

PAUL WINSTANLEY

Art School

From the 13th of September to the 25th October

Private view: 13th of September, 2018

Paul Winstanley was born in Manchester in 1954. He studied fine art at Cardiff College of Art from 1973 to 1976 and at Slade School of Arts in London from 1976 to 1978. He won the First Prize of the Unilever Award at the Whitechapel Open in 1989. An important retrospective exhibition was held at Art Space, Auckland, New Zealand in 2008. His work figures in important public collections: Arts Council England; Government Art Collection; British Council; Tate; British Museum; Southampton City Art Gallery; Irish Museum of Modern Art of Dublin; Museum of Modern Art of New York; Bank of America of New York; New York City Public Library; Museum of Contemporary Art of Los Angeles.

Winstanley is a painter who uses the traditional genres of landscape, interior, still life, figure painting to create customary conceptual works, developing a relationship between the spectator and the painting as a central element of the piece's content.

In 2011, the gallery (at that time known as Galería Estiarte) presented some of his works in a group exhibition: *UK & EU Contemporary Artists*. He first exhibited in Spain at the Centro Conde Duque in Madrid, showing his work in another group exhibition: *Landscape. British Council International Touring Exhibition*. Since then, he has not shown his work again in our country.

This time we open the season, within the Apertura programme, with an individual exhibition by this prestigious artist, in which we will present paintings, water colours and engravings from the *Art School* series, a work that he started in 2009, when he took some photographs of the insides of empty schools during the summer holidays, a task that was much more complex, richer than the artist had imagined. But it was not until two years later when he decided to continue visiting art schools that he became definitively seduced by the idea: he planned to get to know all the schools possible the length and breadth of England, Scotland and Wales during the summer of 2012 and after visiting over fifty schools, he published a book with the archive he had obtained, which he also called *Art School*.

The paintings arise from the photographs, but they do not faithfully represent "real" interiors, faithfulness to reality does not interest the artist, who at times mixes material from different photographs. He shares this attitude with the much admired and frequently quoted Dutch painter from the 17th century, Pieter Jansz Saenredam, who painted many interiors of Protestant churches. Both artists used the light; they created and manipulated; with the result of some unique, pictorial ideas of interiors. In Saenredam, Winstanley found a parallelism with his *Art School* series.

Many critics have referred to this series, amongst them Nathan O'Donnell, writer and art critic, who when contemplating these paintings comments: "Looking straight at *Art School 31*, you see an empty wall. There is a feeling of stillness, neglect, inactivity, a suggestion of finding yourself trapped, of confinement in this geometry. They are works that place their trust in the implicit, that imagine the absence. They could almost be ghostly images, images from which human beings have been eliminated.

However, it is not perceived as a work without hope. The confinement, the strict geometric content, is exactly what gives these paintings the feeling of their potential energy."