

# DIFFRACTION

## FLORENCE BLANCHARD

05.11.20 - 11.11.20

Painter, muralist, print maker and PhD, there are a number of very impressive feathers in Sheffield-based artist Florence Blanchard's cap. Hailing from Montpellier in Southern France, Blanchard began her artistic career as a graffiti writer in the 90s, adopting the tag EMA (a reference to the late Diana Rigg's character in the 1960s TV series 'The Avengers' and what Blanchard still uses as her signature today) She then moved to the US to attend New York University where she completed her PhD in molecular biology, where her passion for methodical detail and an almost analytic approach to colour flourished. Upon graduating in 2008 in the midst of the financial crash, Blanchard focused her full attention on becoming a full time artist and learnt to make prints, now an essential part of her practice over ten years later. Inspired by her scientific training, a focus on microscopy has led Blanchard to see the world in a different way, where kaleidoscopic shapes and colours fluidly interact and almost hum with energy. Now based in Sheffield for the last nine years, Blanchard regularly exhibits internationally, and most recently collaborated with ITV to create a full scale illusion sculpture.

'Diffraction' provides a welcome tonic from the seemingly never-ending greyness of 2020. A collection of brand new original works, Blanchard's vibrant and unique style of painting allows us to do exactly that, diffract. Meaning to bend around an obstacle, 'Diffraction' encapsulates exactly how uplifting and inspiring artwork can be during a testing time, and how Blanchard's daring combination of colour and form delivers a (welcome) almost sugar-high like boost to the brain. Blanchard's focus on breaking the traditional rules of colour theory leads the eye to dance excitedly around each work, raking over unconventional focal points and absorbing each painting's atypical harmony. 'Diffraction' is a rejection of the norm, a refusal to admit defeat in the face of a bleak horizon and a celebration of the joy colour and shape can bring us.

*Nelly Duff*