

Educator Notes

Mary Ramsden: (In / It)

November 4, 2016–February 19, 2017



Mary Ramsden, *Wine dark sea and Violet sheep parts 2 and 4*, 2016. Left: Oil paint on dibond composite panel, 8 x 6 in (20.4 x 15.2 cm); Right: Paint on wood panel, 24 x 30 in (60.9 x 76.2 cm). Courtesy the artist and Pilar Corrias Gallery, London. Photo: Damian Griffiths

About the artist

Mary Ramsden was born in 1984, in Yorkshire, UK, and currently lives and works in London. She has studied at the Royal Academy in London, and the Edinburgh College of Art and Leith School of Art in Edinburgh. Her paintings explore abstraction, gestural marks, language, and scale.

About the exhibition

For her first solo museum exhibition, Mary Ramsden presents a new series of paintings arranged in groupings that investigate associations between scale, imagery, and space. Expanding on her interest in language, social media, and our daily interface with technology, Ramsden's gestural marks echo the physical residue left when swiping the touch screen of a tablet or smart phone. The traces of these urgent movements are found amongst fixed geometric planes of various soft and bright colors. Ramsden's work points to the experiences and effects of the screen in daily life.

(In / It), the title of the exhibition, originates from the space between two words in a poem by Marianne Moore:

I, too, dislike it.

Reading it, however, with a perfect contempt for it, one discovers in it, after all, a place for the genuine.
—Marianne Moore, *Poetry*, 1967

The line break in this poem reinforces Moore's spare, precise language while also creating movement and curiosity. Similarly, the energy of the curving lines of Ramsden's paintings is punctuated by wide spaces of singular colors that provide spaces for contemplation.

Questions for discussion

- I How do the shapes and colors in these paintings make you feel?
- I The artist is inspired by finger marks and smudges that people leave on their computer screens, tablets, and smartphones. What are different actions or movements that your fingers make when interacting with these devices?
- I Imagine each of these paintings is a chapter in a storybook. What kind of story do you think the artist is telling?

Suggested activities

(Imagine / It!)

Gather pencils, various acrylic paints, blue painter's tape, paintbrushes, and canvas boards.

Pass out one canvas board and a pencil to each student. Invite them to close their eyes and imagine the movements they make while using a touch-screen device. Ask them to use the pencil to translate these motions into lines on the canvas board. Prompts that can help students to create lines include: "What kind of motions do your hands make when playing your favorite video game?" or "How do you move your fingers when trying to zoom in?"

Distribute brushes and various acrylic paints. Ask students to paint over their pencil marks with paint. As the paint is drying, invite students to imagine what would happen if they turned on their "screen"—what color window would pop up? How does this change their experience?

Using blue painter's tape, have students mark up their "windows" over the painted finger smudges. Allow students to paint up to three separate layers of "windows" on their canvas board, giving time to dry in between.

Encourage students to consider the effect technology has on their day-to-day lives, and reflect on their artistic choices with classmates, family, and friends.

For more information, please contact the Education Department at 970.925.8050 ext. 133 or email education@aspenartmuseum.org

Following page: Mary Ramsden, *Big Main Room Bang. Chapter 8*, 2016. Oil on wood panel, 24 x 30 in (60.9 x 76.2 cm). Courtesy the artist and Pilar Corrias Gallery, London

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