



The Pump House
Battersea Park, London SW11 4NJ
30 January - 6 February 2022, 11 AM - 7 PM



Berntson Bhattacharjee is proud to present 'The Pump House' this January. The exhibition takes place in the heart of Battersea Park at the Pump House, a Victorian building with a rich history. Three emerging artists, all of whom have recently been schooled in London will be exhibited; Rafaela de Ascanio, Kalman Pool and Jessie Stevenson. The artists will each take over a floor of the gallery, giving them the necessary space to present a full new body of work.

The exhibition begins outside, with immersive, unconventional pieces. Large inflatable sculptures, creatures from **Kalman Pool's (b. 1996)** imagination, greet the viewer upon arrival. Brought to existence by air, these sculptures are installed outside for the first time, and are forced to coexist with nature. Their lives begin in virtual reality, where Kalman creates the virtual beings before they are translated into physical entities. Projected onto the walls of the Pump House is a light installation by **Jessie Stevenson (b.1993)**. This ambitious project brings her sketchbook to life, giving a rare insight into

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www.bbgallery.art
info@bbgallery.art
[@berntsonbhattacharjee](https://www.instagram.com/berntsonbhattacharjee)

her process. The moving image is an exciting step for Jessie demonstrating her practice beyond the traditional canvas.

Through large glass doors the gallery opens onto the ground floor, which will be home to **Rafaela de Ascanio (b. 1986)**. A cocooning, enveloping space filled with texture and organic materials creates an otherworldly experience, with ceramic sculptures and paintings joining forces to create a narrative. An integral part of Rafaela's practice stems from history and research into imagery from ancient cultures, particularly how certain themes evolve over time and are reincorporated in new forms. With this body of work, Rafaela explores representations of Norse goddesses and pagan rituals being encoded within Renaissance masterpieces and religious iconography. While the artworks speak of an intangible female energy, they are also physically and spiritually grounded to the earth they stand on, through the medium of clay.

One floor up is where you will find a continuation of Kalman's practice. Fantastical, colourful paintings with hints of living beings camouflaged within adorn the walls of this floor. Taking inspiration from nocturnal creatures, elements of these works are shaped with UV paint, awakening them in the dark.

Jessie brings her wild, natural landscapes inside to the top two floors of the Pump House. Nestled amongst the treetops, views of the lake from the gallery complement the highly poetic and philosophical gestures of Jessie's Norfolk. This series of paintings mark a departure in her practice; she is moving towards a bold expression embodying the sensory experience of nature with more daring mark making and uninhibited movement. She cleverly juxtaposes her inspiration from the Romantic artists J.M.W. Turner and Eugène Delacroix as well as the poetry of William Wordsworth with the contemporary abstract strokes and drippings by Cy Twombly. These are combined with incorporated colourways from pop culture, such as fashion, advertising and television.

Built in 1861 to house a coal-fired steam engine and pump to circulate water in the park lake, by the 50s the The Pump House had fallen into abandonment and became known as 'the Haunted House'. Now returned to its former glory, the Pump House is an important space for the arts, and exists in harmony with the nature surrounding it. Innovation being at the heart of the Pump House's history, this is carried through to the exhibition, with each artist challenging themselves and their practice to create bold works using a combination of contemporary media.