

contemporary british painting

prize 2024



contemporary british painting
prize 2024 longlisted artists:

Damaris Athene
Simon Averill
Ruth Bateman
Daniel H Bell
Frea Buckler
Waffle Burger
Kate Burling
Eric Butcher
John Clark
Philip Cole
Matthew Collings
Alison Critchlow
Ryan Durrant
Zavier Ellis
Samantha Fellows
Sol Golden Sato
Lothar Götz
Melanie Guatelli
Andy Harper
Sarah Jane Hender
Jane Hayes Greenwood
Davina Jackson
Jeehee
Seungjo Jeong
Melissa Kime
Angela Lizon
Ciarrai MacCormac
Lily Macrae
Dougal McKenzie
Harriet Mena Hill

Hugh Mendes
Efrat Merin
Jemima Moore
Christina Niederberger
Laurence Noga
David Oates
Greg Palmer
Stuart Pearson Wright
Georgia Peskett
Miroslav Pomichal
Jen Roper
Sophia Rosenthal
Yevgen Samborsky
Benet Spencer
Corinna Spencer
Olivia Sterling
Mark Surridge
Ilona Szalay
Simon Taylor
Helen Thomas
Mimei Thompson
Andrew Torr
Polly Townsend
Toby Ursell
Virginia Verran
Kate Walters
Suzy Willey
Olly Winder
Lisa Wright
Neil Zakiewicz

the
contemporary
british
painting
prize 2024

BayArt, 54B/C, Bute Street, Cardiff CF10 5AF
14 September - 19 October 2024

Thames-Side Studios Gallery, Thames-Side Studios, Harrington Way
Warspite Road, Royal Borough of Greenwich, London SE18 5NR
1 - 17 November 2024

Huddersfield Art Gallery Curates at Yorkshire Artspace:
Persistence Works, 21 Brown Street, Sheffield S1 2BS
30 November 2024 - 11 January 2025

Simon Averill | Ruth Bateman | Daniel H Bell | Eric Butcher | Alison Critchlow
Zavier Ellis | Lothar Götz | Andy Harper | Davina Jackson | Angela Lizon
Lily Macrae | Dougal McKenzie | Harriet Mena Hill | Sophia Rosenthal
Olivia Sterling | Simon Taylor | Polly Townsend



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Second edition published by Contemporary British Painting November 2024
Statements made by the artists in their own words
Introduction by Molly Thomson
The Blyth Gallery Exhibition Award text by Mindy Lee
The Judith Tucker Memorial Prize text by Griselda Pollock
Daniel H Bell essay by Louisa Buck

Catalogue design by Natalie Dowse at IDprojects.org
Front cover image Daniel H Bell 'Dusk' (detail)
ISBN: 978-1-7397818-5-9

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Introduction

The Contemporary British Painting Prize 2024

The Contemporary British Painting Prize is an open competition that offers artists working within the broad arena of painting an opportunity to submit their work and be considered for the annual exhibition and prize. An Open such as this provides an important platform for artists, and the focus on painting promotes reflection on what is going on in this area as well as extending debate and forging new connections. The fact that the selectors from within Contemporary British Painting change each year also means that the debate around the submissions is never stale or static.

There were more than 1200 submissions for the prize this year. This impressive response reflected interest from across the whole of the UK, presenting an enormous challenge to the 2024 selectors, for whom the task was interesting, rewarding and completely daunting. This year also, following the sad death of Judith Tucker, who was such an energetic force within Contemporary British Painting, two additional prizes will be awarded in her memory.

My fellow selectors Natalie Dowse, Andrew Litten, Rich Jellyman and I each had the job of selecting 17 artists out of all the submissions. It was a long and intense process and to say it was difficult to whittle our individual lists down to 17 is an understatement. However, despite the unfortunate necessity of leaving people out, too much interesting work is not a bad problem for a selector to have. In the end it was good to see some of the artists who dropped off one list appear on one of the other three and from there become part of the final discussion.

Judging painting on a screen isn't always easy, but I was impressed by the level of care and attention given to the photographing of work and to the accompanying statements. This allowed us the best access possible to the nature of the work and the thinking behind it. There was a wide range of current concerns and individual approaches reflected in the work, whether from a central position within painting or

Opposite:

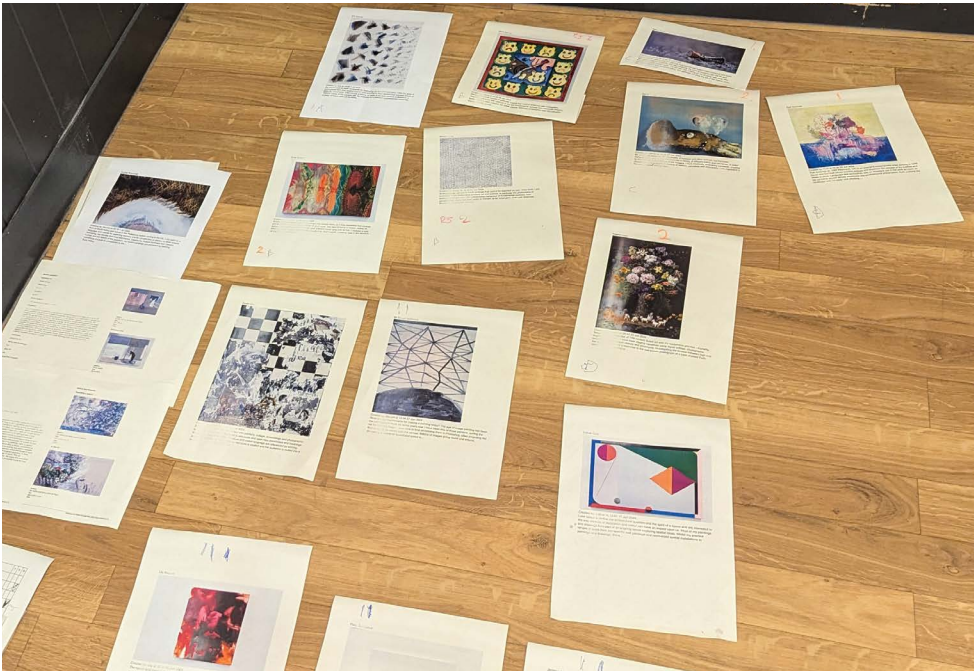
*Molly Thomson, Rich Jellyman, Andrew Litten and Natalie Dowse
deliberating on selection day in Bristol, July 2024*

from its 'expanded' edges. While it can be difficult to make comparisons between very different kinds of work our aim as individuals was to be as open-minded as possible and to focus on finding fresh and interesting voices. This resulted in a wonderfully varied longlist that provided the basis for our shortlist discussion.

Inevitably, selectors will bring their own experiences and knowledge to the task, but when observations and insights are shared in a spirit of generosity and readiness to consider different views, the debate is constructive and able to facilitate difficult decision-making. It was an exhausting process but an uplifting one too. Painting remains an area of practice that is full of energy and new developments, and while the limited selection cannot, of course, be representative of everything that is currently going on in the UK, this year's exhibition brings together a diverse group of exciting artists whose work is rich and thought-provoking.

The terrain we call painting is broad and at its best this ever-evolving practice, with its long history, demonstrates its capacity to reflect and respond to a changing world.

Molly Thomson



The Blyth Gallery Exhibition Award

The Blyth Gallery is an artist led project space at Imperial College, London. The *Blyth Gallery Exhibition Award* is an opportunity to work with me on developing a solo, or small group show in 2026/27. This award offers curatorial and technician support, publicity, private view refreshments, one artist fee of £200 and an additional £200 funding towards transport of works. The exhibition will also be publicised on the CBP newsletter, website and @paintbritain social media.

I was very excited to judge the first *Blyth Gallery Exhibition Award* last year. It was a great opportunity to be introduced to new painters from across the country. I spent an action-packed afternoon and evening looking at work and hearing the artists talk openly about their practice. It was a close call, as I was tempted by several works. I awarded the prize to Emma Tod for her quiet, enigmatic paintings that left me curious to explore them further in a new context.

I am currently working on a group show with Emma titled *Come Closer* which will run from 28 May -19 June 2025. Exhibiting artists include Haroun Hayward, Boo Saville, Chris Hanlon, Emma Tod, Michelle Ussher, Gary Colclough.

Mindy Lee

CBP member Mindy Lee is the Head of Art at the Blyth Music and Arts Centre, Imperial College, London. She has supported creative practice through curation and teaching for the past 20 years, since graduating from the RCA, MA Painting in 2004. She was longlisted for the CBP painting prize in 2024.

The Judith Tucker Memorial Prize

in association with
Contemporary British Painting

Judith Tucker (1960-2023) was a British artist who taught Fine Art at the University of Leeds. She demonstrated a lifelong commitment to painting and to the artist community, including being a Founder member of Contemporary British Painting. At the time of her death in November 2023, she was its Chair. Her extensive body of work, created in series, examined and reflected upon landscape as place, memory and environment through both oil painting and large-scale drawing.

Two prizes of £3000 and £1500 are offered, in her memory, to a woman artist based in the U.K. whose practice explores the relations between memory, place, environment and landscape through contemporary painting. In this first year the judges of the prize will be the three trustees of the Fund: Lubaina Himid MBE, Griselda Pollock and Harriet Tarlo. The announcement of the winner will be made on 30 November 2024 at the Huddersfield Art Gallery installation of the Contemporary British Painting Prize at Sheffield Persistence Works.

Griselda Pollock writes on behalf of the trustees:

Moved by shock and grief at the cruel taking of Judith Tucker's life on 13 November, 2023, we felt the need to commemorate her beautiful creative life, her energy, generosity, support and laughter by instituting a prize in her name. Overwhelmed by the generosity of so many friends, family, colleagues and former students who immediately donated to the fund, we have been able to offer two prizes - one to consolidate and one to encourage painters - sharing Judith's profound commitment to painting as a practice, through which she explored a fundamental sense of land and place coloured with memories, personal, social, historical, ecological, and indeed traumatic.



*Judith Tucker in
her studio 2022*

Judith Tucker enlivened everything she did and everyone she touched as artist, teacher, mentor, friend, organiser, writer, beloved. Mourning does not end for those who lost her; memory can be a force to honour what she invited us all to respect. Akin to the spirit of Hannah Arendt's earthliness, Judith Tucker's practice was grounded on the earth as a living place we shared with all the living forms. Land carries memories older than time yet we impress our lives upon it, leaving traces. As planetary catastrophe looms for our shared world, Judith Tucker took the legacies of landscape painting into emerging dialogues with sociologists, philosophers, ecologists, climate strategists, art historians and above all poets.

The depth of her multi-disciplinary thinkings, her intellectual curiosity, her ethical sensitivities, her political commitments, and the sheer brilliance of her ever evolving artistic 'research' through materialities, processes, techniques in both painting and drawing is an inspiration, tragically made clearer to us in her disappearance from the world she so enlivened. We hope that the love and respect that has enabled us to offer this prize will be our puny acknowledgement of the force for good and for art that Judith was in the world and shall continue to be in the name this prize celebrates as a continuing inspiration.

Daniel H Bell: Strange Nature

by Louisa Buck

Every normal human being (and not merely the 'artist') has an inexhaustible store of buried images in his subconscious, it is merely a matter of courage or liberating procedures ... of voyages into the unconscious, to bring pure and unadulterated found objects to light.

- Max Ernst

Daniel H Bell's small, strange paintings snag the eye and embed themselves in the psyche. The more you gaze into the limpid translucent surfaces of these mysterious mini *mises en scène*, the odder they become. Things dematerialise and morph into something else altogether and it's never clear what exactly is taking place. In 'Dusk' (2024) a bulbous brown shape with what looks like a single cataracted eye and ending in a trio of chunky white tentacles exhales a pair of delicate white bubbles which waft upwards against a crepuscular pink and blue backdrop too smooth to be sky. Are we looking at a sporing fungus, the death throes of a beached sea creature, a gruesomely severed udder, or all or none of the above?

Even when we know what we are seeing, we can't quite believe our eyes. 'Caterpillar' (2024) fulfils its title by depicting the stripy yellow and black larvae of the cinnabar moth, but why are these critters pouring from the severed neck of a dead donkey? And what about the demonic blue eyes glaring out from the ectoplasmic cloud in the foreground? Just as the surrealists revelled in the spark to the subconscious fired by the unexpected combinations of unrelated objects, so Bell finds inspiration in the suggestiveness and subversive energy triggered by unplanned shapes, forms and encounters. As Max Ernst declared, "*creativity is that marvellous capacity to grasp mutually distinct realities and draw a spark from their juxtaposition.*"

In common with Ernst, Magritte et al, many of the images in Bell's paintings are arrived at by chance, often snapped on his compact camera during walks in the countryside. These grabbed pictures are then worked over back in the studio and

filtered through Bell's vision. The prone donkey was originally spotted by Bell whilst it was sleeping in a field, and in a recent painting 'Newt' (2024) Bell brings about the unholy union of a scarily enlarged human-like hand of a dead newt discovered on his rural wanderings, combined with a picture he recently took of his mother, both of which are then fused in supernova-like clouds of paint. Often inspiration can arrive out of the most mundane moments. The ghostly faces emerging out of the painterly shadows of 'Damp' (2024), as its title suggests, have their starting point in the spots and splodges of a damp attic wall; and as well as appreciating their smooth surfaces and crisp edges, Bell's decision to work on modestly sized found blocks of previously used wood, MDF or hardboard, is in great part so that their stains, marks and knotholes can offer a route into future imagery.

In the same spirit as the automatic methods used by the surrealists, Bell also uses the paint itself to throw up more suggestive shapes and dictate the course of a work. He makes a point of mixing a variety of substances: acrylic, oils, varnish, emulsion, filler and even fake blood can all co-exist in a single work. These are then built up in layers on the unyielding grounds of wood and MDF upon which they can bleed into each other and react in often unexpected ways. He always has several paintings on the go in the studio at the same time, which he leaves lying flat upwards like creative Petri dishes, so he can move between them, observing and reacting to what is happening on their surfaces. "I like the unpredictability of not knowing what things are going to do as I'm using them," he says, and then only finding over time "how they mix together and change, and then how I can manipulate that."

Bell did a degree in painting at Glasgow School of Art, but by the time he graduated in 2003 he wasn't interested in making paintings any more. For a while he made kinetic sculpture and then went to Norwich School of Art and Design and took an MA in Digital Practices. However while the course gave him useful skills in animation and sound design, he still found himself drawn away from the digital and back to the tactile and the material. After a few subsequent years working in nature conservation

and making a more in-depth study of biology and the natural world, Bell returned to making films that increasingly reflected his love of the stuff of things. Through making models for these early films and animations he rekindled an interest in creating textured surfaces, and, as he puts it, “painting crept back in.” But while these more recent and ongoing paintings still pay tribute to the artists Bell admires – from the morally ambivalent, tragi-comic figures of Philip Guston to the dark fantasies of Goya and the sumptuous symbolism of Odilon Redon – unlike his earlier works they are no longer predicated on specific content. Now the paint itself takes centre stage as the active protagonist.

For the past few years painting has co-existed with the moving image as two complementary and equally important strands in his work. Their relationship is symbiotic. The films provide a rich source of imagery for his paintings and his paintings can often be glimpsed in the background of the films. At times the paint is unleashed as an animated glopping, plopping liquid filmed presence in its own right. Like his paintings, Bell’s films are modest in scale but pack a hefty psychological punch. Brief hallucinatory fragments, they flare up to capture visceral, magical moments of natural entropy and oddity, often accompanied by peculiar guttural, scratching abstract sounds that are the fruits of Bell’s field recordings. Both film and paintings take their starting point in often random encounters with the natural world that can be scary, funny, beautiful and repellent, sometimes all at once.

In one film – they are all untitled - the hugely magnified single eye of a slug swivels at the end of its stalk to scrutinise its surroundings; in another we get uncomfortably up close and personal with a snail as it noisily consumes a blade of grass. A stoat runs past a camera left out in the wild. Wonkily taxidermied birds or parts of birds are reanimated, with the webbed clawed foot of a dead coot memorably made to flex in a deeply disquieting way. For just a few seconds a dead cinnabar moth comes back to exaggerated life to buzz and quiver convulsively, attached to the dual leads of a tiny motor. Chilli peppers dangle damply and lumpily off their plant to an ominous electronic sound track, and a fully formed blackberry miraculously pops up out of a purple stain. Even Bell’s dog is given the uncanny treatment as she careers through sea and snow to a soundtrack by experimental German rock band Faust while due

to some nifty reverse filming, the steam of her frosty barking breath is dramatically sucked back into her mouth.

Bell is particularly fond of fungi, their forms and colours and the way they can mutate, explode, seep and shapeshift. They infiltrate his paintings and often run amok in his films where various fungal species occasionally acquire eyes and skedaddle around; or are time-lapse filmed as they bloom, sprout, collapse or simply exist in all their weirdness. The wonderfully named King Alfred’s Cakes, a fungus species that cross-dresses as a potato and produces copious piles of sooty black spores, makes a number of appearances and there’s also a memorable sequence of pulsating oyster mushrooms. Puffballs are another favourite in their many modes, as is the Blusher Mushroom, a type of fungus that resembles a crusty loaf of bread.

But while Bell’s work is testament to his close and often tender engagement with nature there is nothing cute or romantic about his relationship with the natural world. Death, entropy and decay are treated with a dark, unsentimental humour and a refusal to idealise. There’s a bodily sense of flux and a whiff of the repellent in the shifting turbulence of his smoky paint surfaces and the unsettling hybrid beings they coalesce to form; while in his films the animal, the avian, the amphibian and the fungal all assume distinctly human qualities. In Bell’s peculiar free-association scenarios nothing is fixed or finite and it is impossible to settle on any single meaning or interpretation. In his work as in the world at large, everything is interconnected and in a perpetual state of motion and metamorphosis. This is what makes these paintings and films so compelling. We gaze into their unfolding realities in much the same way as Bell himself peered as a child into the enticing depths of the wild pond near his family home in Shropshire. We cannot resist looking, and there is both trepidation and also excitement in not knowing quite what we might find.



The artists...

Simon Averill

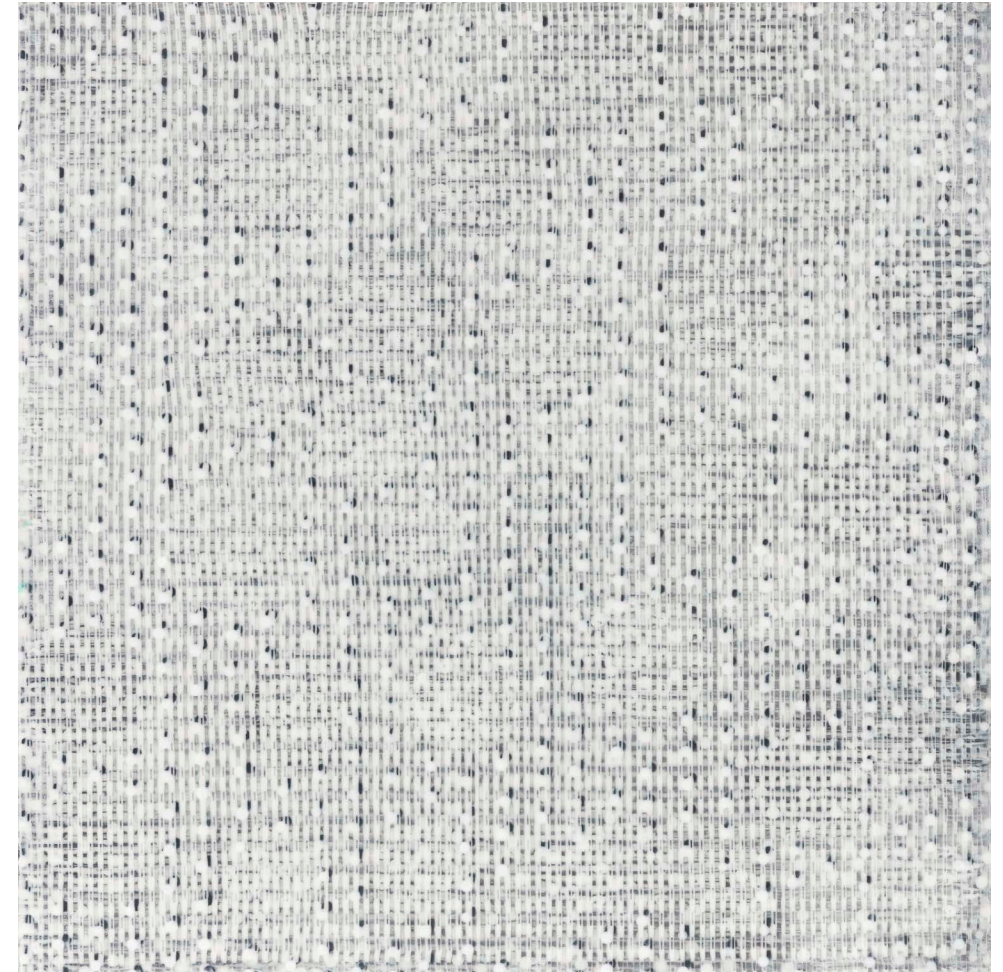
'Everything we call real is made of things that cannot be regarded as real.' *Niels Bohr*.

I am interested in the relationship between art and science, in particular the phenomena of quantum entanglement - the extraordinary behaviour of fundamental particles, their particle/wave duality and their ability to interact, to be 'entangled', over vast distances.

Scientists accept there is much that is unknown or misunderstood about Quantum Entanglement. It is this uncertainty that gives me space as an artist to imagine and explore. A physicist might say that form and colour do not, indeed cannot, exist at the fundamental level. As an artist I am not bound by these physical constraints; I have permission to misunderstand; to go beyond the physics; to make space for imagination and art.

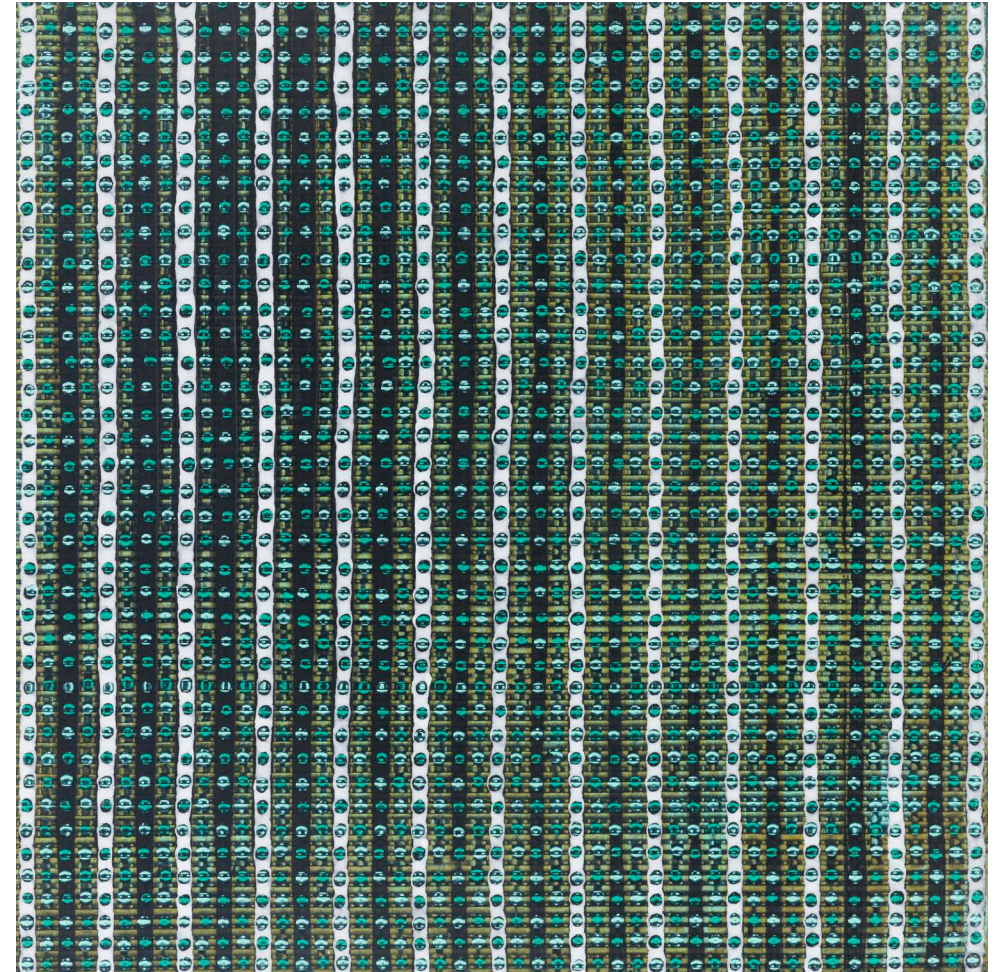
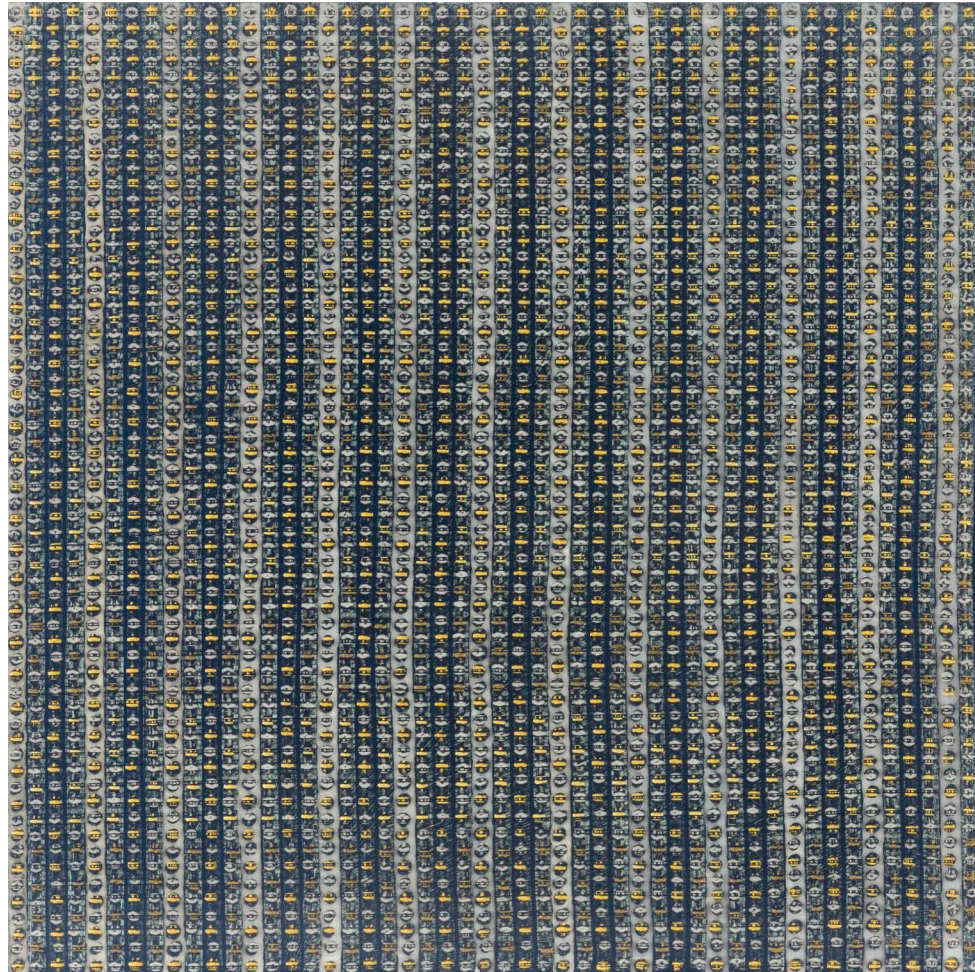
I treat these paintings as a series of thought experiments. Each brushstroke a particle, each layer a wave. I am dealing with illusion, testing the possibilities of liminal space where the focus is on or just below the surface. Juxtaposition of colour and mark create an optical disturbance requiring the eye to constantly shift its focus.

In the developmental stages of the painting there is space for expression and gesture, as it edges towards resolution I try to remove the makers mark, as if the painting might have made itself.



Entanglement 156

Acrylic on wooden panel, 40cm x 40cm, 2023



Entanglement 161
Acrylic on wooden panel, 40cm x 40cm, 2023

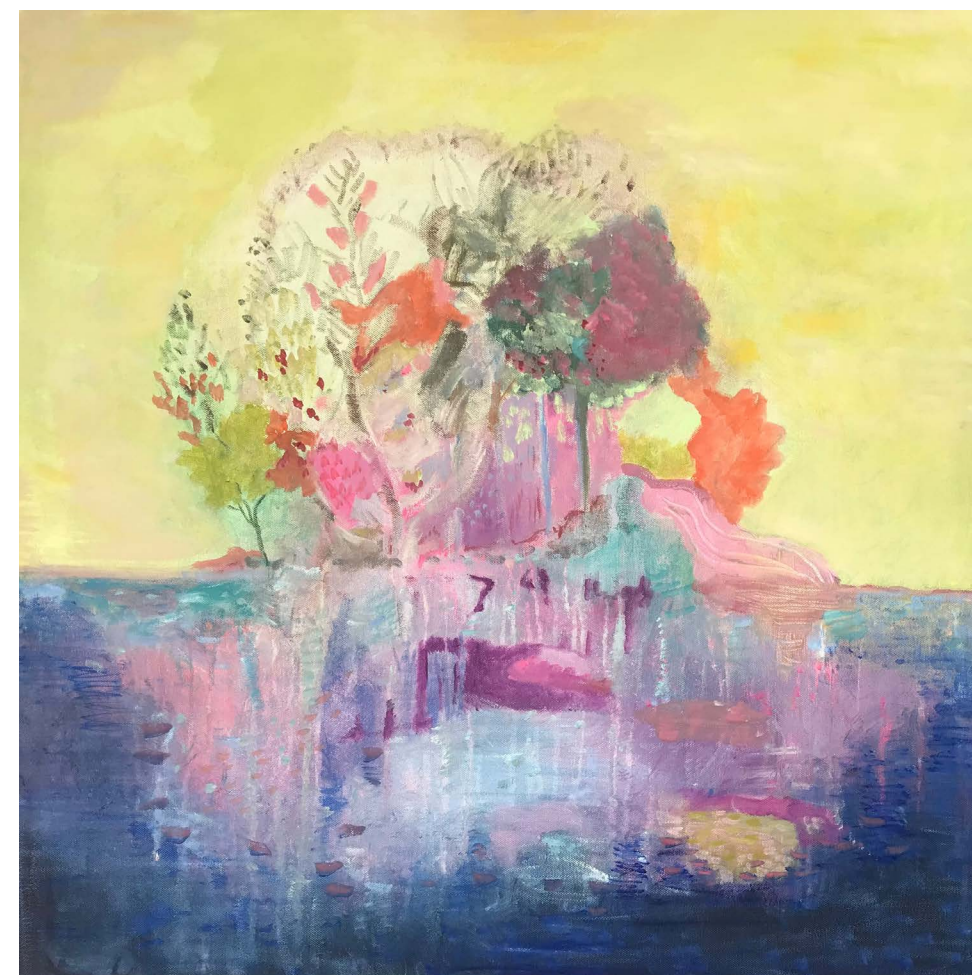
Entanglement 166
Acrylic on wooden panel, 40cm x 40cm, 2023

Ruth Bateman

Ruth Bateman is an emerging contemporary artist working in North Devon and Cornwall whose practice pursues and questions the concept of the sublime and sense of place. Landscape and connectivity play an important role in her work as much as her concerns around climate awareness and environmental preservation.

Ruth explores the landscape with her body: rock climbing, mountaineering, and cycling. This bodily experience of landscape is reflected in the kinetic way she creates her painting. Allowing herself to be entirely instinctive with paint; the mark making and choices of colour are initially intuitive and spontaneous, being tamed and refined as the painting progresses. Ruth uses conventional materials such as acrylics, oil, inks on canvas, along with non-conventional materials such as tea, mud, bedsheets and other found surfaces.

Ruth's paintings are a conflation of both internal and external landscape, her work acts as an expression and celebration of difference, but also a statement of the tension between man and the environment. Being neurodivergent, Ruth sees art as another language which enables us to enter a world where there are no barriers. She utilises the communicative powers of visual expression to problem solve, ask questions, explore, give voice and empower.



Together
Oil over acrylic, 70cm x 70cm, 2024



Made Certain
Oil over acrylic, 70cm x 70cm, 2024



Cloud
Acrylic and mixed media, 60cm x 60cm, 2023

Daniel H Bell

My works are based on the physicality of humans and other animals, but fractured, ambiguous and uncanny. I incorporate a variety of different paints and varnishes, in order to reinforce the hybrid nature of the imagery. I work intuitively, embracing accidents, trying to create a mixture of realism, caricature and abstraction. I am interested in the way surfaces shift and change, and how I can develop figuration through the more unpredictable aspects of the paint's application. All my work is inspired by the natural world, and I see the disfigurement and uneasiness in my paintings as a reflection of its vulnerability.



Dusk

Acrylic and varnish on MDF, 40cm x 32cm, 2024



Damp
Oil and acrylic on MDF, 15cm x 10cm, 2024



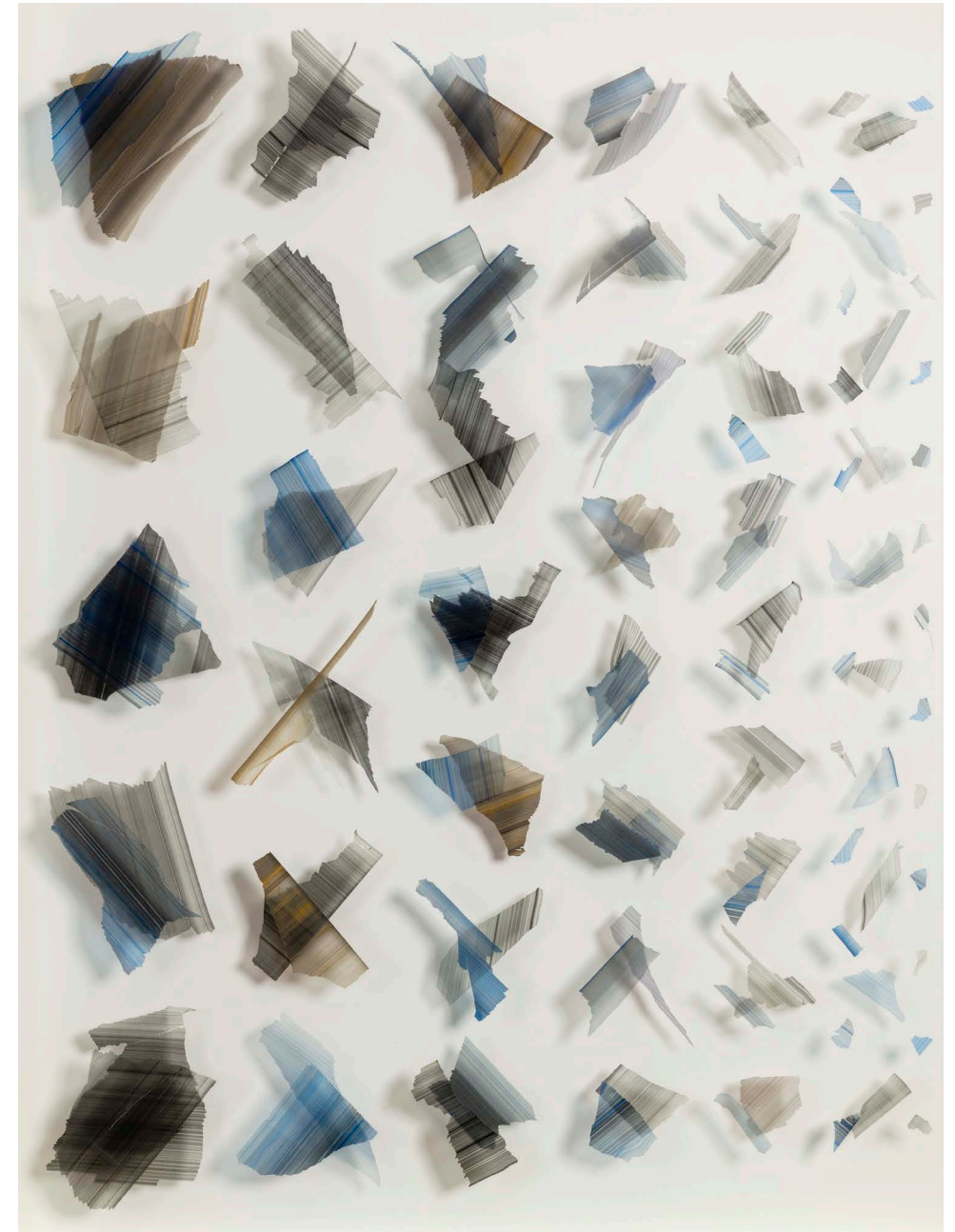
Caterpillar
Acrylic, emulsion, filler and gel on MDF, 24cm x 17cm, 2024

Eric Butcher

My current work is made exclusively by destroying my previous work. It is the result of a process of investigation into my studio practice, an attempt at its systematic deconstruction and a response to profound environmental anxiety. Confronted by the overwhelming environmental problems facing the world my former studio practice seemed vain, selfish and indulgent. What is it that my work consisted in but taking precious resources and turning them in to useless objects?

My crisis was one of meaning, honesty and a search for value and legitimacy, questions with which many artists will be familiar. My solution was to subject my entire practice to a sort of forensic examination. I pulled my work apart, both intellectually and physically, peeling the skins of paint from their aluminium supports and categorising them according to a basic taxonomy. The resulting skins, fragments and traces of paint are presented sandwiched between sheets of glass, like specimens. They provide a record or index of past artistic endeavours, a 'natural history' of my creative past.

Endgame, as I call it, is the modus operandi of all current and future creative work. I will use only those materials already available in the studio; using up, repurposing and recycling what I already have without consuming more (after over 30 years of making art, there's quite a build up). As such this process mirrors society's reflection on a consumerist past - a mea culpa for the sins of unrestrained consumption - and points to a future of aestheticised austerity. I will draw out my use of current resources for as long as possible, being as frugal as I can and when I have run out of materials I will simply **stop making art**.

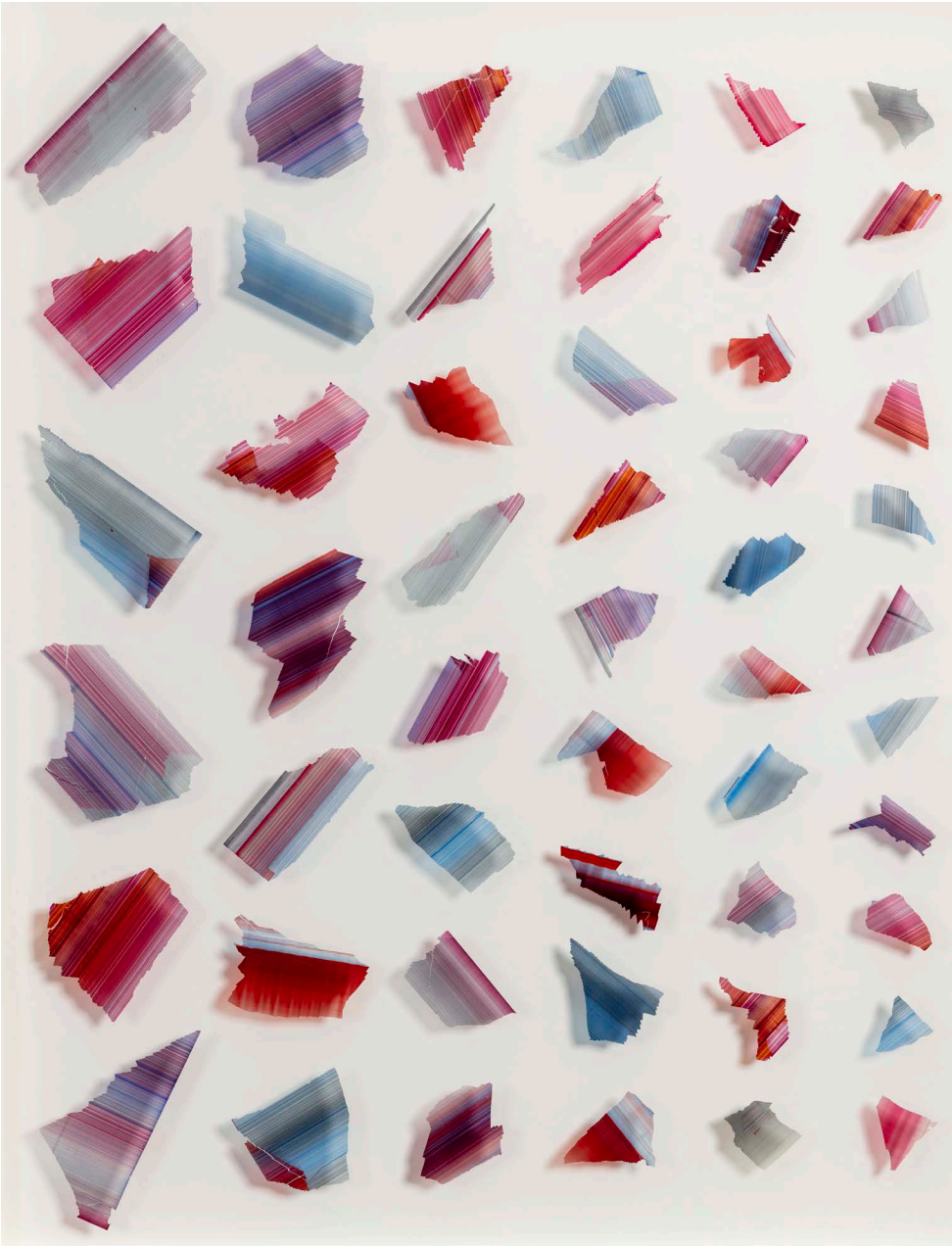


T/R. 1045

Recycled paint fragments: Acrylic, graphite + acrylic gel on glass, 109cm x 86cm, 2024



T/R. 1044
Recycled paint fragments: Acrylic, graphite + acrylic gel on glass, 109cm x 86cm, 2024



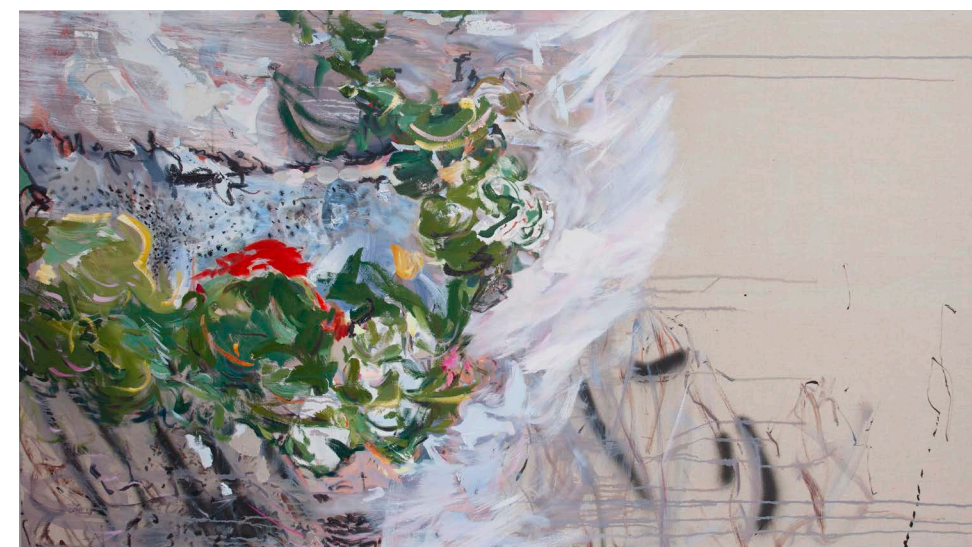
T/R. 1040
Recycled paint fragments: Acrylic, graphite + acrylic gel on glass, 109cm x 86cm, 2024

Alison Critchlow

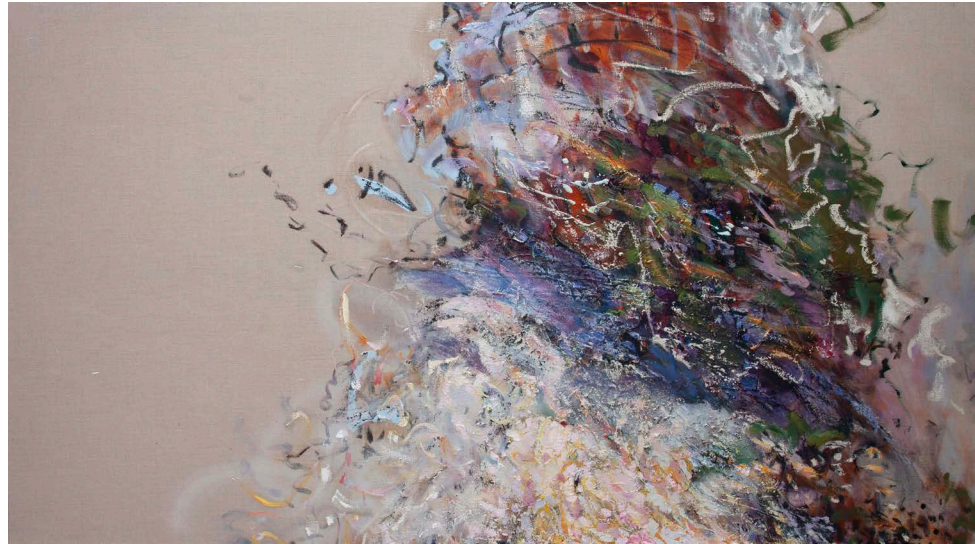
These paintings are in a visual dialogue with Romanian/American artist Hedda Sterne (1910-2011). They are inspired by a set of abstract drawings she made in 1967, sparked by watching a swarm of insects. She titled her series 'Massacre'. I see her drawings as a reflection on how individuals can feel compelled to act as a collective, becoming a form much larger than themselves. Sterne had witnessed horrific scenes during WW2 in Nazi Europe before escaping to New York in 1941. Her artistic inquiries are very pertinent for the here and now and a fresh reassessment of her work and ideas is long overdue.

Like her, I am interested in the relationship between internal and external landscape, memory and human potential. I am fascinated by the language of paint and employ a range of marks as a type of vocabulary. Using thick slabs of paint beside delicate dots and lines; the texture and heft of the material, messy and rough, refined or pure, is the syntax of my paintings. I work on several pieces at once, for practical reasons, (building layers slowly) and to allow a creative conversation to unfold with time as an active ingredient. I am interested in material thinking, and creative dialogues. This practice of moving between paintings sets up an arena for watching instinct and thought at work. It is a way of exploring the interface between painting practice and conscious awareness.

In these paintings I am using textures and squiggles which speak the language of swarm. They are investigating the charge in the air, interconnections, echoes and traces - the nature and sound of an imagined swarm at different scales. A bundle of thoughts and impulses all buzzing around my head and my studio - this seems to be the way to paint a swarm.



A swarm in the air
Oil, pastel and spray paint on linen, 180cm x 100cm, 2024



Swarm Twist
Oil on linen, 180cm x 100cm, 2024



Maelstrom
Oil, acrylic, charcoal and spray paint on canvas, 200cm x 180cm, 2023

Zavier Ellis

My practice is a form of contemporary history painting, involving deep research that focuses especially on revolution, resistance and conflict. Subjects include the French Revolution, Spanish Civil War, Civil Rights, fall of the Berlin Wall and birth of monotheism. I am interested in the complexity of history and the tendency for events, methods and motivations to repeat themselves with different iterations. I draw on the past to inform the present and warn against the future.

By employing mixed collage and painterly techniques, often in combination with the use of text, I create a visual symbolism drawn from my research. Whilst adopting rhetorical and propaganda techniques, especially focusing on repetition, I deploy imagery, colour codes and language that reference those specific historical and political events.

Flags, street signs, historical graffiti and worn, patchwork urban surfaces inform my visual language. Always fragmented, I invite the audience into a confused dialogue where the broken, derelict, incomplete and mistaken are embraced to encourage new meanings and interpretations.



Sites of Conflict: Freiheit I
Acrylic, emulsion, spray paint, wax crayon, collage on birch ply, 60cm x 48cm, 2023



Sites of Conflict: No Pasarán
Acrylic, emulsion, spray paint, oil bar, collage on birch ply, 60cm x 48cm, 2024



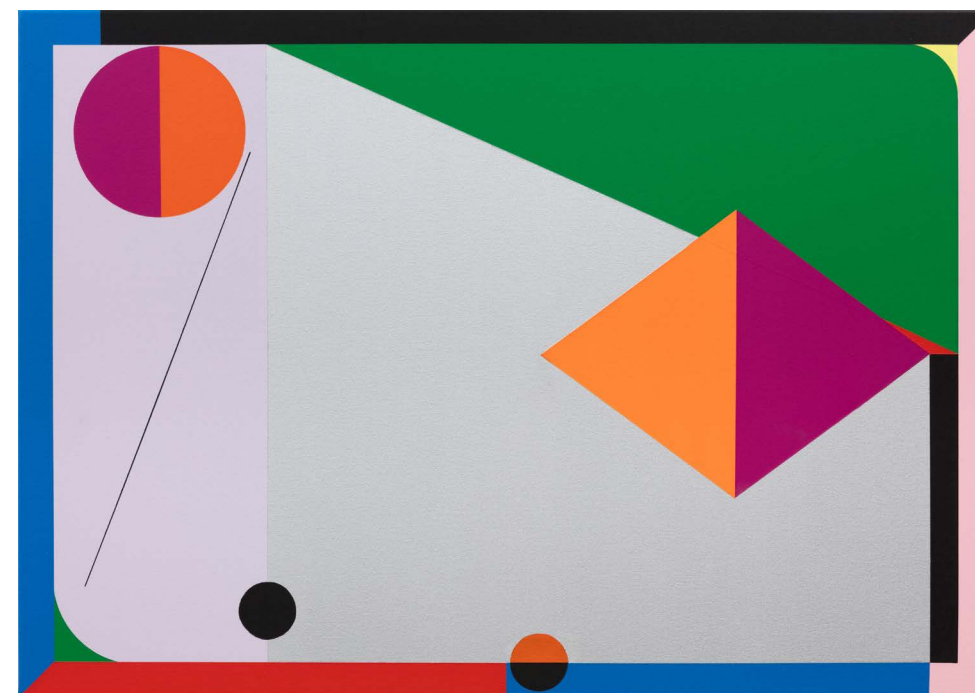
Sites of Conflict: No Pasarán I
Acrylic, emulsion, spray paint, oil bar, collage on birch ply, 30cm x 24cm, 2024

Lothar Götz

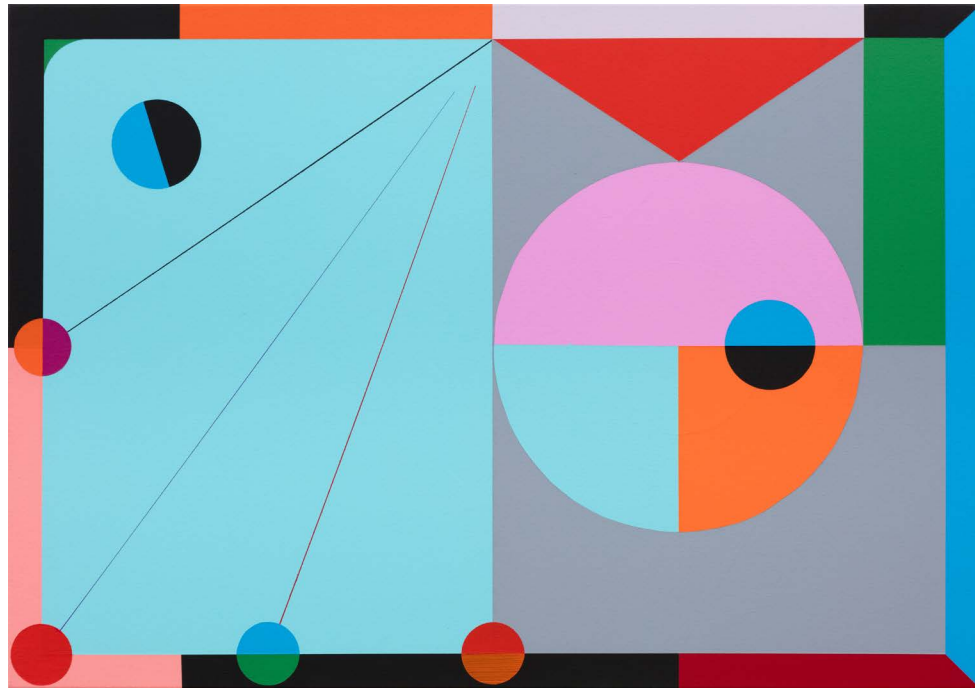
I use colour to define the architectural qualities and the spirit of a space and am interested in the way aspects of decoration and colour can have an impact upon us. Most of my paintings and drawings form part of an ongoing series exploring spatial ideas.

Whilst my practice ranges in scale from site-specific wall paintings and room-sized spatial installations to paintings and drawings, there is a clear coherence and dialogue across my body of work through its continual referencing and engagement with ideas about architecture and space and its characteristic use of abstract geometric forms, fields and lines of intense colour, juxtaposed with one another. Like the wall paintings respond to the actual site they are located in, so do many of my paintings and drawings respond to writings or historical artworks, often connected to the ideas and visions of Modernism.

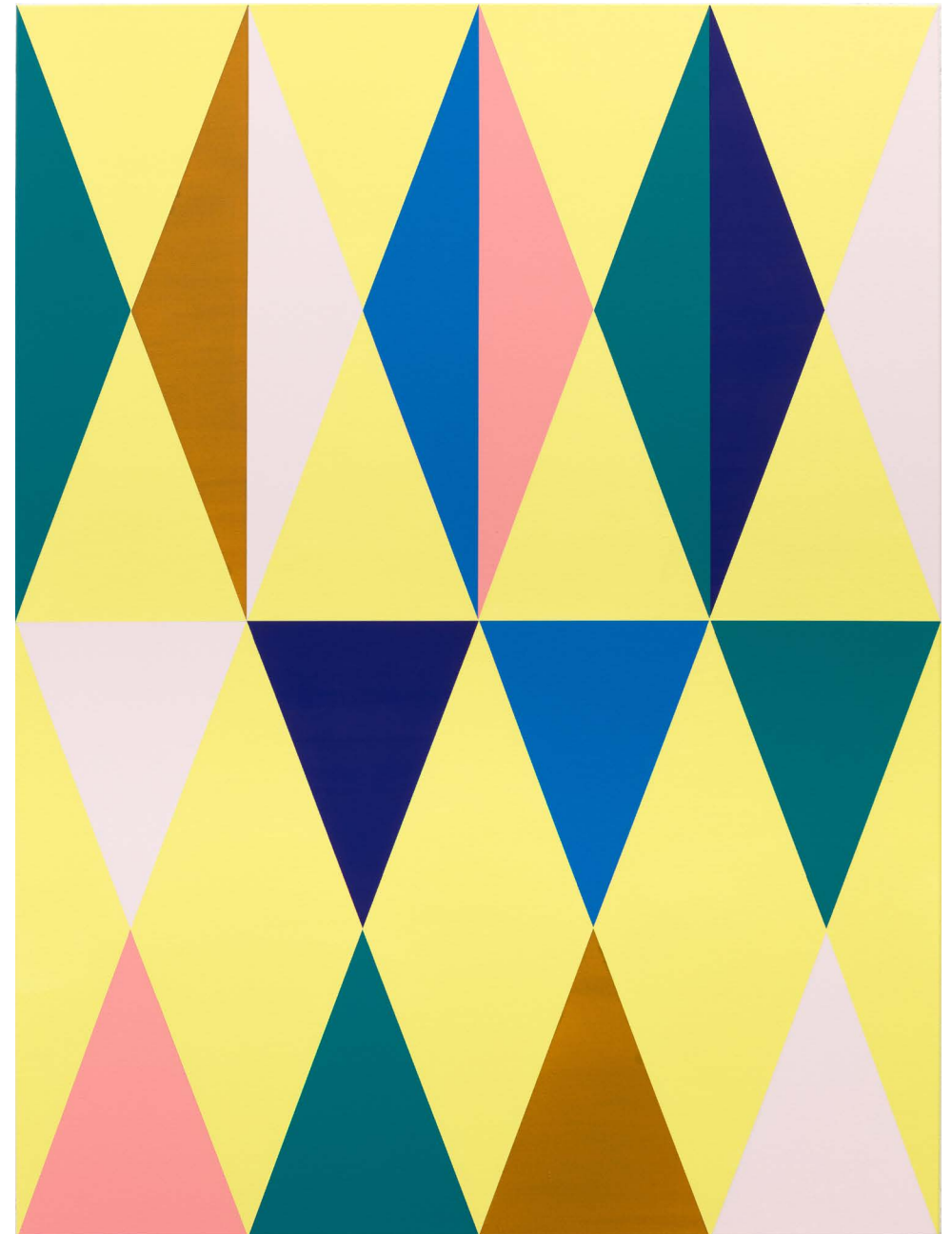
What I enjoy the most in painting is that with colour you can add an abstract layer to reality. Abstract not only in the tradition of abstract painting - I mean abstract as something that has no clear use or is not meant to be something - but also it adds a layer of space which becomes active.



Playground 1
Acrylic on canvas, 60cm x 85cm, 2023



Playground 2
Acrylic on canvas, 60cm x 85cm, 2023



Diamond Yellow
Acrylic on canvas, 120cm x 90cm, 2024

Andy Harper

Artists often cite influences or the things that inspire them, as if they somehow had choices and the ability to bring these to bear on their work. The idea of being a master, acting on desires and fulfilling wishes through your practice never rang true for me. I realised a long time ago, there was so much more I couldn't do, than I could. I believe, less in the freedom of the artist, and more in the inevitable toil of performing what only you can and only you will bring about.

This is not an attempt to reposition or re-affirm the life of an artist as tortured grafter, in my case, every brushstroke torn from my very soul, or a disguised campaign to re-posit the artists labour as one of preordained value. Neither is it a call for some romantic notion of authenticity. For what trains our eyes and hands is omnipresent but unknowable. The skill comes in recognising it and surrendering to it. In big things, like genetics, but also small things, like how you might position a bike on the road, stir a cup of tea or visualise how a rudder might act underwater. If neuroscience has taught us anything it is that everything or perhaps anything can affect how we think, act and in my case, paint.

I often have ideas to make my work more like this or that. I force the tiller, so to speak, but progress always stalls and I have many a bad work from failed moves in the past, but it's all part of the play.



Heave and Haul
Oil on linen, 200cm x 150cm, 2022



Mellifluous
Oil on canvas, 155cm x 155cm, 2023



Staghorn
Oil on linen, 89cm x 122cm, 2022

Davina Jackson

My interest has always remained in the theatrical and psychological use of space and a search for poetic simplicity. Through my approach to painting, I hope to portray the essence of an intimate moment or experience and explore what it feels to be human, our connection to our environment and to each other.

I approach painting much like trying to recall a dream; piecing together the fragments of memory that we intuitively store in order to articulate, observe and understand the present. Images from my childhood that are deeply imbedded in my unconscious memory often emerge through the process of painting. While I am not always sure why I remember something as clearly as I do, it is only after I translate my ideas into an image that it makes so much sense. By utilising memory as a means to access a personal language, I hope to communicate something universal and question not only our emotional capacities, but also allow for a quiet space in a conflicted and intense world.

My inspiration comes from everyday observations, noticing the small incidental nuances in people's movements and interactions with the world. I am interested in the way we inhabit our bodies, how we express ourselves through subtle gestures and reveal inner truths through our eye contact and body language. While I continue to draw images from my South African roots and the landscapes that I am so familiar with, I also find inspiration through poetry, storytelling, theatre and photography. Figures and stories from Greek mythology which lead to so many different interpretations on the fate of humanity and which find so many parallels and relevance today, also provide ongoing source materials and discoveries.

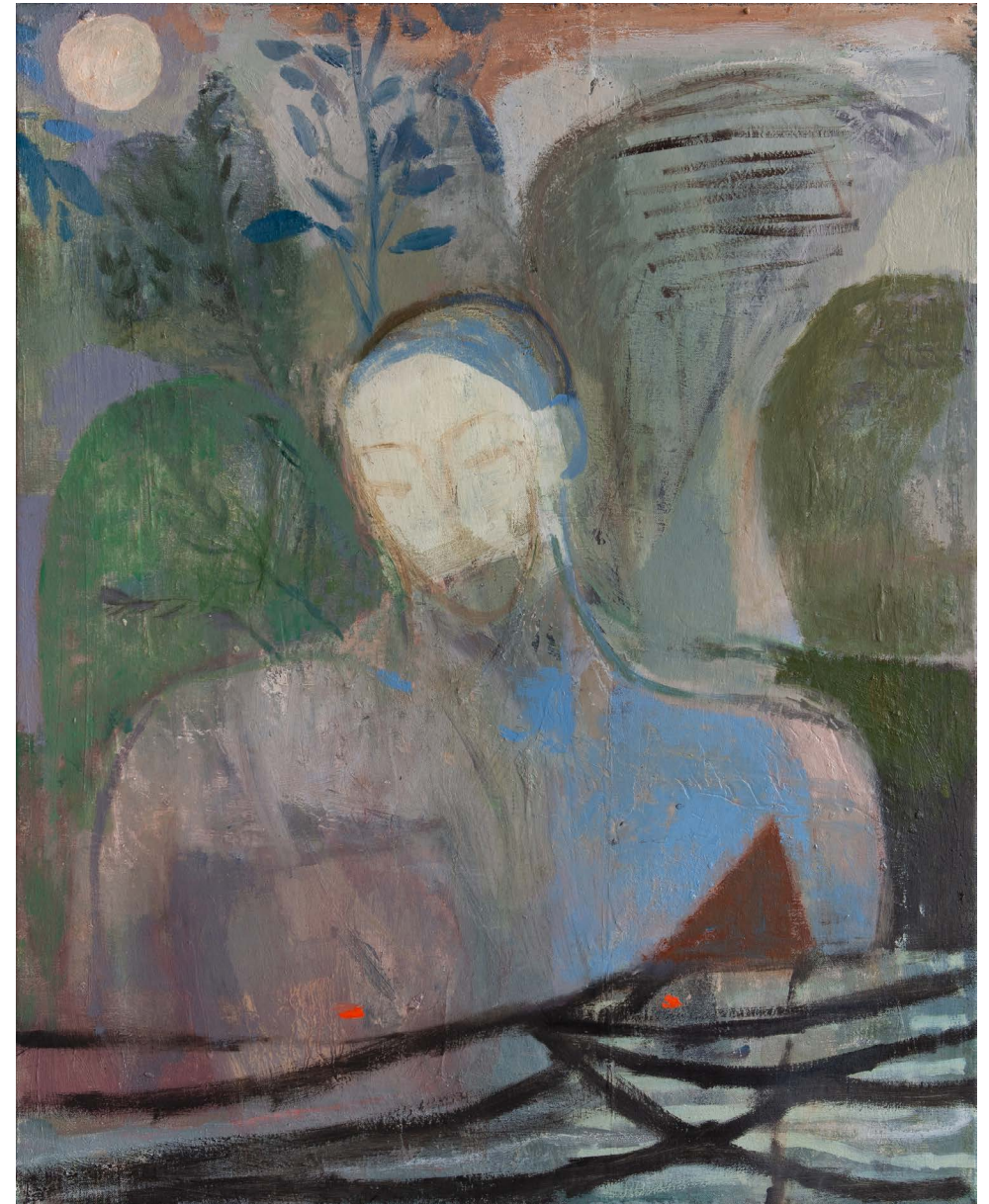
Over the pandemic period I began to use old book covers as a surface and explored ways of juxtaposing the association of discarded and found material with a transformed painted image. *Washing Day*, for example, represents a moment in time where we are witnessing something that feels familiar but is also very much another's experience (the viewer can speculate but can never fully know). The white sheet and child's dress blowing in the breeze over a resting maid, offers a subtle connection to the apartheid era of South Africa. She sits in a very sexually suggestive and relaxed pose, in contrast to her presumed resignation of subservience. Pushing her to the central forefront, her privacy and orientation is intruded upon.



Washing Day
Acrylic and ink on found book cover, 21cm x 26cm, 2022



Fetching water
Oil on board, 30.5cm x 40.5cm, 2024



Discovering Icarus
Oil on canvas, 76cm x 60cm, 2022

Angela Lizon

Drawing on the language of 17th century Dutch art with its readymade gravitas - mortality, fragility, ostentation - I have been staging narratives using digital collage, photography, kitsch objects, fairies and animated vegetables, investigating the tension between high and low art.

My cultural heritage is reflected in the paintings, a blend of Polish exotica and Cockney humour, which influences the work both atmospherically, emotively and aesthetically. Lockdown 2020 gave me time to take an in-depth look at the flora and fauna of the domestic garden and to reevaluate it as subject matter alongside art historical sources. I now grow and photograph my own flowers, using the bouquet as a stage or backdrop, and intertwine my daily living with my art practice.



All We Like Sheep
Oil on linen, 150cm x 100cm, 2024. Photograph: Dan Weill.



Sniff
Oil on canvas, 15cm x 20cm, 2024



Tulip
Oil on linen, 100cm x 40cm, 2024

Lily Macrae

The nature and materiality of paint - primarily oil paint - as a tool holds so much possibility. Painting is this wonderful collision of alchemy and idea. It has an otherworldly quality; able to exist somewhere in between reality and dreams, between the past present and future.

My practice is rooted in a desire to use painting as a method to reveal rather than just record. I use an almost subtractive method of working; applying the paint and then wiping back through the surface. For me, painting itself is used simultaneously as an act of excavation and construction of an image.

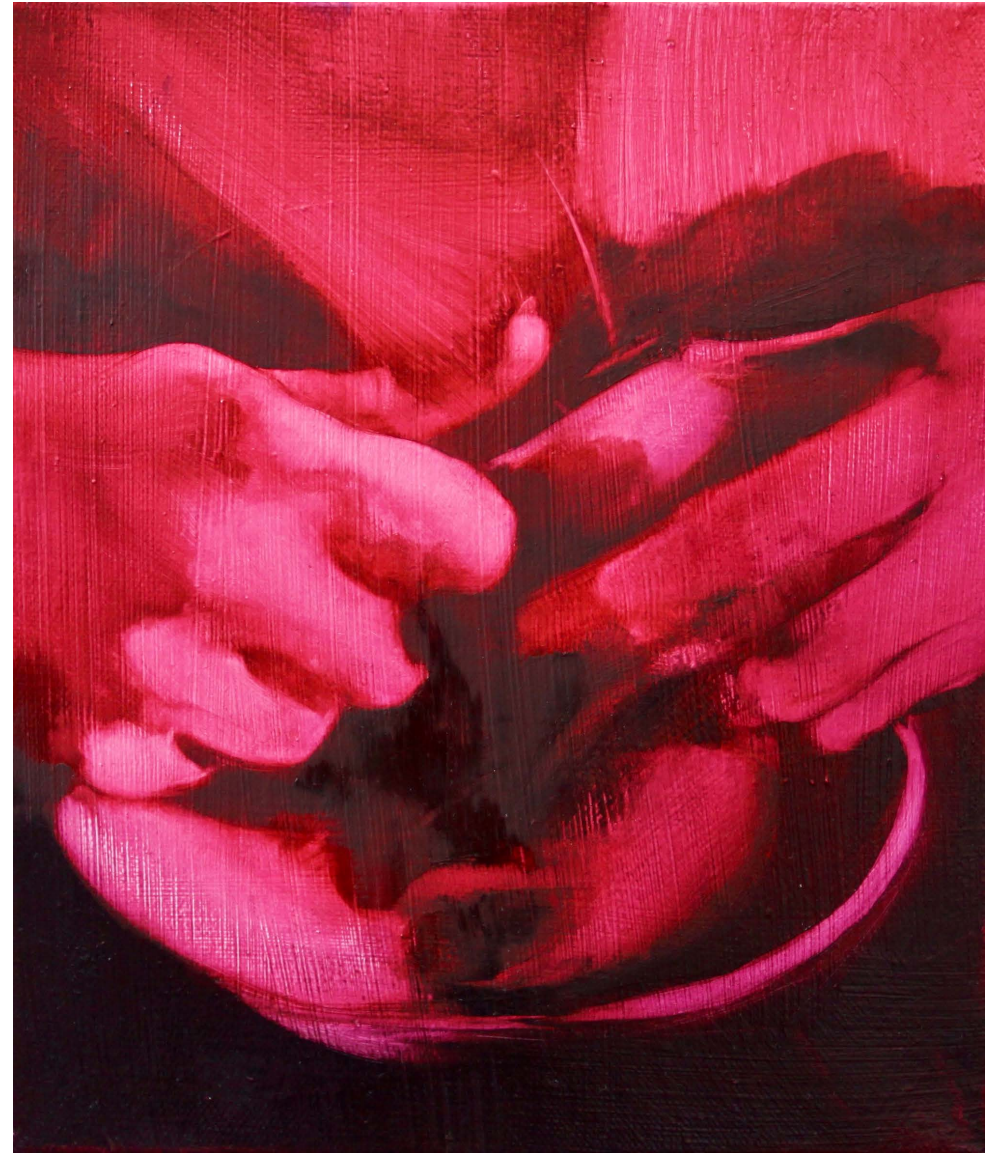
The choice to make a painting is in itself a choice to reference and engage with the past. To interact with and decontextualise that which has come before us and that which will be there long after we are gone. Often anchored by an appropriated motif, found imagery from art history, or film stills my work re-imagines universal stories and myths; highlighting their power, beauty, and often absurdity. I want to celebrate the alchemy and fleshy potential which oil paint holds; for the work to hold both tension and tenderness, power and vulnerability.



Squeezing Grapes
Oil on linen, 50cm x 60cm, 2023



Slumber
Oil on linen, 50cm x 60cm, 2023



Peel
Oil on linen, 30cm x 35cm, 2023

Dougal McKenzie

What are my requirements for making a painting today? The age of image painting has been the predominant mode for some years now. I have been one of those painters, surfing the net for relevant images, from time to time processing them in Photoshop, often projecting the final image to be traced onto the canvas. Billions of images going round and around, circulating at whatever broadband speed is available in this our Fifth Generation age. Painting within this mode became for me a form of doomscrolling, where the data collecting required for the work could very often take as long as the making of the paintings themselves. My recent approach has been to rely on things like a piece of oval hardboard, or a stick edge, to guide the paintbrush across a number of second-hand canvases that have been re-primed. Canvases to be re-used, a Sunday painter's efforts laying beneath mine. In our time of NFTs and AI generated imagery, this return to automatic analogue painting feels good.



World Wide Web Painting
Oil on found canvas, 35.5cm x 45.5cm, 2023



Tennis Centre (Park)
Oil on found canvas, 35.5cm x 45.5cm, 2023



Lakeside (Red Sky at Night)
Oil on found canvas, 35.5cm x 45.5cm, 2023

Harriet Mena Hill

Painting can make the unseen visible. Since 2018 I have been working on the Aylesbury Estate in South East London, researching the connection of memory and place with residents, as they await the demolition of their homes.

The paintings, part of an ongoing series 'The Aylesbury Fragments ' have been created in an attempt to articulate this transition from being to unbeing, as described to me by residents coming to terms with the imminent destruction of their community on the site occupied by the estate for 52 years. The entrances and thresholds in the paintings are invitations to enter these liminal spaces.

The paintings repurpose salvaged concrete from the demolished housing blocks to form a fragmented visual record of the original buildings. They describe a formal beauty in the rigid geometric lines of the brutalist buildings. The structures are softened by human presence - a line of washing, some new graffiti, and trace the effects of time and the elements on the fabric of the buildings - the ingress of water cutting urban streams through concrete, the blooms of bright rust flowers.

The object becomes the subject, the tangible remnants becoming the substrate, prompting connections to the intangible past. The physicality of the substrate keeps the subject actively present as the illusory surface develops, an accumulation of memories fixed in particles of pigment fused to the pitted concrete surface.

These paintings are a testament to the resilience of a community living through extraordinary circumstances. They evidence a landscape and environment that did exist and that mattered.



Sudden In A Shaft Of Sunlight III
Acrylic on salvaged concrete, 18cm x 13cm, 2023



Where You Laid Your Head
Acrylic on salvaged concrete, 27cm x 14cm, 2022



Cables and Shadows
Acrylic on salvaged concrete, 18cm x 15cm, 2024

Sophia Rosenthal

Born in South Korea and raised in the Philippines before settling in the UK, I use paint as a language and vehicle for exploring memory and its complexities in relation to ideas around belonging, my identity and lived experience.

Inspired by Roland Barthes's text *Camera Lucida* and the theory of the punctum, my recent paintings are prompted by noticing something unusual or unexpected in the personal photographs from my childhood. These discoveries are at the heart of my current work.

Painting directly from the photograph forming the basis of my creative process, I aim to capture something of the elusive and emergent nature of memory and recollections of the past. I create fragments of intimate imagery that uses an active combination of the effects of both paint and photograph, conjuring uncanny familiarity and feelings of displacement.

I am influenced by the material practices of painters in the 1960s New Figuration movement, including Mamma Andersson as well as the semi-abstract works of Phoebe Unwin. I have developed a playful, yet meticulous process of cropping, glazing, layering, and masking, creating subtle, textural spaces, where the layering of materials come through to the surface in unexpected ways.

Through the more poetic, slow, and chance-induced process of painting, I am able to interrogate and reframe my own notions of narrative memory, instead reframing it as embodied, at the point between consciousness and intuition, that is reflexive to surrounding environments. Painting allows me to explore more freely, new and unexpected realities that associate to broader narratives of identity and belonging.



A Hood

Oil and acrylic on wood panel, 21cm x 29.7cm, 2023



Crisp
Oil and acrylic on wood panel, 21cm x 29.7cm, 2024



Glove
Oil and acrylic on wood panel, 21cm x 29.7cm, 2023

Olivia Sterling

My paintings explore three overlapping themes; whiteness, food and comedy. They are often laced with violence or sex but sweetened by comedy and cartoonish imagery. My paintings channel rage into gaiety. Whiteness defines itself by its lack of colour - an oxymoron which I subvert and lampoon via painting, which is a practice that ultimately centres around the manipulation of colour.

These paintings are populated by bowls of double cream, mousse, milk and chocolate; objects which mimic the skin colour of the figures inside the paintings. Through the depiction of these various foodstuffs, I illustrate the absurdist action of discrimination. I confuse or belittle this way of thinking, swapping skin lightening creams for double cream, blood for wine and cake for the flesh of a body. Here, bodily matter is often mistaken for edible objects, which has the effect of tethering consumption and objectification together. Many of my paintings take place within kitchens or restaurants where fluids and foods are common and ready to interrupt any form of cleanliness or purity. In my eyes, white fabric such as a white business shirt or a white restaurant tablecloth is practically begging to be made unclean, just as a canvas must be covered in paint. My work expresses the view that to adhere to the strict and frankly dull rules of whiteness (i.e no fatness, queerness, fluidity or colour) is often no fun at all.

I am also interested in depicting whiteness emotionally, how this strange action manifests in real life such as in friendships, dating, love, boredom or self-loathing. My work interrogates how deep rooted this strangeness goes and examines how this strangeness has the effect of making those that are marginalised see themselves as strange. Therefore, my paintings explore themes of excess, flamboyance and enjoyment to fight the pillars of whiteness which are uniformity, superiority and smallness. Often, my paintings point outwards towards the viewer. In one work, an éclair is aimed at the onlooker and threatens to cover them in cream. Judith Butler summarises anti-queer, far-right sentiments by describing “the fear that to take in an idea is to be subjected to unwanted penetration”. My paintings hope to illustrate this “feared penetration” is illogical, intangible and absurd. In reality, you will not be covered in cream as my painting suggests and it is delusional to perceive it as a real threat rather than a mental exercise.



Emotional Complicity
Acrylic on canvas and wood box, 40cm x 40cm, 2023



Dessert du Jour
Acrylic on canvas, 140cm x 180cm, 2024



Sorry to Use that Word
Acrylic on canvas, 180cm x 120cm, 2024

Simon Taylor

My work is contemporary still life and painted in a photorealistic and extremely detailed style. The themes I am working on with this series of work are of being thrown away and cast aside after serving a purpose and being purposefully discarded.

The paintings are of found objects, which are still in situ out in the world after all useful life has been extracted from them. Their existence, meaning, fascination and purpose, often created by advertising, has been removed. The objects were the carriers of pleasure and worth but are now just regarded as rubbish. The paintings reflect what remains when there is nothing left. I see them as metaphors for the human experience, where people are used, consumed and discarded by others.

My paintings are heavily influenced by the photographic/cinematic image where twenty-four frames per second flash past our eyes. We consume thousands of images on social media, television and film everyday. My attempt is to step back from this bombardment of images, to give myself and the viewer the opportunity of actually appreciating what we are seeing. I feel that the detail in my work helps the viewer to do this due to the creativity and work involved in its creation.

Having seen so many similar images in films, television and adverts, where a close up shot of an object is used to tell a story, sell a product or used as a device for embellishing a narrative, I have used the exact wide screen cinematic proportions for the paintings of 2.39:1 to hopefully invite the viewer to create their own narrative around the works. As they look like film stills, it offers the idea of something happening before and after, the objects being used as props, being there for a reason and are not just rubbish that somebody has used and discarded.

I would like the paintings to be viewed as one frame in a sequence of twenty-four per second. The fleeting frame frozen so the viewer can consider the process of construction, the surface, the tones, the details, overall composition, idea and intention. This can only be achieved with paint where the viewer can look at the painted picture on another level and plane other than a transient photographic one.



You Left Me Powerless
Oil and acrylic on aluminium, 25cm x 60cm, 2024



I Gave You My Heart
Oil and acrylic on aluminium, 25cm x 60cm, 2024



Left Behind
Oil on canvas, 17cm x 41cm, 2024

Polly Townsend

My paintings draw on journeys through many of the most remote and hostile landscapes in the world. In January 2023 I was the Artist in Residence in Antarctica and other recent works come from Kashmir, Tibet, Kyrgyzstan and residencies in Death Valley and The Badlands National Park.

I paint places that at first glance seem bleak and lifeless, but, in reality, are some of the most vibrant and life-giving ecosystems on our planet. Far from being desolate, the landscapes slowly reveal an infinite variety of form, light, colour and texture.

I often treat the land as a singular subject, a still life, disembodying the form whilst remaining faithful to the original properties and character. This objectification helps probe the gap between the tender and the unnerving; the beautiful and the bleak. I use empty space to emphasise the tension between absence and presence, reflecting on the current state of landscape: one of flux, impermanence and a rapidly changing climate.

I produce small works on site using a collapsible easel, sketchbooks and photography, and build up larger canvases in my London studio.



Mass, Antarctica
Oil and acrylic on canvas, 122cm x 152cm, 2024



Kashmir
Oil and acrylic on panel, 60cm x 50cm, 2024



Ice Slice, Antarctica
Oil and acrylic on canvas, 122cm x 152cm, 2024

Acknowledgements

The Contemporary British Painting Prize has grown year on year, only made possible due to the considerable efforts of a core of dedicated and incredibly hard-working members of Contemporary British Painting, our selectors and judges, our hosts and supporters.

We at Contemporary British Painting sincerely thank our artist selectors Natalie Dowse, Rich Jellyman, Andrew Litten and Molly Thomson for choosing such a striking shortlist with so much integrity. We also thank our judges Louisa Buck, Martyn Cross and Paul Hedge for lending a serious critical eye to the exhibition; to Lubaina Himid MBE, Griselda Pollock and Harriet Tarlo, the judges for the Judith Tucker Memorial Award; and Mindy Lee, CBP Member and Curator at Blyth Gallery, Imperial College London for the The Blyth Gallery Exhibition Award. We also extend our thanks to our exhibition hosts Liam O'Connor at BayArt Gallery, Phil Ashcroft at Thames-Side Studios and Grant Scanlan at Huddersfield Art Gallery Curates at Yorkshire Artspace: Persistence Works. Many thanks to Natalie Dowse for producing our stunning posters and catalogues, also Joanna Whittle, Mandy Payne, Gordon Dalton and Narbi Price for promoting the prize and Painting of the Day on social media. We also extend our thanks to Phil Illingworth, Paula MacArthur and Narbi Price who do so much organising and negotiating behind the scenes, and of course to Lubaina Himid MBE and John Talbot for their generous support.

Most importantly we wish to thank all the painters who submitted their work to this year's prize. Many of these works will be appearing as 'Painting of the Day'.

Previous winners of the

contemporary british painting prize

2016 - Cathy Lomax

2017 - Narbi Price

2018 - Joe Packer

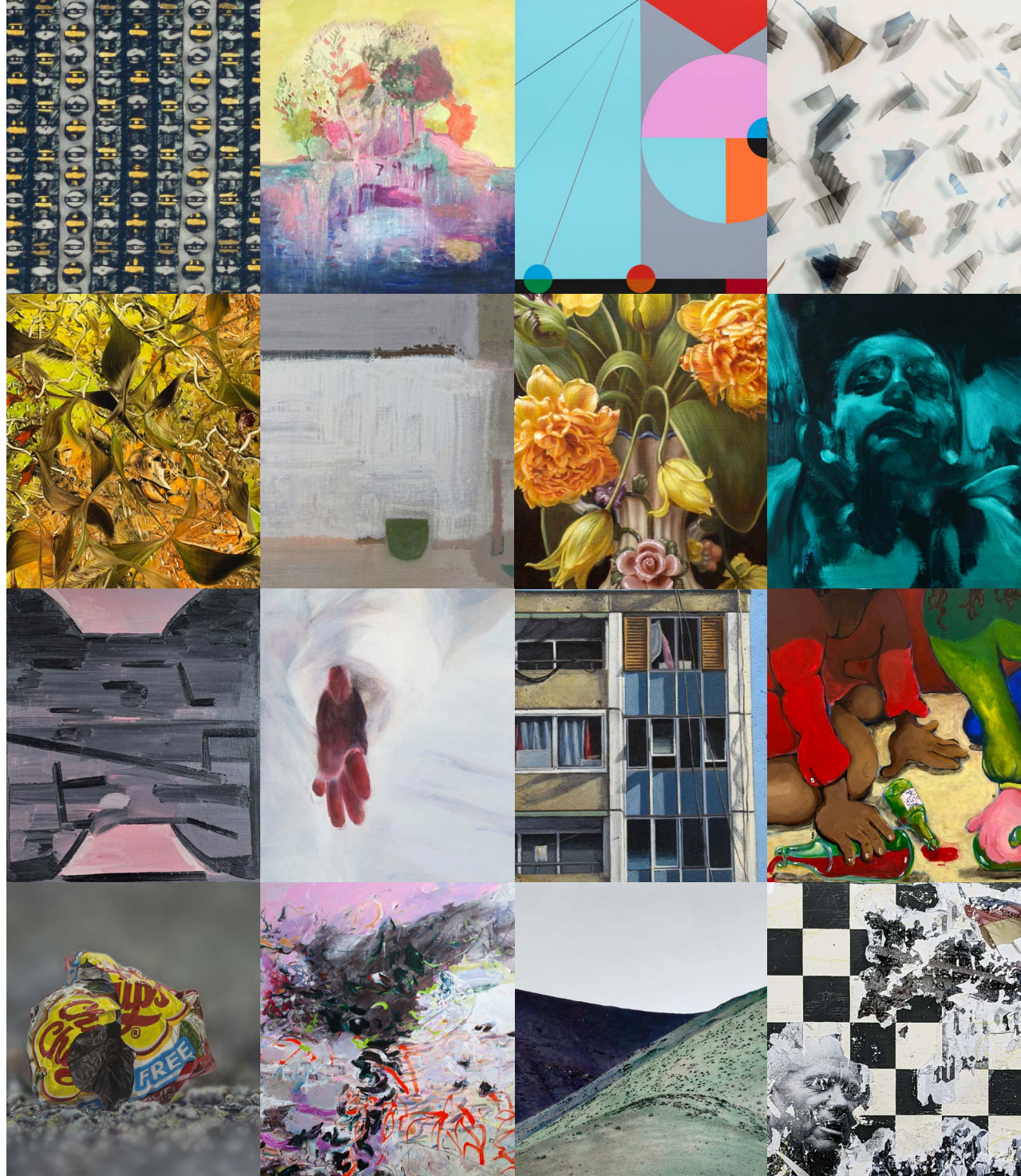
2019 - Joanna Whittle

2021 - Susan Absolon

2022 - Lesley Bunch

2023 - Rich Jellyman

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ISBN 978-1-7397818-5-9

