CELIA GULLETT
ARTISTS STATEMENT

My latest work reflects an ongoing interest in surface. In previous work I have used a loose grid to act as the subject upon which I can build a painted surface. In this current work I have abandoned the grid as subject. My focus is now on the individual characteristics of particular pigments to act as the subject itself. Combining pigment with wax in the” Spirit into Matter series “I am placing colour and surface together to speak about painting. My interest comes from researching the sources of pigments used since the act of painting began. The source of pigment whether it is man made, or organic, dictates its inherent properties. I take “spirit” as the abstract quality of a pigment, and, “matter” to mean its appearance when it becomes paint. Revealing these properties and the effect this produces both visually, psychologically, and emotionally is at the core of this suite of paintings.

Combining the pigments with wax, has removed any reflection normally apparent in oil paint and for me strips the colour back to a very pure state. The process of painting layer upon layer reveals the intensity or space each pigment requires in order for it to come into being, for it to materialize.

The diptych format of the series arises from a desire to partner colours, to create a dialogue between the physical and metaphysical properties of colour. One hue seems to call for the presence of another to make the composition complete. For many of these associations or songs between colour I have drawn much inspiration from the frescos in the San Marco Monastery by Fra Angelico. The spirit of these
frescoes owes much to the deliberate use and proportion of colour in each arrangement.

In the “Water series” the intent is somewhat different although the interest is still in surface. Using the same diptych format, a smaller more intimate scale is intended to draw the audience into the subtle properties of encaustic wax. In these abstractions produced by the effect of water and pigment, slightly obscured by a veil of wax, the reading of the surface is altered. I am interested in the subtlety of this medium and its ethereal quality. The interest in the effects of water arises from observations of how water travels across surface in nature. Again, translated into painting there is a direct relationship between the way pigment as “spirit” needs water in order for it to materialize, and become “matter “.

Celia Gullett 2013