

# palmer gallery

Exhibition 10  
SOFT LANDING

11.07.25 - 09.08.25

Private View:  
Thursday 10th July, 6-9pm

Hannah Perry  
Levi de Jong  
Madeleine Ruggi  
Tom Bull

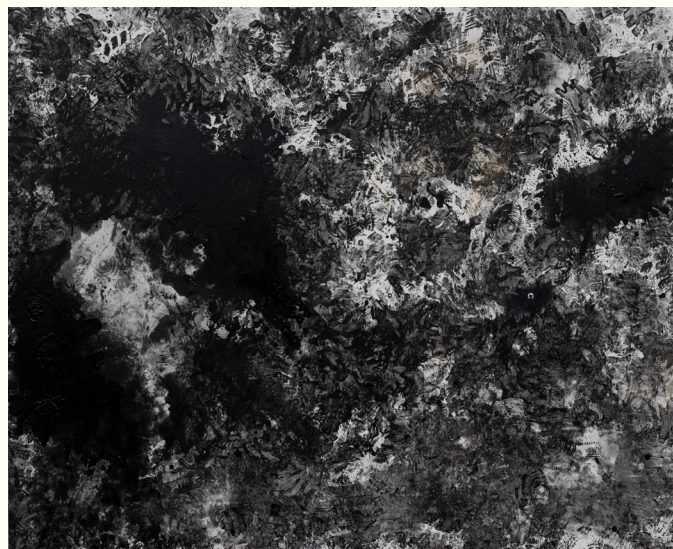
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Rubber, steel, engine oil, aluminium, bitumen, carbon.

These were once the materials used by Palmer Tyres during the process of industrial production, that have now been re-imagined for *Soft Landing*, Palmer Gallery's tenth exhibition. Featuring the work of Hannah Perry, Levi De Jong, Madeleine Ruggi and Tom Bull, the show draws on the Palmer Gallery building's industrial legacy, transforming its history of material innovation into experimental cross-disciplinary contemporary practice - the core of the gallery's program.

In 1940, after its East London factory in Silvertown was destroyed during the Blitz, Palmer Tyres - the company behind the first aircraft tyre that didn't burst on landing - was relocated by the government to a factory on Hatton Street in Lisson Grove. Renowned for material innovations, Palmer was among the first to experiment with inflatable rubber, pioneering early pneumatic tyres for bicycles, then automobiles, and eventually aircraft. Their new site - one of the first all-concrete structures in London - was thus transformed into an aeroworks, producing tyres, brake parts, and gun turrets for Spitfires, Hurricanes, and Lancaster Bombers. It became a space where engineers, fabricators, and machines worked in tandem, creating a material symphony of rubber, metal, oil, and heat.

It is this spirit of industrial ingenuity, material experimentation, and cross-disciplinary exchange that forms the backbone of *Soft Landing* - featuring artists whose practices engage with the aesthetics and processes of manufacture. At a time when digital innovation - particularly the rise of AI - dominates cultural discourse, and as we find ourselves increasingly confined to virtual realities and meta-spaces, *Soft Landing* redirects attention back to the material world: to labour-intensive processes, analogue tools, and the resistant tactility of substances like metal, rubber, oil, and tar.



*Titanium, Hannah Perry, 2024*  
Acrylic paint and engine oil on canvas, 140 x 180 cm

**Hannah Perry's** work explores the overlap between industrial environments, gender, and class. Growing up with a father who worked as a car mechanic, she developed an early familiarity with mechanical processes and manual labour and her practice grapples with the complexities of this traditionally masculine context through a female lense. Perry often works with materials such as steel, latex, and engine oil, pairing them with references to motherhood, sex, pop culture, and the internet - highlighting the tensions between these seemingly disparate worlds. In her painting *Titanium*, she uses engine oil on canvas with thick, expressive strokes that evoke mid-century abstraction, reimagined through an industrial framework of mechanical materials. These works occupy a space between durability, strength, and sensitivity, underscoring the porous boundaries between industrial and human experience.

**Madeleine Ruggi's** practice explores the hidden structures of trade and the constant flow of goods that underpin daily life. For *Soft Landing*, she presents a new body of work entitled *Distress Purchase*, centred around the repurposing of used tyre treads which reflect on global distribution networks and the arteries of trade. The series includes a large-scale installation composed of two ten-metre sections of used tyre tread - a material used to re-manufacture worn HGV tyres. Arranged in looping, anguine forms, the sculpture evokes the thousands of motorway miles that serve as arteries of trade, linking goods with global distribution networks. An accompanying sound piece, produced in collaboration with sound designer Alex Batchelor, layers recordings of re-tread machinery; truck engines; a container ship engine; tyre testing facilities, and conveyor belts to conjure sprawling, typically unseen journeys commodities make across land and sea.



*Distress Purchase, Madeleine Ruggi, 2025,*  
Rubber tyre tread and steel, 205 x 240 x 250 cm

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**Levi De Jong** is an American artist whose sculptural paintings draw on the materials and symbols of working-class life in the American Midwest. Classically trained in painting and sculpture in Florence, Italy, De Jong replaces traditional media with substances more often found in the construction of roads, barns, and industrial buildings - bitumen, silicone sealant, industrial enamel, and construction staples. For *Soft Landing*, he presents a series of sculptural paintings, created using torched bitumen and oil-based enamels which have been sealed and stapled into hand-woven geometric forms, bearing both the aesthetic of repair and the physical trace of labour.

Finally, **Tom Bull's** sculptural practice explores the intersections of industry and domestic life across both rural and urban contexts. Drawing on a visual vocabulary of car parts, stoves, furniture, and plumbing systems, Bull repurposes familiar objects in unexpected ways. For *Soft Landing*, Bull presents a new work featuring a metal stove, which sits in one of the gallery's booths, echoing the building's own internal pipework. Elsewhere, a toy car rigged to a smoke machine evokes the ambience of an active industrial site.

Though rooted in hard industrial matter, the works in *Soft Landing* are transformed through creative endeavour, allowing these materials to take on a surprising softness - like an inflatable tyre pressing into hard tarmac - reshaped by the artist's hand into forms that are reflective, open-ended, and humane. Using the industrial history of Palmer Gallery as a point of departure, the exhibition seeks to explore how the legacies of industry continue to inform contemporary life - raising questions around class, gender, labour, trade, and national identity. In doing so, *Soft Landing* offers a grounding return to the material - a way to touch back down and, through the vehicle of Palmer Gallery's history, reconnect with the industrial foundations from which we've emerged.



*I Like America and America Likes Me (Yet More Hardcore Cottagecore)*, Tom Bull, 2025, Steel, 193 x 34 x 98 cm

## About Palmer Gallery

Founded by Lucas Giles and Will Hainsworth in 2024, Palmer Gallery is a space dedicated to identifying and developing the strongest emerging artistic talent of today. The gallery programme focuses on cross-disciplinary artists working across painting, sculpture, video, performance, light and sound installation, creating an immersive exhibition space. This multi-sensory approach embraces a holistic view of contemporary art while championing an institutional dedication to framing and contextualising complex artistic practices. Palmer Gallery's core mission is to allow artists to express themselves and thrive in an open, supportive and experimental environment; fostering a culture of creative freedom and connection among the gallery's artists and the wider community. The gallery is situated in London's Lisson Grove, in a 1000 ft<sup>2</sup> former-factory built in the 1920's by the Palmer Tyre Company, who produced parts for the Spitfire, Hurricane and Lancaster Bombers during The Second World War.

## Contact Us

For further press information and high-res images please email: [contact@palmergallery.co.uk](mailto:contact@palmergallery.co.uk)



*Silk Road (c. 119)*, Levi de Jong, 2023, Fibreglass, rubber and silicone, 120 x 200 cm