

Stephen Polatch,  
*Clyde*  
12 January–19 February, 2022  
6 Minerva Street, London

CLYDE  
Carina Haouchine

She's swaying, can in hand. It's not an unfamiliar sight. The drop isn't much but the outcome would be. The moonlight feels more like strip-lighting, it's glary and harsh, I wish someone would put a lamp on. I think she's rocking back and forth on her heels now, bobbing up and down. But it's very hard to know when you yourself are forever bobbing up and down. The current is quite forceful tonight, so I'm bobbing left and right too. She looks at me and I give a bob of recognition.

I got moored here for some reason or another and forgotten about. It would cause more hassle to remove me so I'll stay here until the next river regeneration project comes along. I see a lot, but people keep their distance when you're cast out. Last summer a young man swam to me, he slid up onto my side. The thrill of his wet skin on my plastic shell made me feel lighter than ever. But once his friends had taken enough videos he left, dived away abruptly. Since then I've been quite down.

People come here with purpose or a lack of. She takes out her phone and calls someone. I think she's crying. I know she's not talking because people's words echo. They dance down to the water's surface and back up to the sky. Reaching me somewhere in between. There is only the two of us out tonight. She looks at me and I don't know how to tell her that I'm here for her. I want to say "me too" and "I'll protect you, I'll keep you afloat".

Eventually, I see another figure emerge behind her. I don't want to think the worst but I'm thinking the worst. She screams, I hear the delayed sound as it crawls over to me. She turns to the second figure, who I now make out to be another young woman, and collapses in on herself. Sitting on the edge of the bank, she cradles her knees in her arms. The second figure drops down

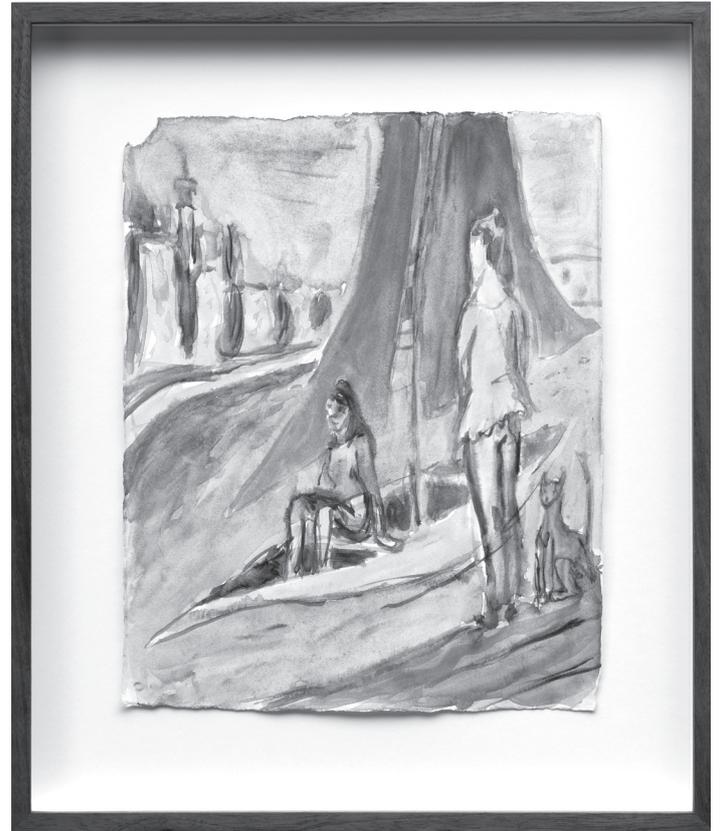
Soft Opening,

to the same level, putting her arms around with an anchoring hold, pulling her back.

They sit a while talking too low for me to hear, then both rise. The moon is so awfully bright now but they seem to love it and point at it emphatically. The woman no longer has the can, she's dropped it, because the two of them are swaying in each other's arms. I watch hands on backs and think of summer and the feeling of skin. As they move to the current's rhythm one of them nudges the can off the edge.

The can makes its way towards me and I feel self-conscious. I cry too often in winter for anyone to see me this close. He's in a hurry so our interaction is brief, something about the sea and getting away from it all. I don't know what it all is. He asks if I want to join but even if I was untethered, I'm not sure I would.

I watch the women visibly shiver in the distance. They begin walking away with alternating buoyant steps, each keeping the other grounded.



*Clyde*, 2021  
Watercolour on paper,  
28 × 22 cm  
(39 × 32.5 cm framed)

<i>Main Gallery (Left–Right)</i>	<i>Viewing Room (Left–Right)</i>	<i>Vitrine I (Anti-clockwise, Left–Right)</i>	<i>Vitrine II (Anti-clockwise, Left–Right)</i>
<i>Maryhill I</i> , 2021 Oil on canvas 60.8 × 46 cm	<i>Clyde</i> , 2021 Watercolour on paper 28 × 22 cm (39 × 32.5 cm framed)	<i>In the Pipe</i> , 2021 Watercolour on rice paper 24 × 17.5 cm	<i>Eye Roll</i> , 2021 Watercolour on rice paper 20 × 14 cm
<i>Highlanders</i> , 2021 Oil on canvas 44 × 61 cm	<i>Carrot and Flower</i> , 2021 Watercolour on paper 26 × 18 cm (37 × 29 cm framed)	<i>In the Pipe II</i> , 2021 Watercolour on rice paper 24 × 17.5 cm	<i>Green Ribbon</i> , 2021 Watercolour on rice paper 20 × 14 cm
<i>Clyde</i> , 2021 Oil on canvas 51 × 70 cm	<i>Leaping Cat</i> , 2021 Watercolour on paper 27.5 × 17 cm (38.5 × 27 framed)	<i>In the Pipe III</i> , 2021 Watercolour on rice paper 24 × 17.5 cm	<i>The Hunter and the Miller</i> , 2021 Watercolour on rice paper 20 × 14 cm
<i>Clyde Boaters</i> , 2021 Oil on canvas 46 × 60.8 cm	<i>Boater with Fish</i> , 2021 Watercolour on paper 28 × 17 cm (38.5 × 28 cm framed)	<i>Sunset Cycle</i> , 2021 Watercolour on rice paper 20 × 13 cm	<i>Falling with Swan</i> , 2021 Watercolour on rice paper 24 × 17.5 cm
<i>Falling</i> , 2021 Oil on canvas 51 × 65.8 cm	<i>Flower Picking</i> , 2021 Watercolour on paper 27 × 21 cm (39 × 32 cm framed)	<i>Thigh Deep</i> , 2021 Watercolour on rice paper 20 × 13 cm	<i>Boat Building</i> , 2021 Watercolour on rice paper 20 × 13 cm
<i>Lifted Building</i> , 2021 Oil on canvas board 40 × 51.5 cm	<i>White Puffa</i> , 2021 Watercolour on paper 28 × 20 cm (39 × 30.5 cm framed)	<i>Long Grass</i> , 2021 Watercolour on rice paper 17.5 × 24 cm	<i>Person with Flowers</i> , 2021 Watercolour on rice paper 20 × 13 cm
<i>Rainbow Bridge</i> , 2021 Oil on canvas 42.8 × 51.5 cm	<i>Bird Handler</i> , 2021 Watercolour on paper 27.5 × 21.5 cm (38.5 × 32 cm framed)	<i>Hunter, Maid and Rose</i> , 2021 Watercolour on rice paper 14 × 20 cm	<i>Person with Rose</i> , 2021 Watercolour on rice paper 20 × 13 cm
<i>Maryhill II</i> , 2021 Oil on canvas 46.5 × 61 cm	<i>Highlanders</i> , 2021 Watercolour on paper 27 × 18 cm (28.5 × 38 cm framed)	<i>Green Ribbon II</i> , 2021 Watercolour on rice paper 14 × 20 cm	<i>Diving</i> , 2021 Watercolour on rice paper 20 × 13 cm
	<i>Flight over pond</i> , 2021 Watercolour on paper 27.5 × 19 cm (29 × 38 cm framed)	<i>City with Swan</i> , 2021 Watercolour on rice paper 17.5 × 24 cm	<i>Hunter and the Maid</i> , 2021 Watercolour on rice paper 20 × 13 cm
	<i>Smoking Cowboy with Cat</i> , 2021 Oil on canvas board 42 × 33 cm		



*Clyde*, 2021  
Oil on canvas,  
51 × 70 cm

Stephen Polatch (b. 1990, London UK) lives and works in Glasgow, UK. After completing his BFA at The Ruskin School of Art, Oxford in 2013, Polatch went on to complete a Postgraduate Diploma at the Royal Drawing School in London. Recent exhibitions include *Peepers*, K Halstead, London (2021); *A Many Voiced Argument with Life*, Glasgow International/Market Gallery, Glasgow (2021); *Prestwick*, New Glasgow Society East, Glasgow (2021); *The Amber Room II*, Amber Room, London (2020); *Eigenheim*, Soft Opening, London (2020); *Graven Images*, New Glasgow Society, Glasgow (2019); *Drawings of Iasi*, Iasi, Romania (2019); *Bilder*, New Glasgow Society, Glasgow (2018) and *Unswept House*, Unit 42, Glasgow (2017).