

## **Title: Real Lives - Painted Pictures**

List of painters:

Susie Hamilton	<a href="http://www.susiehamilton.co.uk">www.susiehamilton.co.uk</a>
Eleanor Moreton	<a href="http://www.eleanormoreton.co.uk">www.eleanormoreton.co.uk</a>
Lexi Strauss	<a href="http://www.lexistrauss.com">www.lexistrauss.com</a>
Jacqueline Utley	<a href="http://www.re-title.com/artists/jacqueline-utley.asp">http://www.re-title.com/artists/jacqueline-utley.asp</a>
Rebecca Fortnum	<a href="http://www.mdx.ac.uk/about-us/our-people/staffdirectory/fortnum-rebecca">http://www.mdx.ac.uk/about-us/our-people/staffdirectory/fortnum-rebecca</a>
Barbara Howey	<a href="http://barbara-howey.co.uk">http://barbara-howey.co.uk</a>

In this age of mass global image access through digital technology figurative painting has seen a resurgence especially among women painters. Why this should be is an interesting question. Painting exists in a different social and psychological space than the screen of the computer. It has presence as a thing, an object with the evidence of labour and time marked upon it. It gives voice to individual preoccupations in a physical and intimate relationship with the viewer. If you get close enough to the surface it smells. The paintings of these artists explore women's lives and figuration provides a framework for these experiences.

These works explore painting with wit, playfulness and a lightness of touch, whilst maintaining an interrogative position both to painting and to the world they encounter. Their work takes a look at the lives of homemakers, childrearers, young women and the elderly through observations of the real world or through art history and film.

The work of Susie Hamilton looks in a wry, stripped back way at the trials, compulsions and chores of shopping. Her work features elderly women struggling with aging bodies, low incomes and the daily need for food. Eleanor Moreton explores psychologies within domestic interiors gleaned from wide reference points from contemporary life to art historical motifs. Lexi Strauss's witty portrayals of men attempting breastfeeding appear "clownish and vulnerable" exuding anxiety and confusion. Jacqueline Utley's tiny domestic interiors with their heightened colour and awkward social interactions evoke scenarios of individual loneliness and isolation amongst the flower arranging and stuffed chairs. Rebecca Fortnum's faces are retrieved from a history of sculptural portraits, which she encountered in different museums across Europe. They reflect the dumb encounter with 'others' in the sculpture courts of national collections, across cultures, years, and through the hands of other artists. Barbara Howey's paintings draw on images from photography and film of women who stage themselves or are staged with the viewer in mind.

Barbara Howey June 2016

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