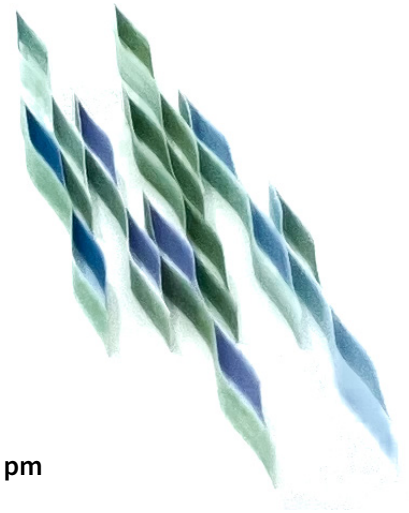


IONE & MANN

AMELIA BOWLES

Wayfinding



PRESS RELEASE

Exhibition Dates: 22 March – 18 April | PRIVATE VIEW: Thursday 21 March 6-8 pm

IONE & MANN is proud to present **Wayfinding**, the debut solo exhibition by British artist **Amelia Bowles** (b. 1993).

Amelia's work sits between sculpture, painting and architecture; making use of the activity of light, colour and form, she claims the void and what is immaterial to facilitate the conditions for a series of physiological, cognitive and perceptual encounters.

Wayfinding, a word that relates to both ancient navigation practices as well as urban signage, hints at an attempt to navigate these encounters, both for the viewer and the artist herself.

The pathways that emerge can be seen as meticulously precise borrowing from the language of diagrams, architecture and engineering. But within her approach also lies a softness, an intuitive curiosity which makes the resulting experience feel contemplative and transportative rather than simply directional.

Amelia's Wayfinding relishes the journey and the infinite perceptual possibilities of a world that is simultaneously vast and intimate, a world with no end points.



Amelia Bowles gives us beautiful and original abstract forms with an air of easeful spontaneity, and we can enjoy them in just those terms. But she cites an unusual inspiration: hearing Billy Cobham playing a drum solo at Ronnie Scott's in 2016. He started full-on with loud and chaotic rhythms, then brought it down more and more. Eventually, he arrived at the softest of taps – but you could still sense the tension and energy that lay behind them. In a comparable way, Bowles' forms are simple, but they retain reminders of the complex world from which they have emerged. With that in mind, we can consider how form, scale, orientation and colour relate. We can look at the relative importance of positive and negative shapes – to which Bowles pays equal attention: what is primary, the void or the substance? We can look at the effects of light and shadow, and what they do to colour. We can ponder the inconstancy of our perceptions – the colours will change with the light as the day passes; the shapes will change continually as the viewer moves around, activating the work. We may wonder whether we are looking at paintings, sculpture, or architectural proposals, and what has been drawn from those traditions. And we can seek vestiges of representation.

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So, from what is Bowles abstracting? Where did her own diminuendo begin? In large part, from the heavens above and the waters below. The heavens, specifically the sun, inform *Murmurs (composition I)*, 2024. The shapes might be traced to its pulsing and rays, and Bowles enjoys the ambiguity of yellow. Its associations with happiness and positivity are balanced by the theory that too much time with yellow can cause agitation, and excessive exposure to the sun is harmful. Our nearest star is also present in *Yet To Be Woken*, 2024; that coral-orange, says Bowles, is from her observation of the hot sun that first emerges from dusty light early in the morning. The blues and greens of *Venetian Waters*, 2023 are more aqueous, and the shapes may read as wave patterns. It makes sense that this was inspired by Venice, which Bowles loves for its history and phenomenology: how the different architectures reveal the trading city coming together through a multiplicity of perspectives, how the lapping and reflections keep altering what we see. Those works, then, show Bowles abstracting from the fundamentals of our world. Yet she can also do quotidian: she loves vents and pylons and engineering diagrams, and we might detect that, too.

Consistent with the process of 'abstracting from', several steps lie behind the large works, and Bowles displays some of these stages, illustrating her thinking. She starts with drawings. They lead her to play with cut-out paper shapes. She develops those into maps, annotated with measurements, exploring how the forms she has identified might be realised sculpturally. Then come three dimensional collages, attractive in themselves while acting as maquettes for the large-scale pieces. Only then does she decide on the most suitable material, and move to the sculptural form and her painting of it – Bowles trained as a painter, as remains evident in her relish for mixing colours. That final stage, she says, is far from mechanical: matters change throughout, and she likes how the details reveal that they are handmade. There's a sensitivity to the geometry, and the colours don't conform to rules, as you might expect – look carefully at what is green and what blue in *Venetian Waters*. Spontaneity and intuition remain, even if they are part of a plan.

What connects the works in the show? They enact inter-connection itself. Internally, that's in how their multiple separate forms relate to and play off each other. Bowles might, as in *Murmurs (composition II)*, 2024, emphasise that by combining forms made from a shape cut out of paper and the remaining offcut, so generating internal echoes. The suggestions of wave patterns do something similar. A more outward-facing enactment of wave connection comes from water, critical to all life and linking the earth's terrains; and from Bowles' emphasis on conditions of light. That speaks to us as heliocentric creatures, to our circadian rhythms: our perceptions of the world, our bodily functions, our relations with others are all grounded in our relationship to light and the cycles of sunlight – and we're connected to plant and animal life on earth by shared heliotropism. Or, at least, we should be: you can argue that city life disconnects us from those circadian rhythms, and that filters down to anthropocentric attitudes towards the natural world as well as our consumerist and acquisitive lifestyle choices. Bowles may be pointing to how we should be, rather than to how we necessarily are. We're at quite a remove from the titular wayfinding, in its ancient usage as the method of navigating using the stars. Either way, though, Bowles' work takes something from how we perceive the world, and how we are in it. Complex considerations feed into her simple forms. You might call her a 'metaphysical minimalist'.

Text by Paul Carey-Kent

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ABOUT:

Amelia Bowles (b. 1993, London) is an artist living and working between London and Paris.

She is a graduate of Bath Spa School of Art and Design (BA (Hons) in Fine Art Painting, 2016) and City and Guilds of London Art School (MA Fine Art, 2023). Recent exhibitions include: The Ashburner Sculpture Award in Dartmoor National Park (2023); A Slash of Blue at Gerald Moore Gallery, London (2023); Expanded Impermanence with Saturation Point, London (2022); Chance and Choice Brussels (2021); The London Group Open at The Cello Factory London (2019); Notes on Painting II at The Koppel Project, London (2019); The Big Circle Project: Immediate Effect at M17 Art Center, Kiev, Ukraine (2019). Artist residencies and awards include The Royal Drawing School at Dumfries House (now part of the King's Foundation) and the Leverhulme Scholarship for City and Guilds of London Art School (2022-2023) where she also received a Prize for Outstanding Critical Engagement.

Wayfinding is Amelia's first exhibition with the gallery and her first solo exhibition.

IONE & MANN is a London-based contemporary art gallery established in 2015.

Independent and female-owned, artist-focused and not driven by trends, the gallery is dedicated to thoughtfully curated exhibitions and championing early to mid-career artists.

IONE & MANN favours a personal, more considered approach to presenting, experiencing and engaging with art and artists, one that allows for long term relationships and ongoing dialogues between gallery, collectors, artists and the community.

Founding Director: Alkistis Koukouliou [alkistis@ioneandmann.com]

IONE & MANN

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Opening Hours: Tuesday - Friday 11 am - 6 pm, Saturday 12-4 pm and by appointment.

For additional information, images, or interview access to the artist please contact us at: info@ioneandmann.com

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