

## Forms of Life:

Small Drawings by

**Julie Held**

at Mercer Chance, 253 Hoxton St, N1 5LG

*Opening: Thursday 6th April 7-10pm*

*Exhibition continues until 23rd April.*

*Open Friday - 11am-2pm*

*Saturday, Sunday - 11am-6pm*

*or by appointment.*

*Please note: closed over the Easter weekend*



**Mercer Chance** are proud to present an exhibition of drawings by **Julie Held**.

Some are standalone works, while others are selected from Julie's sketchbooks. To tear these delicate sheets from the safety of their binding seems a violent act, but it is a revelatory one: each page sings alone, and their modest melodies can be heard clear and sweet as if for the first time.

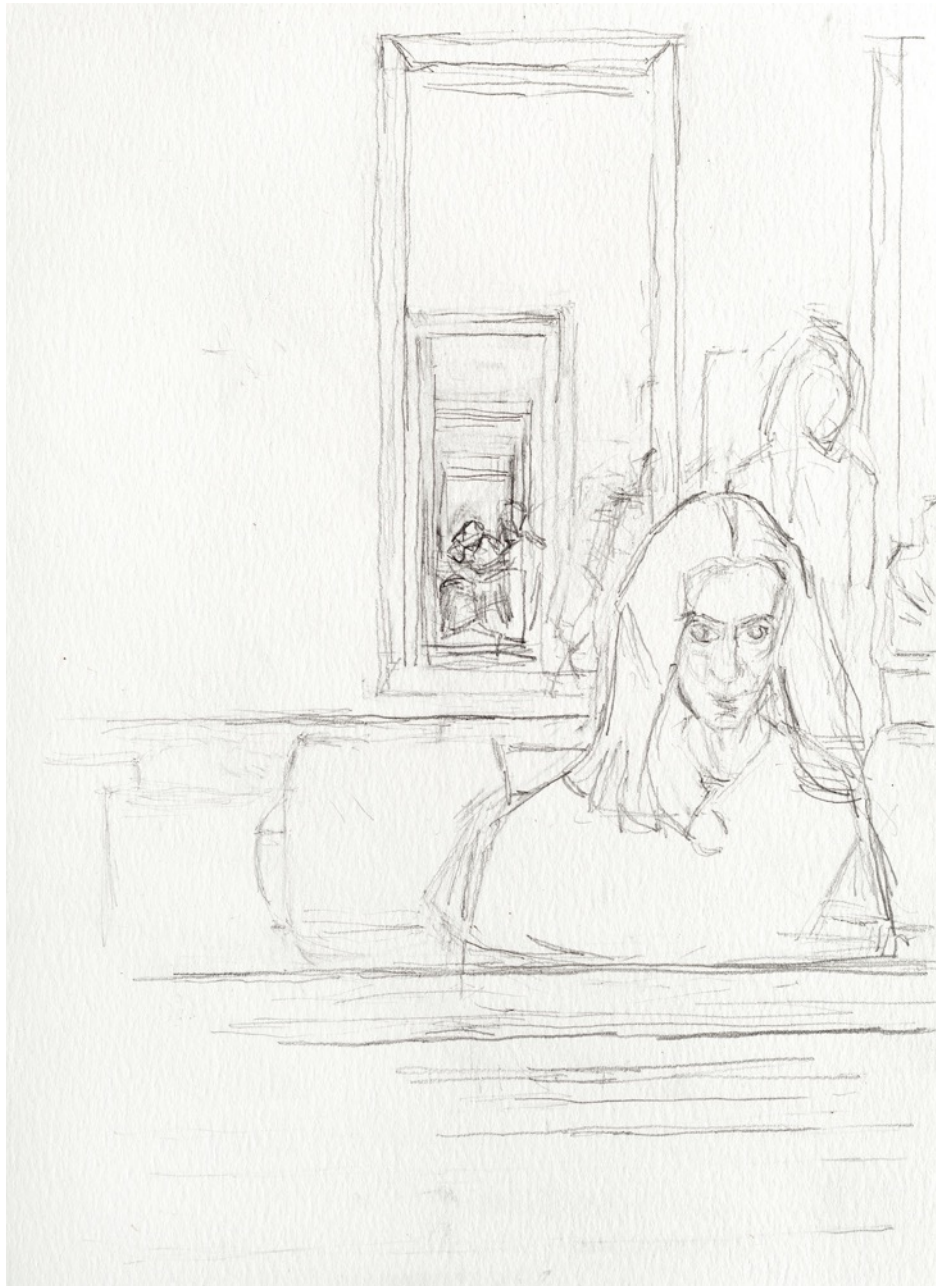
We are struck firstly by their feeling of intimacy, or privacy; it almost feels intrusive to look upon them, as if they will fade, wrinkle, or scatter away as ash, merely under the force of our gaze. Of course this is much to do with their scale; they are small enough to be cupped in one hand, nurtured, hidden from sight or slipped furtively into a pocket.

Beyond their size, there is something inherent to the images themselves and the way they have been drawn, that is suggestive of private thoughts rather than public statements. Each is a memo to self, never intended to show off to anyone else.



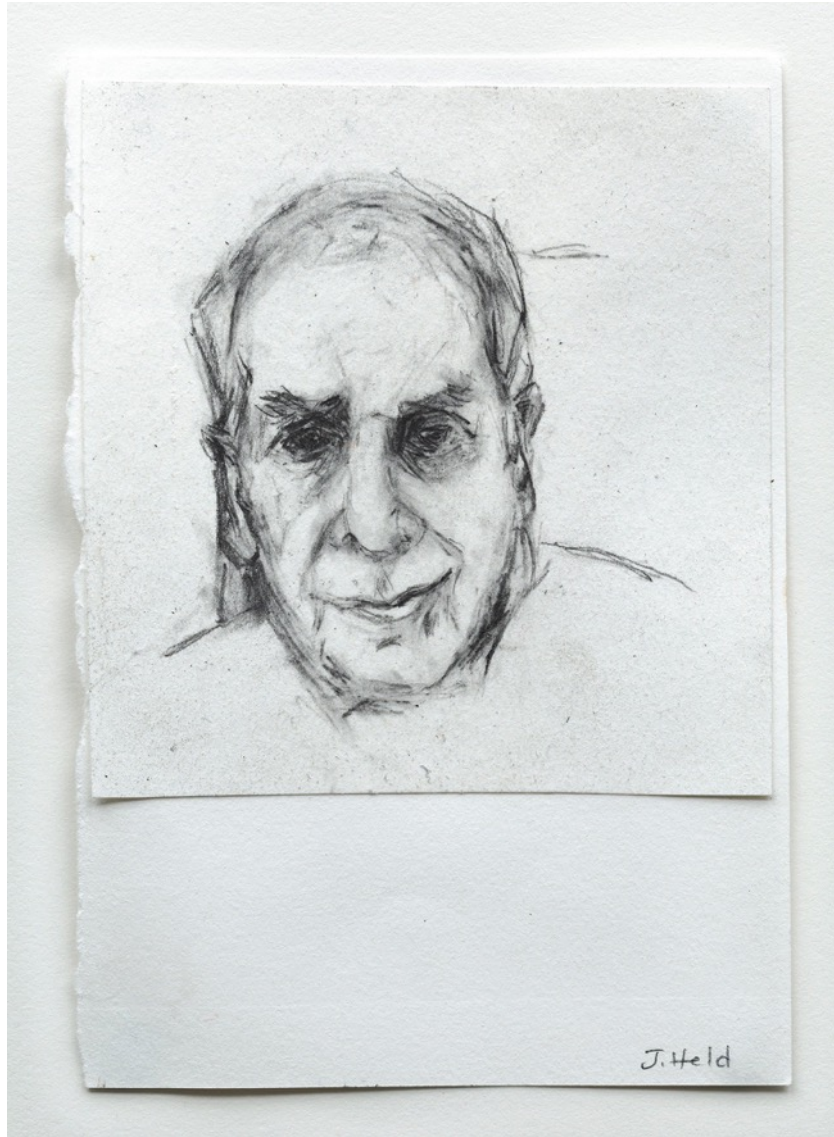
Information is captured and organised in a very efficient and intuitive manner; the essence of each subject is extracted and noted down, with no self-conscious stylisation. Each drawing is an honest attempt to mark down those moments during which the outer world of appearances seems somehow to chime with our inner world of feelings.

They are not incoherent jottings, dashed down carelessly, but seem to have frozen time for just long enough to become fulfilled, before reality rushes on again. In a sense many of them are preliminary drawings, collecting information with an eye toward the canvas they may become, yet through that thoughtful composition, mindful of painterly concerns, they also become complete works in themselves.



Many exhibit a flattening out of space, a deliberate emphasis on frontality, and an interest in framing devices. Both tendencies suggest a painter's heightened awareness of the picture plane, and the viewer's relationship to the subject as separated by that plane.

Space becomes an emotional dimension: what distance stands between the artist, the subject and the viewer? Are we brought up close, so that space is denuded and we are forced into intimacy, or are we detached, an outsider looking through a shop window at an arrangement of objects that suddenly appear foreign? In this collection of work, we see both; the former in Julie's portraits, the latter in her street scenes. Other drawings seem to combine distance and closeness, putting us in a position of both intimacy and alienation simultaneously; of feeling solitary, yet connected to others through intense moments of empathy and love.



text by Michael Chance.

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