

Brian Dawn Chalkley

## The Untold Depth of Savagery

04/12/2020 - 06/02/2021



**Figure in pink 2020**  
Pencil, felt tip and thread on cotton pillow case  
75 x 45 cm (approx)

For their second solo show with Lungley Gallery, *The Untold Depth of Savagery*, Dawn Chalkley creates visceral landscapes investigating a variety of concerns including gender, sexual identity, cultural history and memory, drawing us in with wit, as well as at times, fear and anger.

The latest works are as bewitching as ever. Pillowcases embellished with drawings, handwritten texts and embroidery, are deeply alluring. Recurring motifs remain the same – androgynous figures, guns, frocks against vivid landscapes but now their significance has deepened with time, like recurring characters in a long sequence of novels.

Brian Dawn's unwavering ability to twist conventional assignments and signifiers of masculine and feminine are bewitching. Autobiographical references to the artist's childhood holidays, the people she encounters and *Dawn* (her trans alter ego) can be read in tandem with

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questions about décor and decorum, class and taste, and the status of the artist versus that of the amateur artisan.

Each work invites you to solve its pictorial mystery, which sometimes seems nearly possible. Only when we are up close do we start to absorb narratives that allude to the stuff of nightmares.

***Obsession, repression, sexual fantasy, secrets, solitude and a very bleak kind of humour are among the artist's subjects. The work is full of character, and the character is the artist's best invention.***

*Adrian Searle, Guardian critic.*

Peeling back at these imagined scenarios the viewer becomes a participant unravelling and constructing the clues of these unexplained moments, narratives and motifs caught in action with no resolve. The pictures are laden with clues but interpretation is slippery and as elusive as the moment between waking and sleeping. While they hint at potential happenings these new pictures reveal no certainty of anything at all.

The image lies somewhere between memory, dream and hypnotic trance. It feels as if the scene were already in Dawn Chalkley's head, somehow and had no choice but to free it.

**Brian Dawn Chalkley** (b. 1948, lives and works in London) recent exhibitions include ***Tales from the Colony Rooms: Art and Bohemia***, Dellasposa, London (2020); '***Unsheltered as it is***, D-Contemporary, London (2020). ***Missing***, Lungley gallery, London (2017).

Brian Dawn was invited to do a residency at Taipei University which concluded in a solo exhibition at the University (2016). Works have been acquired by the Arts Council England and private collections worldwide.

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With very special thanks to David Hoyland and the team at Seventeen for hosting us.

For further information please contact the gallery at [mark@lungleygallery.com](mailto:mark@lungleygallery.com)