures appear amongst these abstract star scapes as spectators, and help to make the unfamiliar world beyond ourselves seem more approachable. Their emotive expressions create the atmosphere of longing or contemplation that many of these paintings share. Faces reach out to or merge with one another in a way that highlights our yearning to find mutual connection, as well as the similarities between social attraction and gravitational pull.

When seen together, these paintings appear like a collection of worlds calling out to one another. To look at them feels both transportive and meditative as their bright vibrating compositions disperse our attention, drawing it inwards and directing it out of our bodies – beyond our physical reality to the furthest vantage point imaginable.

**Penny Davenport** (b. 1978, Inverness; UK) lives and works in Liverpool, United Kingdom. The artist holds a BFA from John Moores University (Liverpool; UK).

Recent exhibitions include: *The Passing of Time* at Nidi Gallery (Tokyo; JP); *The Look of a Look That's Looking* at Harkawik Gallery (New York City, NY; US); *Andante Remix* at Linseed Projects (Shanghai; CN); *Postcards* at Galleri Magnus Karlsson (Stockholm; SE).