



Rachel Clarke, *Untitled*, 1999.

Rachel Clarke was the recipient of the UCC Purchase Prize, 1999. The painting depicts an instantly familiar farmyard setting. The scene is dominated by a row of abstracted farm buildings and outhouses which seem to melt into each other creating a fluid visual journey across the picture plane. This row of farm buildings fractures the picture plane on a gently inclining diagonal that brings a sense of spatial progression to the composition, guiding the viewer's eye across a busy surface of broken colours and forms. Some of Clarke's farm buildings are simply hinted at through the strategic brushstrokes and the application of paint. More precise details are suggested or revealed through brief snatches of structure - open doorways, a chimney pot or window frames. These glimpses catch the viewer's eye, drawing them in, allowing them to wonder what lies within these buildings, guessing at their continued use today. Clarke's application of the paint in blocks of colour, roughly applied dripping washes, and in its varying thickness, seems to hint at the disuse and decay of the buildings and possibly of the farm itself. This notion of disuse is intensified by patches of colour that appear to have been rubbed away or removed.

By contrast, Clarke has depicted a small group of buildings that are clearly defined, lightly and delicately drawn. However, these are skeletal structures which ultimately appear to be left unfinished or

are perhaps even imagined - again evoking the notion that this is no longer a working farm and it is the farm's past that is of significance to the artist.

Intricately and delicately painted on the surface are small sepia-toned details depicting portraits, farming life and domestic scenes, which are reminiscent of staged Victorian photographs or family snapshots. These emerge from the surface, appearing almost like ghosts - again suggesting the farm's use or significance for the artist lies in the past rather than the present. These details perhaps recall previous generations and the history of family imbued within this setting; the farm as a former site of family activity, industry and productivity. The inclusion of these offers a sense of time and place as well as function, and suggests familial ties, personal heritage and memory.

Text written by Ruth Osborne, Glucksman Fellow in Curatorial Practice. The Glucksman's Fellowship in Curatorial Practice provides curators at the beginning of their career with the opportunity to gain professional experience in an internationally significant gallery, through a year-long arc of project administration and exhibition management. The Fellow works as an integral part of the Glucksman team on the research and realisation of the Glucksman's artistic programme.