

# HANNAH PAYNE ART

**SAATCHI  
GALLERY**

Anna Liber Lewis | Spectral Interference  
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Text by Christine Murray, editor, writer, critic.

A floral hemorrhage, wingbeat cloudlight, mycelium dreamscapes. In Spectral Interference, Anna Liber Lewis invites you to explore paintings that pulse and shimmer with colour, where a secret second painting is hidden beneath the surface, and nothing is quite as it seems.

For this show, the artist has painted over her own artworks – those destroyed include several paintings exhibited in Muscle Memory (Elephant West, 2019) and other recent works, some created for this exhibition and then ritually overpainted. Through the act of destruction, Liber Lewis subverts her own artwork and breaks fresh ground for the London artist.

In these works, Liber Lewis employs techniques that are unpredictable and full of risk: Paint is dropped, crushed into the surface, scraped and scratched. These physical acts charge the paintings with psychological energy and capture an act of emotional transference. Liber Lewis uses these processes to redirect unconscious feelings – fears, joys and desires – onto the canvas as she experiments with painting and movement as a way to regulate her autonomic nervous system. When we look at these works, we become part of this chain of transference – like a stone tape, the intense emotions are imprinted and transmitted from artist to canvas to viewer.

These otherworldly paintings are haunted by the original artworks. The destroyed paintings often featured flat colour, lines, grids or frames – these containers are broken open or part submerged. In “She who does not speak”, an abstraction of the artist’s name “Anna” is obliterated; in “Death or Whatever”, the letters in the word ‘death’ are buried. In the aftermath, we can only imagine the word “death” or “Anna” that came before. But the overworking of the canvas is a clue. It feels as though the work is still in flux, caught in the act – what is the artist trying to hide?

The final works resist definition. Some are reminiscent of nature, but slippery to interpret: Fractal firelight, forest claw marks. Are these impressions of the inner landscapes of “Anna” – the artist’s pseudo-identity? We are in uncertain territory, dreaming or travelling through deep space, trapped between two paintings or witnessing the cosmos, a realm of ghosts and visions.

Dance is an important influence for Liber Lewis, who has described painting as a full-body experience. She is interested in how emotions can be channeled or danced onto the canvas. But in the stillness of the gallery, it is not “Anna”, but the viewer’s eye that is made to dance – over the surface of the work, its textures, shapes and unexpected depths – the painting you see and the lost work, and the spectres that haunt the space between.