

Drinks by the Pool with Lucy Smallbone

Showing this month in Space Station Gallery Lucy Smallbone, we sat down with Lucy to find out more about her work and what she really sips by the pool

Q&A: Lucy Smallbone

Q: What is your artistic background?

A. I did a BA in painting at City and Guilds London Art School 2007- 2010 and then I did a Masters at the Slade school of fine art graduating in 2015. In between I've been juggling working as a professional artist whilst also working an array of didn't art related jobs!

Q. Can you talk to me about your paintings, both of subject matters and technique?

A. I've always been interested in landscapes visually and had a passion for reading about fictional spaces such as Utopias. So my paintings really combine these two interests. Depending on the type of landscape I'm painting I always start with a collection of different photos and drawings that I take visual reference from. Then I try to set on the feeling or atmosphere that I want to create, this normally comes from books, films or my own memories. The other half to my practice is probably

the more important half which is the process of painting. I am a painter obsessed with paint, especially brushstrokes, textures and vivid colours. During the painting process normally the paint physically alters the landscapes, changing the meanings and taking control of the image.

Q. Your pieces are built up in layers, why is that?

A. I always start my paintings with an interesting ground and then build upwards. With each layer I add I always become attached to brush marks or different sections so end up leaving parts of the under painting showing through. So it ends up sort of like a painted collage.

Q. What is ambition as an artist?

A. After spending many years juggling multiply jobs and painting my biggest ambition is to be a full time painter. More time would give me the space to make mistakes, explore and to contemplate. When you lack time in the studio you end up feeling pressurised to create only successful paintings and failure can be an extremely important part of your practice.

Q. We talk about mark making, why is that important?

A. Mark making is all about the joy of painting. I love paint and most of that love comes from the craft side of my practice. Learning about different mediums and pigments, how they move and what you can push them to be, all adds up into a passion for paint marks.

Q. Which artists do most admire or respect?

A. When I was at school I fell in love with the work of Anselm Kiefer, for the scale and physicality of his work. Recently Karen Mamma Anderson's work is a huge inspiration, she has a way with mark making and describing space.

Q. How important is painting today, is it still relevant?

A. Yes, there are a lot of great young painters coming through making painting as relevant today as ever.

Q. Which gallery would you like to be represented by?

A. Victoria Miro, I love many of her artists, I used to work at Parasol Unit so would spend a lot of time on the top floor of the Wharf Road Gallery dreaming of the type of show I would want there.

Q. Who is your favourite Victoria Miro artist?

A. Hernan Bass, Alex Hartley, Francesca Woodman and Chantal Joffe

Q. Would you be happy to show your work in art fairs, out of context alongside other people work?

A. Art fairs are relevant as they capture the art world and what is going on at the time.

Q. Have been awarded any prizes?

A. I won two prizes from City and Guilds, a travel prize where I went to Germany and a studio bursary. I also won one from the Slade where I got to go to Chernobyl in Ukraine. The most influential one was definitely my trip to Chernobyl, which was unlike anything I've ever seen. It was a very strange experience being there, as it was incredible beautiful and wild but also you had to keep on reminding yourself to not touch or sit on anything.