

Tim Ayres

*As Such And In As Much As*

## As Such And In As Much As by Markus Richter

After obtaining his Master's Degree from the Chelsea School of Arts in 1989, Tim Ayres left England to pursue his studies at the Rijksakademie in Amsterdam. Instead of returning a year later, as originally planned, he remained in The Netherlands. His work has since been on view in a number of continental museums, amongst others Kunstmuseum Bern, Museum Wiesbaden, The Museum for Contemporary Art Oslo, and the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, which also holds major paintings of the artist in its collection. In the UK however, his work has rarely been seen; the exhibition *As Such And In As Much As* represents his first solo show since he left for the continent. Hence it is a home-coming show of some sorts.

Although the works included in *As Such And In As Much As* are all fairly recent, the exhibition arguably provides a synopsis of the artist's oeuvre. Key subjects with which Ayres has concerned himself with over the last 25 years form recurring elements in the show. Words, music and the grid structures are essential visual aspects, which have been, and still are, significant to his practice.

Ayres had been engaged in poetry when he was young, but set aside the idea of becoming a writer after having read Eliot's »The Waste Land«: "It boggled my young mind in a wonderful way, that poem. I was glad for it to do that. At that point drawing and painting were taking precedence over writing and I was glad for that too." The artist's profound

relationship with the written word would present itself in an altogether different medium: phrases and fragments of text keep appearing in his painting. Some short and straightforward, others more elaborate and hermetic; often ironic and at times self-referential, as in *I Wrote This Painting Sitting By My Pool* (2015). There is a certain dryness to be found in his paintings and a sense of absurdity in the wording he uses, on both the paintings and their titles (which one may even identify as somewhat British).

Rarely are the texts narrative or descriptive and never carry simple messages; the phrases rather trigger the imagination of the viewer. Moreover, the painted letters are in their essence an arrangement of abstracts lines and curves; they are compositional elements that form the image.

»The Waste Land« is still a point of reference. One of the grid paintings in the exhibition is titled *The Hyacinth Girl* (2014), drawing from the first part of the poem, »The Burial of the Dead«. Not that a memento mori was needed; Ayres melancholic predisposition – a prevailing discourse in his work – may be proof enough for his consciousness regarding the transience of life. In 2012 a car crash would nearly kill the artist. With a back broken in three places he survived, the injuries forcing and initiating changes in his life as well as in his work. Amongst others, he switched from painting on the MDF panels that he had been using for years, to stretched canvases. The reasoning, first and foremost pragmatic: he could no longer maneuver the heavy wooden panels with ease. The outcome

however was startling: His painting became more fluid, free, and at times even gestural. The former closed, flat surfaces are now open, resonant, and alluring.

Other developments would see Ayres abandon a proportional system based on a panel size of 150 × 130 cm, for a protracted 1 × 1.5 ratio, which he takes from 'classic' 35mm photography. The proportion of his grids – the grids being a constant in Ayres' oeuvre since the 1990's – is still linked to those of the paintings. With *The Hyacinth Girl* and *A Sound Is Made At Ten Minutes And Twelve Seconds* (2015) the London exhibition includes two works in which the grid is occupying the entire format, the outline overlapping the edges and the crossbars subdividing the surface in four equal measured parts. Here the grid seems to prove, guarantee, and moreover, symbolize stability; it is a metaphor for ordered structures as such. It is a »fetish« (as Ayres alludes to in the title of another 'grid' work, elsewhere) of rationality, the very icon of enlightenment.

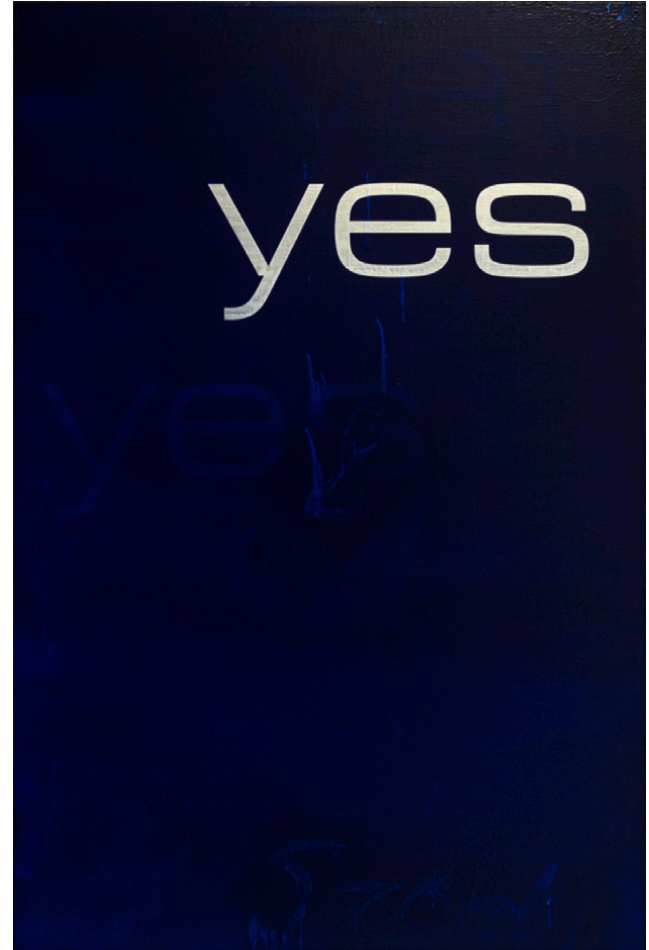
But like rationality, the grid might collapse, the crossbars could drop out of their fixed positions and the painting would become an image of turmoil and disintegration. Since *Collateral Damage*, a work from 2000, the collapsing grid occasionally returns in Ayres' works. However, its current incarnation, as used in the work *Linger (Rated X)* (2015) does not carry much of the desperate notion of structural failure that applied to earlier versions. Rather, the painting exudes a sense of physical ecstasy and a blatant sensuality.

Quite frequently, the painted phrases or the titles of Ayres' works are referencing

music. *Linger (Rated X)* quotes a song by post-rock band Spiritualized; *A Sound Is Made At Ten Minutes And Twelve Seconds* refers to a video clip of the American indie folk band Bon Iver. The artist himself used to front a band, "playing pretty rough stuff somewhere between Pere Ubu, early Wire, and Sonic Youth". But very much like poetry, he gave up singing to become a painter; music remains an important point of reference and a source of inspiration.

The 1992 painting *I Wish This Was A Song* is emblematic for Ayres' incorporation of music in his artistic practice. The work reflects the thrill of fronting a band, of making music, but it does so within the realm of painting. Hence it is a rather dialectic maneuver; the wish that the painting might be a song is sublated in the painting as such. "The song is always there, but remaining silent. The internal song; under-singing. It might become audible for the viewer, if you can hear the melody in the mind's eye. I saw someone dance in front of one of my paintings once..."

Tim Ayres' paintings are evocations, stirring images and sounds in the viewer, triggering the memory of songs, fragments from poems or half forgotten impressions. But most of all they are paintings; essentially they are what happens on their surface, between the layers of translucent or opaque paint and the linear compositions. It is the surface, which holds their quiet beauty.



Eclipse (A Note For SN), 2015  
Acrylic on canvas.  
180 × 120 cm



This is “This Is Axiom”, 2013  
Acrylic on canvas.  
105 × 70 cm

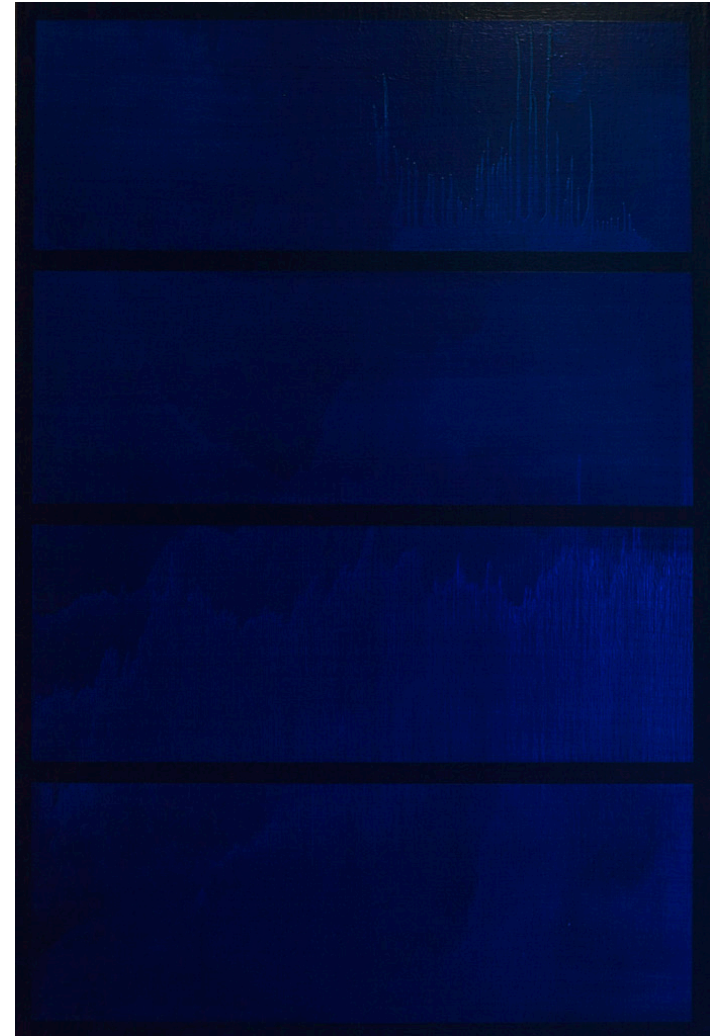


Linger ("Rated X"), 2015  
Acrylic on canvas.  
195 × 130 cm



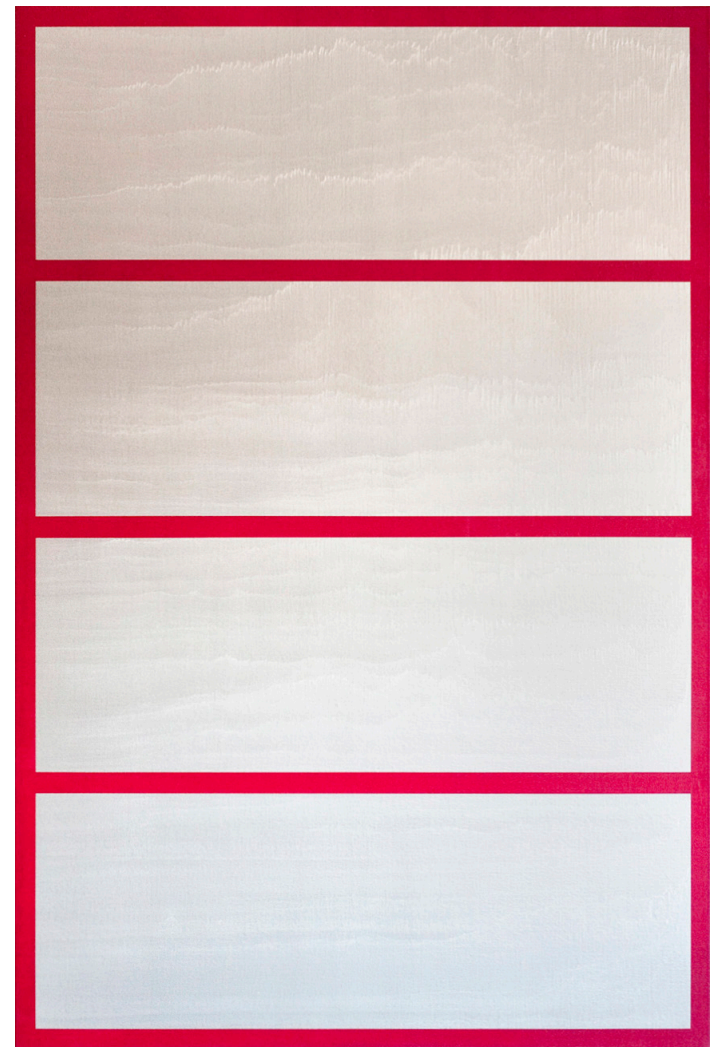
I'm Pregnant, 2015  
Acrylic on canvas.  
180 × 120 cm





A Sound Is Made At Ten Minutes And Twelve Seconds, 2015  
Acrylic on canvas.  
195 × 130 cm

The Hyacinth Girl, 2014  
Acrylic on canvas.  
195 × 130 cm







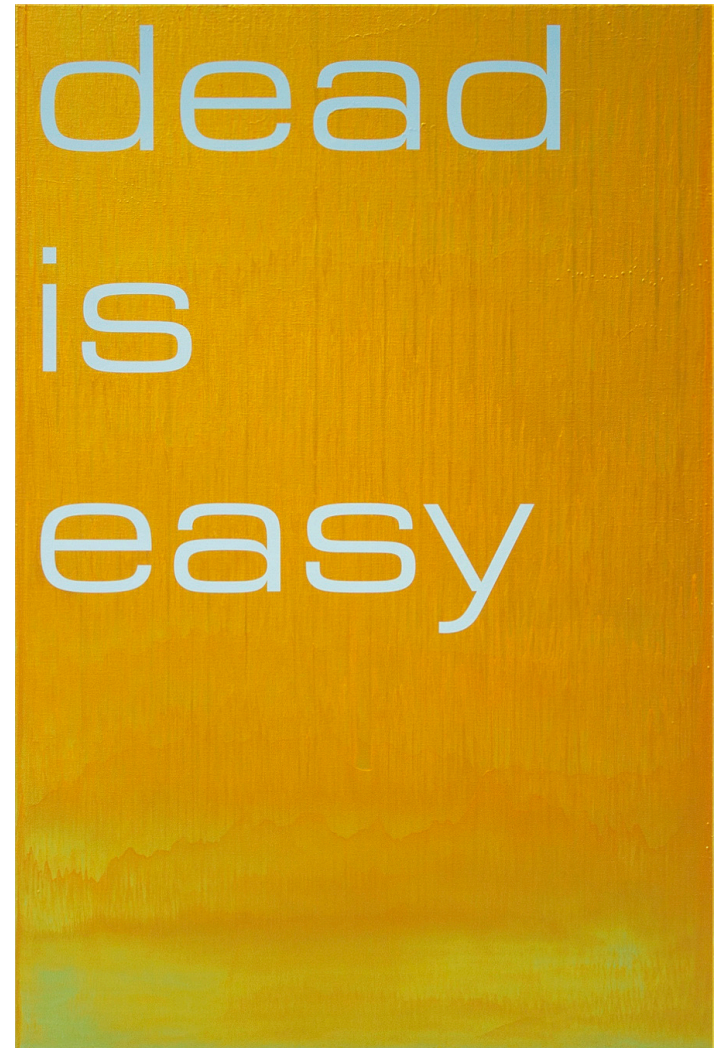
Poem (AK/AB), 2014  
Acrylic on canvas.  
75 × 50 cm



Oh My Well God Fuck Yeah, 2015  
Acrylic on canvas.  
195 × 130 cm

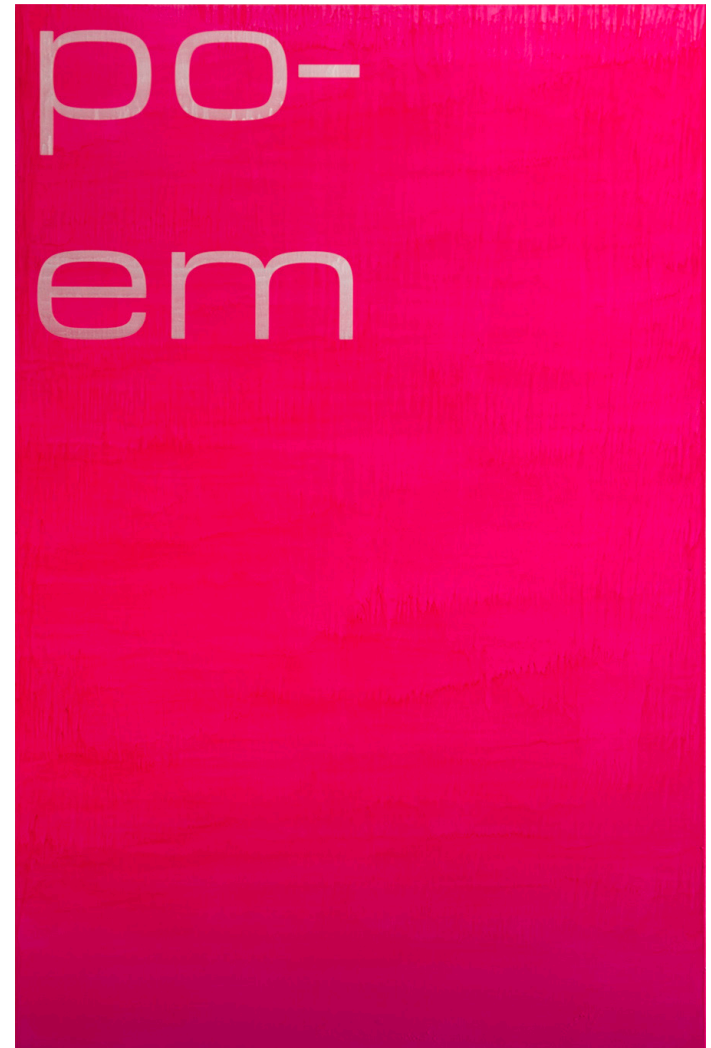


Scene One, At Belle Fourche, 2013  
Acrylic on canvas.  
150 × 225 cm



Dead Is Easy, 2015  
Acrylic on canvas.  
195 × 130 cm





Poem (EPT), 2015  
Acrylic on canvas.  
195 × 130 cm



## Biography

Tim Ayres

Born: 1965, Hastings, England.

Lives and works in Amsterdam.

1989–91: Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten, Amsterdam

1988–89: Masters Degree, Chelsea School of Art, London

1985–88: 1st Class Honours B.A., Loughborough College of Art

### Solo Exhibitions

- 2016 As Such And In As Much As. PM/AM, London.
- 2014 The Beautiful Thud. Stigter van Doesburg, Amsterdam.
- 2013 The Back Space. Stigter van Doesburg, Amsterdam.
- 2011 The Geibelstrasse/Via Fontana Martina Series. Marian Cramer Projects, Amsterdam.
- 2010 Tim Ayres. Henningsen Contemporary, Copenhagen.  
Tim Ayres & Han Schuil. Galerie Andreas Binder, Munich.
- 2009 Glimpse; Glance; Glimmer: Nude; Semi; Detail. Vous Etes ICI, Amsterdam.  
Tim Ayres & Herbert Hamak. Galerie Christian Roellin Project Space G27, Zurich.  
To Increase On Return. Galerie Martin Mertens, Berlin.
- 2008 Rattlebag. Galerie Christian Roellin, St. Gallen.
- 2007 On The Status Of The Glass Of Water At Its Halfway Mark. Vous Etes ICI, Amsterdam.  
Paintings. Galeria Xavier Fiol, Palma de Mallorca 2006  
Zu Gast. Galerie Martin Mertens, Berlin.  
Untitled. Galerie Andreas Binder, Munich.
- 2005 Barely Flowers, Amongst Others. Vous Etes ICI, Amsterdam.
- 2004 Untitled. Stadsgalerij Heerlen, Heerlen.  
Untitled. Galerie Andreas Binder, Munich.  
Untitled. Reali Arte Contemporanea, Brescia.  
Dialogue Series #4 (with Lucas Lenglet). Markus Richter Gallery, Berlin.
- 2003 Paintbox Extensions. Copenhagen.  
The Floor Is Drying Because It's Just Been Cleaned.

Vous Etes Ici, Amsterdam.

- 2002 Memo. Markus Richter Gallery, Berlin.  
Being There When. Vous Etes ICI, Amsterdam.
- 2000 PHEW! Markus Richter Gallery, Berlin.  
PHEW! 2. Galerie Andreas Binder, Munich.
- 1999 Wasted/Holes. Galerie Markus Richter, Berlin.  
The Softest Bullet Ever Shot. Galerie Onrust, Amsterdam.
- 1998 Hard Listening. Galerie Andreas Binder, Munich.
- 1997 Construction/Deconstruction. (with Colin Ardley), Galerie Markus Richter  
Untitled. Onrust Gallery, Amsterdam.
- 1994 Untitled. Centraal Laboratorium van de Bloedtransfusiedienst, Amsterdam.  
Untitled. James van Damme Gallery, Antwerpen.
- 1993 We're Like Two Inflatable Dolls In A Hooker's Bad Dream (with Inez van Lamsweerde). Stedelijk Museum-Bureau Amsterdam.
- 1992 Untitled. International Aids Congress, Rai Exhibition Centre, Amsterdam.
- 1990 A Hole In Motion. Fusion Gallery, London.

### Selected Group Exhibitions

- 2012 I Wish This Was A Song. Nasjonalmuseet For Kunst, Arkitektur Og Design, Oslo.
- 2010 All Those Words. Galerie Zand, Eindhoven.
- 2009 Art Zuid. Open Air Sculpture, Amsterdam.  
Later On... Redux. Ps, Amsterdam.
- 2008 There Is Desire Left (Knock Knock). Kunstmuseum Bern/Museum Wiesbaden.
- 2006 Ideal City — Invisible Cities. Zamosc, Poland and Potsdam, Germany.
- 2005 Later On We Shall Simplify Things (With Ab Van Hanegem, Jan Van Der Ploeg and Han Schuil). Centro Cultural Andratx, Mallorca; Stadsgalerij Heerlem.
- 2004 Made In Berlin. Art Forum, Berlin.
- 2003 Die Realität Der Bilden. Staatliches Museum Schwerin.

Collections include:

ABN/ Amro Bank  
Mondstudio Collection, Germany  
Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam  
Sharjah Museum, UAE  
The Akzo Nobel Foundation  
The New York Public Library

- 2002 Hallo Holland! Art Directors Club, New York.
- 2001 Four Dutch Painters. Galerie Gebroeders Lehmann, Dresden.
- 1999 Glad Ijs. Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam.  
Beachparty 99. Galerie Andreas Binder, Munich.
- 1998 Blick Zurück Nach Vorn. Galerie Markus Richter, Potsdam.  
The Center Holds. Junge Kunst Aus Den Niederlanden, Curated By Rudi Fuchs, Galerie Gmurzynska, Cologne.  
Fama Créscluit Éundo (Het Gerucht Groeit Aan Terwijl Het Ronde Doet). Bogardenkapel, Bruges.
- 1997 Around Europe. Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam.
- 1996 Sublime Vormen Met Zicht Vanaf 5 M. Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam.
- 1995 Painters Opinion. Bloom Gallery, Amsterdam.  
Prix Ni. Galerie Nouvelles Images, The Hague.  
Tim Ayres, Narcisse Tordoir and Alan Uglow. Galerie Onrust, Amsterdam.  
Kontrast. (with René Guiffrey, Serge Hélias and Michael Ventrone). Pro Sieben, Munich  
Vous Etes Ici Editions. Museum Van Bommel Van Dam, Venlo.
- 1994 De Verzameling. Recent Acquisitions. Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam.
- 1992 Tim Ayres, Marie-José Burki, Henri Jacobs, Robert Suermondt and Jan De Vries. Galerie Bruges La Morte, Bruges.
- 1991 Het Klimaat. Foreign Artists Working In The Netherlands. Rijksakademie Amsterdam.
- 1989 Into The Nineties. Mall Galleries, London.  
John Moores 19. Walker City Art Gallery, Liverpool.  
Barclays Prize For Young Painters. RCA Galleries, London.



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