



Assembly of Figures I

Keith Vaughan

On display

Title/Description: Assembly of Figures I

Artist/Maker: Keith Vaughan

Born: 1952

Object Type: Painting

Materials: Board, Oil paint

Measurements: H. 1422 x W. 1668mm

Accession Number: 50494

Production Place: Britain, England

Credit Line: Accepted by HM Government in lieu of Inheritance Tax and allocated to the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, 2011

Keith Vaughan said, 'I paint male nudes because I know what it feels like to be a man', and in this painting, he makes visible the complexity of masculine identities. Notice the body language and gaze of the figures. They stand as a group yet appear disconnected from one another.

Although the painting perhaps depicts a psychological distance between the figures, Vaughan has also created a space for masculinities to assemble. The art historian Gregory Salter has linked Vaughan's photography of his gay friends outdoors in erotic poses during the 1930s, with his painted nude figures in landscapes.

Vaughan described himself as '...a member of the criminal class'. His diaries explore and document his sexuality during a time when it was illegal to be homosexual. In this work painted in 1952, despite their differences, Vaughan's group of male nudes command attention and say, 'we are here'.

Sim Panaser, June 2020
