

NEWSLETTER 3 / APRIL 2020

Serena Morton

LONDON

Dear Friends and Collectors,

In this week's newsletter my focus is on the artist Orlando Campbell.

The plan is to re-open the gallery with an exhibition that celebrates some of the best of British qualities. Campbell's works are cool, intelligent, playful, entertaining and definitely audacious!

This is art to cheer you up.

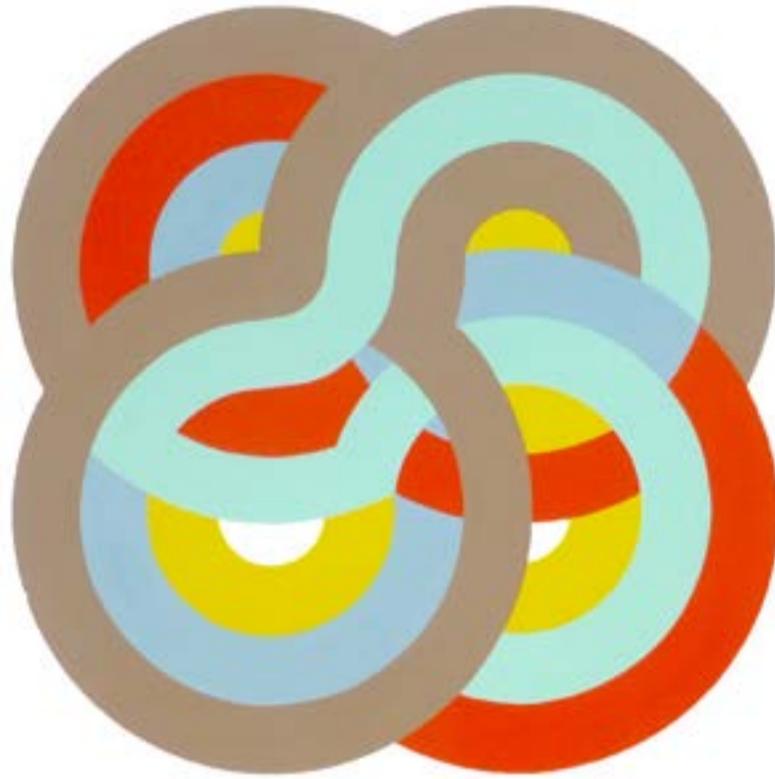
We are scheduled to re-open in June and I shall keep you informed as the situation becomes clearer in the coming weeks.

Until then you can by appointment, take a skype tour of current works in the gallery. If you would be interested in a single person walkaround of the gallery in person, do get in contact via info@serenamorton.com and we can see what could be arranged on a case by case basis.

Better days await.

Serena

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4 Circle Curly Curly 1, 2018. House paint on canvas. 130 x 130 cm

In 1970 whilst living at Glebe Place, I photographed, with a bit of help from my father . A performance exhibition by Gilbert and George at the Nigel Greenwood Gallery (Glebe Place, London SW3). I was amazed by what art was and my fascination began!

At school I studied TD (technical drawing), I was astonished by geometry especially bisecting a line to always get half way mark without using maths.

I grew up with Stella, Noland, Paolozzi and Caulfield paintings, as my parents had collected these artists over the years. Their use of colour and symmetry were to become strong influences in my work over the years. 2001 - Moved to France, this started working with outside plumbing/underground pipework and general plumbing. I became fascinated with the pipe work and diagrams and tried to use them in my art.

I decided to take my art more seriously in 2001 but I guess this was inevitable whilst driving a digger and plotting out the different coloured pipes underground. It reminded me of the London Underground tube map. Especially the work by Sir Eduardo Paolozzi, Patrick Caulfield, Frank Stella and Kenneth Noland. I started off with Venn diagrams. I loved the simple colours, the very same colours I would see in a plumbing diagram. Especially the prime and tertiary colours, there was a particular underfloor heating diagram that reminded me of Frank Stellas black paintings.

Although the Curlywurly paintings are named after a chocolate toffee confection and tips a nod to the boogie woogie paintings by Mondrian. If Van Doesburg fell out with Mondrian over using diagonal lines, I suspect both would be turning in their graves for me even daring to liken my paintings to them, To my mind they are all pipe work.

By chance in about 2010,I started taking a lot of "health" pills and became completely obsessed by their shape and perfection almost like an egg but of course the colours. Which brings me to the new pills I have created for the show at Serena Morton Gallery

From the pills I wanted to see the diagrams of the molecular structure actually, I just couldn't get over how brilliant the diagrams for the molecules were and this is what I am currently working on or re working as I 1st started these studies in 2011 but could never get it right, I will either die trying or the virus will get me. Or the Orange virus Donald Trump will kill us all.

Orlando Campbell
April 2020

[Click to watch an Exhibition View of our past show
'WINTER 2019-2020'](#)

'WINTER 2019-2020'. November 2019. Serena Morton Gallery

[Click to watch Orlando Campbell talking about his
work in his studio.](#)

[In the Studio: Orlando Campbell](#)

Q&A with Orlando Campbell

What was it like where you grew up?

I grew up mainly in Newcastle and partly the Scottish borders, but all holidays were spent with my father in London. I mainly remember Newcastle being dark, snowy and cold with constant rain, the Scottish borders were much worse, constant cold and bored out of my mind, in the middle of nowhere is not good for a teenager, although the city of Newcastle was great but perhaps a bit stuck in 70's and 80's there seemed to be no future. So going to London Kings Road was a massive eye opener and a treat.

Who was the greatest influence on you, within your immediate family?

I have to say my mother and father as my mother is still alive and will most likely read this. One of my first vivid memories is being pushed in a pushchair from our flat in Beaufort Street to the Tate, past bomb sites (is this possible in about 1970?). I remember a massive bendy saw by Claes Oldenburg which seemed to my 3 year old brain as big as Chelsea Bridge. We moved to Newcastle upon Tyne when I was about 4 years old. In the school holidays my brother and I would come to London and our father would take us to films, museums, restaurants, galleries and the Colony Room in Soho. Which I gravitated to when I moved back to London aged about 18.

What do you wish they had taught you and did not?

It's hard to pin down exactly what I should have been taught that wasn't better teaching myself using a YouTube tutorial. Between the three of them I suspect learning how to wire a whole house electrically would result in my death. I do not know what I do not know yet.

What were the best and worst things about places of learning you attended?

The best thing I learned at school was how to play rugby, it all seems a massive waste of time trying to teach an uninterested dyslexic Latin. Although I do remember the technical drawing lessons well and interesting but they even managed to make the art classes dull and regimented. I remember the utter frustrating boredom as if it was yesterday. Going to the Art College at Bath Lane, Newcastle seemed to be a thing I ought to do, not a thing I particularly wanted to do and the Punk Rock scene seemed more enticing and I thought to myself I must go to London. The best things I learnt were after formal education.

Why did you make the move into fine art?

I gave it a good go when I moved back to London aged 18 but my cunning plan to frequent the Colony Room (see the new book by Darren Coffield, Tales from the Colony Room, Soho's lost Bohemia, published by Unbound) and be discovered as a genius ended in a drunken disaster. I realised early on being a broke artist was not all it's cracked up to be, so I got a job as a plongeur in a restaurant. I always kept my hand in, made some sculptures, paintings and collages but I think to be any good it has to be all encompassing every day 24 hours a day, even then it's not quite enough. Being a restaurateur and builder did give me the discipline needed but left no time to make art, although there was much art in both. I became frustrated about not making art about 15 years ago and being a massive art critic coincided with my arthritis. So I was not able to do the jobs I knew how to do, this suited me and I could no longer put it off, paint or die possibly both.

Who are your mentors or influencers?

It's hard to give a specific influencer without using the sponge cliché but after the R. Mutt urinal of 1917 and the famous Andy Warhol quote "Art is anything you can get away with" it seemed to me anything is possible and allowed. Probably my biggest influence and I would never have told him, was the Scottish painter Craigie Aitchison. Though I did not like all of his paintings, he introduced me to colour and although he seemed to make his paintings look simple and naive they were in fact complex and he would tear what he would call blonde but was in fact totally gray hair out night and day for months on "getting it right". I knew him all my life and he was my best man and my grandfathers best man at our weddings.

If you could have lunch with someone you admire, who would it be and where would you have it?

I knew my paternal Grandfather Robin Campbell as a child but not well, he was the Director of Fine Arts at the British Arts Council. He was responsible for many huge exhibitions in Great Britain and collecting unknown artists which are now household names for public collections. Notably Craigie Aitchison and Alberto Giacometti but the list is massive. All very impressive despite only having one leg, as the other one was shot off by friendly fire in Kill Rommel 'Operation Flipper' 1941. So many questions, I would have to take an agenda. I would like to have lunch at Chez l'Ami Louis (a restaurant at 32, rue du Vertbois, in the 3rd arrondissement of Paris, France, founded in 1924. The restaurant, which has been called "the world's most famous bistro" and "the worst restaurant in the world"), it's on a back street dark and discreet and a favourite of Jacques Chirac and Bill Clinton. I would like to think he would have been there as it opened in 1924.

How are you finding social distancing?

Very, very, easy. I have spent the last 15 years rehearsing for this moment. Though a bit tiresome food shopping and constant hand washing, my masks are filthy as I wear them anyway.

What did you have planned this year that has now been postponed?

My Saga cruise to Wuhan province has been postponed! Most things these days seem to happen, in the past planning things that did not happen damaged my flimsy optimism.

Tell us about where you live?

I live at Gaillac near Albi where the great post impressionist Henri Toulouse Lautrec was born although probably never revisited after moving to Paris aged 8 with his mother though after his death his mother and art dealer made sure of his place in history by building the museum in Albi named after him, anyway none of this interests me particularly. I would like to say I moved here because of the light and landscape but I just can't, I am painting all day under electric light and the British TV schedule. Toulouse is nearby and I can get anywhere I want. From there the train to London is easy and Paris even easier but aeroplane is even easier, about an hour and 30 minutes. The climate suits my arthritis as does the solitude.

If you weren't an artist what would you do?

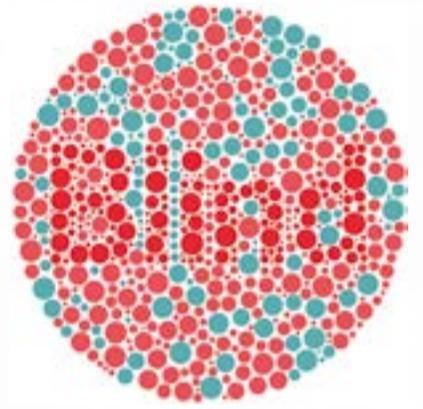
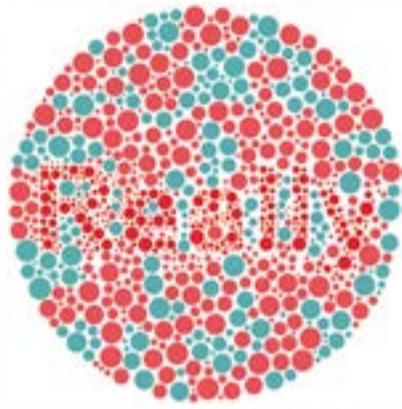
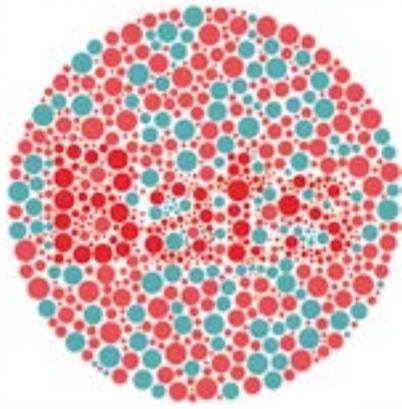
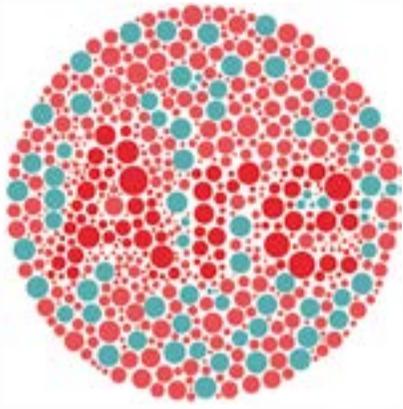
I'm certainly not qualified for anything else and have my doubts if I am qualified for this vocation. Though I have to say international gigolo/playboy sounds tempting but as far as I can remember there

were not many positions advertised for this job in the job centre.

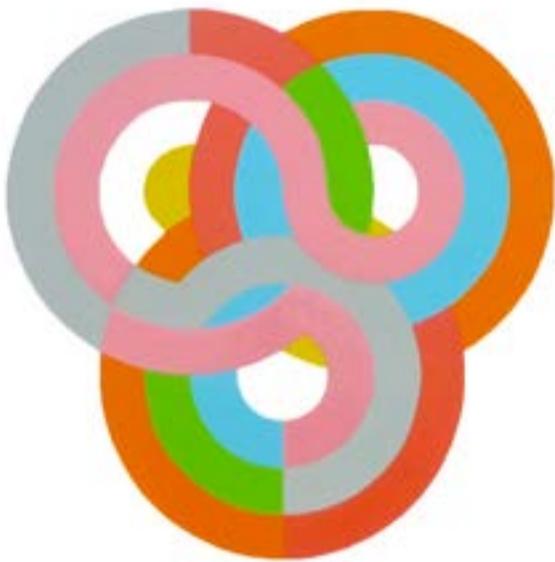
What makes you happy?

Nothing ever seems to make me happy, even when I finish a painting I always see faults and compromises. Although there is some respite in the constant state of unhappiness when I am totally immersed in a new painting with the tv on and loud preferably an australian soap opera like Home and Away or Neighbours.

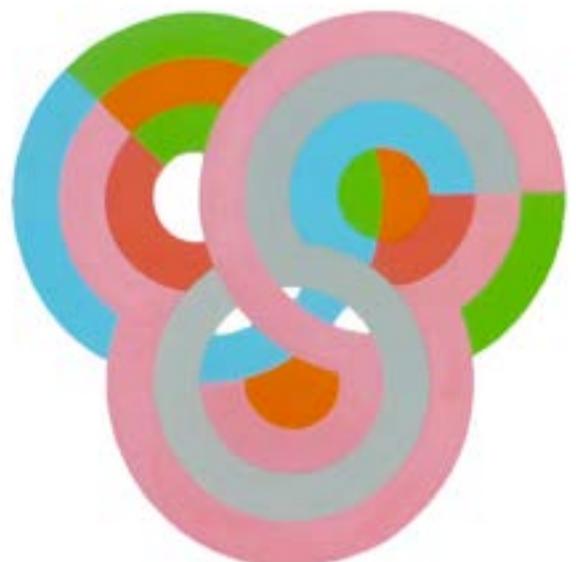
[Click to see Orlando Campbell
Catalogue and Price List](#)



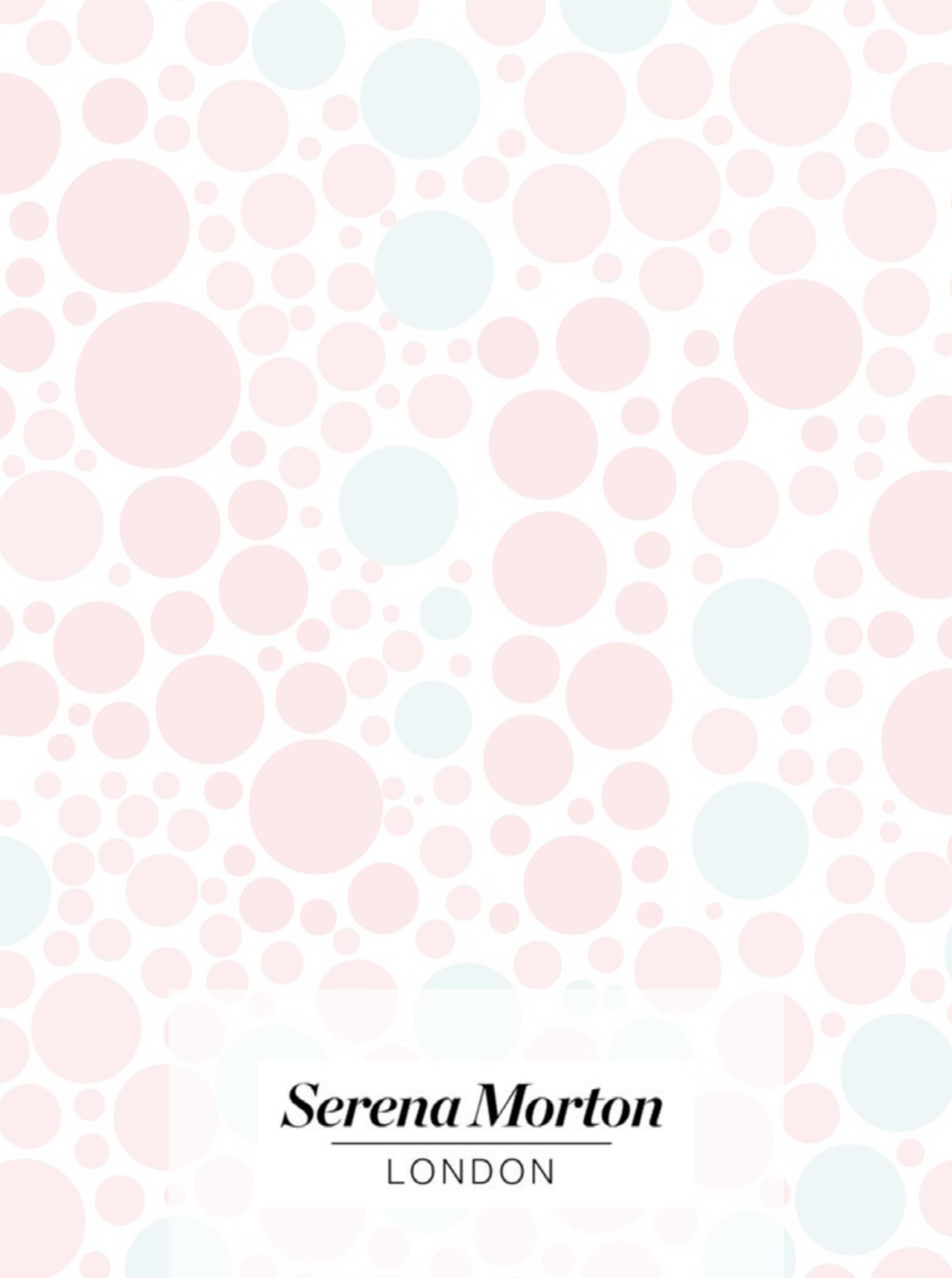
ARE BATS REALLY BLIND, 2020. Pigment Print on canvas. Each 100 x 100 cm
ARE BATS REALLY BLIND, 2020. Pigment Print on canvas. Each 35 x 35 cm
Edition of 5 prints each



Small Venn 3, 2019.
House paint on canvas.
80 x 80 cm



Small Venn 4, 2019.
House paint on canvas.
80 x 80 cm



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