

## **Contingent**

Erica Mahinay  
23 March - 27 April 2019  
T293 Rome

It is unclear if the idea of the fourth wall was invented by the French philosopher and novelist Denis Diderot, or the playwright Jean Baptiste Moliere. The concept of an invisible, imaginary wall separating actors from the audience is apt when looking at the work of Erica Mahinay. Her paintings attempt to break through the wall between artist and material, surface and what lies beneath, painting and sculpture.

Her red toned works now on show at T293 feel like a single unit, but are intended to be pulled apart and separated. This idea of puncture and pressing, touching and entering are reflected in her methods. The dyed or bleached fabrics she uses are pulled on stretchers until they almost become translucent and tear. She creates holes with her fingers, which are sewn up, creating puckers and ripples. Yet, there is an intended intimacy here rather than an aggressive ripping apart. Here surface is both fascination and an illusion.

The Los Angeles-based artist is interested in unpicking our relationship to perception. She draws on the experimental psychology processes pioneered by John and Joyce Weir. The Weirs were interested in how reality was created by language. Mahinay draws on this idea in a visual way. Her work is rooted in philosophy, neuroscience, language, and the human emotional experience. This leads to artworks that are abstract but not just about process, or surface, or even painting itself. Here they are grounded in expressing and demonstrating how we experience life.

-Francesca Gavin, 2019