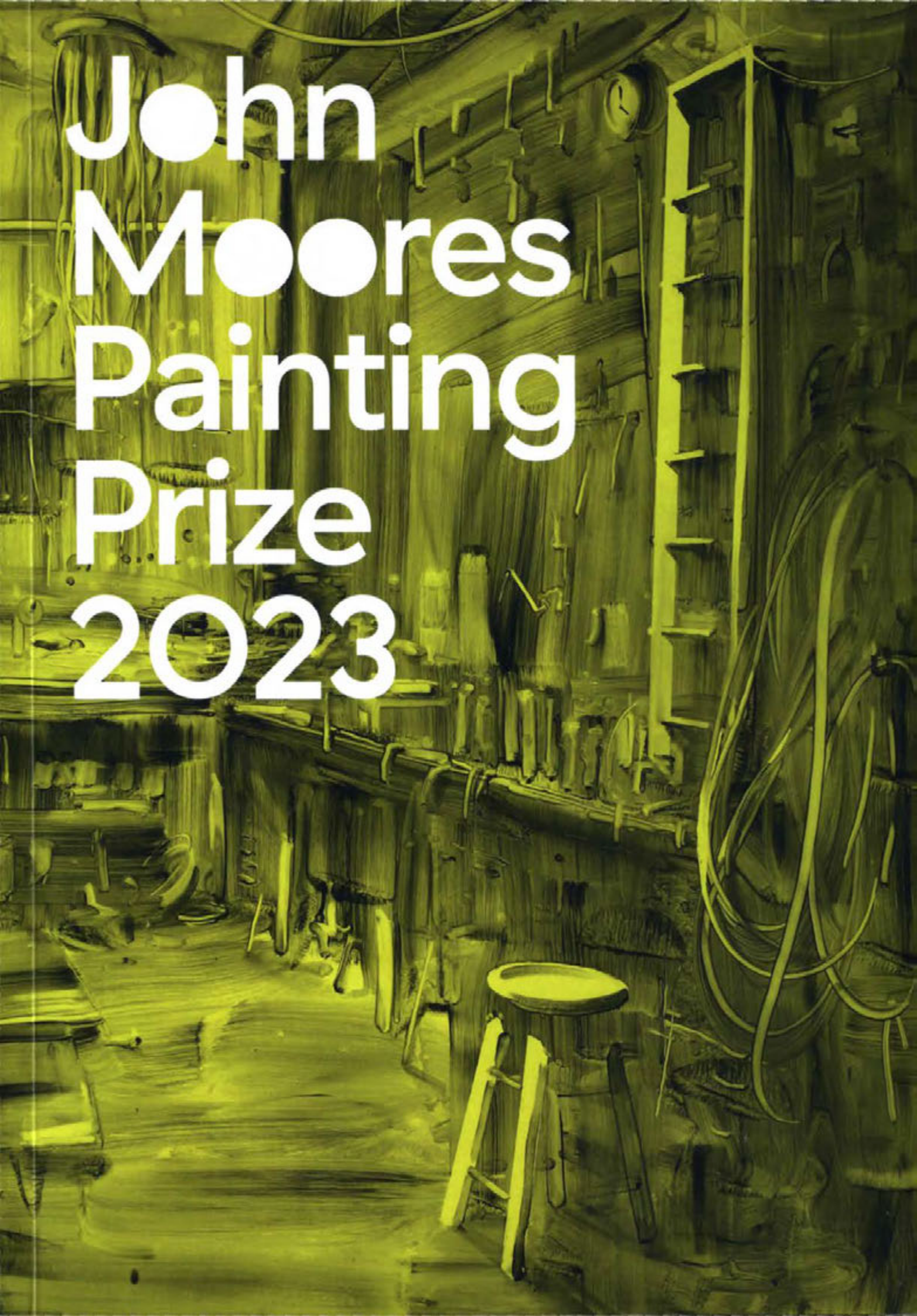

John Moores Painting Prize 2023

Linda Aloysius

Born in Edinburgh

The First Painting in History To Be Recognised By a Public Museum as Painted By a Working-Class Single Mother Artist

2023

Household stains on cotton

49 x 52 x 2 cm

Sweet, can't explain it or where it comes from, playfulness found again and cherished, always within bleakness, poverty, utter despair.

Two tired spoons as hanger, as gallows, and then as tender, downy, living deer ears. Wooden, hard-earned resistance but also keen, twitching, animal attunement, alert and searching for under-the-radar sounds of different, wild, life.

A used tea towel, mass produced, many times washed but still the dirt particles – now painterly pigment – persist, free from shame, to be treasured. Flesh coloured, hanging vulnerable, oddly gorgeous, from quick, rough-sewn threads.

Monochrome. Portrait. Mirror. Mercilessly sliced, internal, dead meat cross-section laid bare, exposed, recoiling. Body and psyche flattened, compressed, machine-woven through by / with / for the patriarchal grid. Every last breath of every living thing muffled, suffocating. But then, delicate, gentle, single, singular, strange, tough, resistant, unlikely, blushing petal unfolding with dancing, giggling ripples.

Absorption of countless brutal hours of invisible labour. Numbing immersion in deadening domesticity. Stains as multiple gathered and clustered bruises of different kinds. Clouded, dark and darkening memories. And then as distant, longed for, to be got there, to be lived there, to be shared there, bountiful landscape of the space of outside.