

## Sincerely About Painting - Aglaé Bassens in Conversation with Nicholas John Jones

27 October 2020

This conversation explores thoughts about contemporary painting in relation to the work of Aglaé Bassens. It is transcribed and developed from an online conversation held on October 27, 2020 alongside *Sincerely*, Bassens' second show at Hesse Flatow Gallery.

Aglaé Bassens and Nicholas John Jones studied together at the Slade School of Art in London from 2009 to 2011. British-born Jones is now an artist and organiser of cultural projects, events and publications living in Oslo. He is founding director of PRAKSIS, an arts based organisation that creates supportive structures for exchange. Belgian-born Bassens lives and works in Brooklyn.



**NJJ:** *Hello, I'm happy to welcome you to this conversation with Aglaé Bassens around her exhibition Sincerely, which has just opened at Hesse Flatow in New York. I'm going to start by saying how nice it is to be asked to speak with you Aglaé, and thanks to everyone for joining us.*

*Aglae, we met each other around eleven years ago while studying at the Slade in London. Since then you've moved to New York, then Paris, now New York again; and I have also moved around a fair bit and now find myself living in Oslo. I know that we both feel that travel and place have influenced our work, but I don't remember ever talking about it specifically. So I'm interested to start there: Would you agree that place or travel have had a big impact on your work?*

**AB:** Yes, absolutely. Maybe it's even everything about the work. It's so much to do with my sense of self that it's inevitably linked to why I paint or what I paint. Actually, I should say that before those moves you mentioned, I was in England for quite a long time, around 18 years, but before that I moved every three years from between the ages of three to twelve. I have lived in Belgium, Sweden, Turkey... It's kind of what I know, and it's hard to imagine what I would be like, or what my work would be like if I had not moved so much, because I can honestly say I don't have a true sense of where home is. And that does affect the way you look at the world, what you notice and how you form a sense of identity. It's almost like you become the sum of things you remember seeing and places you remember being, but it's a transient, fleeting thing rather than solid roots. I think most people's sense of self is more anchored than they realise in where they are from, what culture they were brought up in. For myself, I don't feel as though I can really claim any of the places I lived in as my own because I was just passing through. And that leads to a kind of fragmented, snap shot experience of memories that don't always weave together. The one consistent thing is that I'm the one experiencing them or remembering them. And so you could say my work is about those things, the threshold between who you are and the world around you and that relationship.

**NJJ:** *Something that I have felt in my own experience of moving between places is that it affects how a person looks at things - what you notice or focus on. This is something that I recognise in your work; I feel that your paintings often focus on moments and details. I wonder if that is something you're aware of in your work?*

**AB:** Yes, definitely. I think part of it is because of the way they're cropped. They do feel like you're narrowing in on something. Sometimes it's specific to a place - something you would only notice as an outsider, such as an architectural detail. A little while ago I was making paintings of windows here in Brooklyn because they just looked very different to what I was used to in Europe. Windows are frames for looking at the world so that seemed like an important place to notice that difference.

But sometimes the focus in my paintings is about the things you look at when you're not looking, or rather when you're looking inward while resting your eyes on something. That can also have a narrow kind of feel. So the moments that occur in the paintings are about both the outside and inner worlds. They explore that relationship.

**NJJ:** *I think what you pick up on with your paintings and subjects includes how things are different, but they can also be about moments that are special to you somehow: things that are the same, or that you take with you, or are constant, that then hold deeper resonance having moved.*

**AB:** Yes. I've always been interested in the personal and the universal, and the idea that if you go personal enough, eventually you are talking about something that probably relates to everyone. There is this threshold - if the work is too anchored in specifics surrounding your human experience it can't quite translate to everyone. But if you get more intimate, then everyone can relate. In a way, I think my flowers and unmade bed paintings are still life interpretations of that. Nothing is more intimate than your bed,

but it's something almost everyone can relate to. On the other hand, the broken parasol painting is very specific and more likely to leave you on the outside as a viewer. It's familiar but also foreign. It creates an emotional push and pull that interests me.



*Laundry Day*, oil paint on canvas, 39 ½ x 51 ¼ inches, 2020

**NJJ:** *You mention still life, and I wonder; is that how you would describe yourself - as a still life painter? How do you position yourself in relation to portrait painting and landscape painting? Do you see yourself within these traditional genres of painting?*

**AB:** It's a tricky one. I call myself a still life painter by default I think. In this particular show there are objects like the flowers and the cigarette and parasol. But in the way I paint them I don't really think of them as objects. I think of them as a stage, or as a space or emptiness, and the painting is inhabited by this sort of atmosphere. I think of the paintings almost as backdrops to a feeling. They invite something to happen, and that thing is what the painting is about. The way I treat my background is quite specific, I like the painting to be an almost all-over composition or with a shallow background, so that there is no way out: as a viewer you have to confront the emptiness, confront yourself in a way.



*Staycation*, oil paint on canvas, 40 x 54 inches, 2020

**NJJ:** *Still life usually suggests painting from life. Am I right in thinking these are quite often not painted from life? Often they seem painted from photographs or memory.*

**AB:** Most of the time they are inspired by photographs I have taken, and painted by tuning in to memories of what I felt seeing it, and manipulating the information in the photo in order to convey that mood. So I will almost always crop the image significantly, change the palette, take out some information and pare it down a lot. I enjoy the archival quality of having this folder of photos that spans different places and several years, and the jarring mix and matching of it is important to me as it relates to my experience.

**NJJ:** *Going back to the idea of travel, I think these paintings become a documentation of your way of working - through which experiences and subjects are affecting you. Maybe for some people photography has that element, but here perhaps it's a lot about the time that you spend with the pieces - in making the painting and in deciding what to paint.*

**AB:** Yes, and when to paint it also. I sometimes hold on to images for a long time before it feels right to paint them. It's kind of like taking pictures without internalising their significance, and then unravelling that imagery years later and noticing patterns and trying to paint with that new understanding.

**NJJ:** *Do you feel a difference between painting culture / trends / styles in Europe vs the USA — from your own perspective at least?*

**AB:** I do think so - Obviously I don't want to generalise; and I can only speak from my personal experience. But I definitely remember being struck when I arrived in New York by how much painting there was everywhere. There were so many young painters and so much conversation about painting. I felt people were enjoying painting and its materiality without always needing to give it a conceptual dressing down. Whereas, back in London, of course within the painting department at Slade there was plenty of conversation about painting, but there was less painting in galleries. Perhaps I was just looking in the wrong places, but I remember feeling frustrated about not seeing the kind of work I wanted to make. Now that I think of it, there was a student in London who had moved from Brooklyn because she said the abstract kind of painting she wanted to make was unpopular in New York at that point. So I guess these things always go in cycles, painting dies and is reborn all the time everywhere. But in NYC at the moment there is a generous approach to painting, accepting it as is with its intrinsic strengths and weaknesses instead of systematically comparing it to other mediums and questioning its relevance. Of course I think these changes are also just perceived because when you move, you subconsciously shed these rules in your mind about what you can do and what to expect, so you free up how you think about painting.

**NJJ:** *Earlier today, as I was thinking about this conversation, I realised that while I have the privilege of having known you and your work well in the past, it's actually been years since we've been able to visit each other's studios regularly. It struck me that I have to conduct this from a perspective many people are often in today - especially during Covid, but also more generally - as we have access to images of exhibitions and artworks all around the world via the internet. That is from the perspective of having not actually seen these works in the flesh. Therefore I think it's important to talk about the materiality of the work. What do you want the paint to do or feel like?*

**AB:** I think a lot about how I apply the paint because once I've settled on an image, the materiality is how I'm going to convey an atmosphere and get beyond the painting being a mere illustration of that image. So there are a few different ways that things are painted in this show. I don't know if that is unusual, but I don't think everything should be painted the same way because different images and moods call for different applications of paint, from fast to slow or thick to thin. One thing I've really enjoyed working towards this show is painting in a very loose way.





*Morning Fatigue*, oil paint on canvas, 40 x 52 inches, 2020

The more recognizable the image was, the more I felt free to apply my brush loosely and with feeling because there was enough information to bridge that gap between material and image. So for instance in *Laundry Day*, if you were to focus on the sheets the image breaks into just paint, and it's unclear where the foreground or background is. I painted *Morning Fatigue* in a similar way, with the paint quite thin and and the application quite brushy but careful. And then with other paintings like *Evening Rain* or *Shadow Self*, the handling is thicker, there are more layers, the titanium white was almost like flour to make gravy when I was mixing my colours, which gave it a sort of silent thickness, like a blanket of absence. For those images that are more immaterial and abstract to start with, that handling of paint grounds them in the real world.

**NJJ:** Also in relationship to that - in this body of work, I feel like light has become more and more important: You've got a cigarette that's burning out—it glows from the inside; You have a shadow cast against surrounding light; You have a curtain with light coming through from the other side of it. There are these different ways that light moves, and it seems like something you're quite interested in exploring and capturing through paint.



*À Table*, oil paint on canvas, 13 x 10 inches, 2020



*Shadow Self*, oil paint on canvas, 52 x 40 inches, 2020

**AB:** That's a good point, I haven't really thought about it that way, but I've always been interested in light. Light, and the play of light on things because I think it makes surfaces come alive and it creates a background and foreground which sounds very simple, but places you as a viewer at a certain distance from the painting. You hear about European painting and its northern light or mediterranean light, or Californian painting and its specific light; so light is really the link between place and time. It's a way to set a painting: without depicting anything specific, you can already describe a feeling and a space just with light. And I think it ties in with this thing I'm interested in, of





*Evening Light*, oil paint on canvas, 13 x 16 inches, 2019



*Last Drag*, oil paint on canvas, 21 x 25 ½ inches, 2020

depicting something in between the inner world and the outside world. In *Last Drag*, the light comes from inside, it's been infused by a breath but the body is no longer in the picture, so it's got this strange transcendental or transformative quality.

**NJJ:** *The subject matter in these paintings is not exactly the everyday overlooked, but it's quite often something discarded or fleeting, like the bed left unmade or the cigarette burning, flowers wilting, a shadow, light shifting. Is that deliberate in how you're thinking about subject? How do you think about the subjects that you are choosing to paint?*

**AB:** There is an element of the overlooked and the discarded, and you could also say that they are sad paintings, but I think they're really about feeling. I gravitate towards images that activate these feelings within me, so that I can make a painting full of feeling, hence the title of my show - *Sincerely*. When you make figurative painting, whatever you're painting has been painted before, and that's totally fine by me. What validates making these paintings for me is the amount of feeling you put in them. I like how that feeling will change as you experience life and so you can encounter a flower painting at 20 in a different way than at 30 or 60 years old. And I guess that's where life meets painting. That's something I'm interested in. So I think that's the kind of criteria with which I pick subject matter. They should trigger something in me and feel relevant now, and then there are also general aspects like a certain atmosphere that they have in common, the absence of figures, a play between presence and absence.

**NJJ:** *When we were studying together at the Slade you were making these very large paintings of the human figure, often veiled or wrapped, in which you were interested in how cloth shifted into paint, and how light moved through it. But these new works seem to be more about moments and place, and also a kind of absence - for example the shadows you paint moving across a surface, without touching it but leaving a trace. I think there's something interesting about those shifting and fleeting moments. I suspect it's nothing that you're thinking about very actively. I think it's more as you said things that grab you or hold you in that moment, but I think they're about exploring a certain kind of moment. —*

**AB:** Well, you told me back, 10 years ago that my paintings are either about attachment or detachment.  
[Both chuckle]

**NJJ:** *Did I? I don't remember that, but... I think this body of work explores a certain kind of moment, and I don't think it's necessarily melancholic, but it can have that quality to it. I was interested to understand whether that was deliberately symbolic or simply something that's happening as subjects reach out to you?*

**AB:** I mean I think the symbols are there right? I think symbols and ideas just float in the air for anyone to grab, but to paint them you need to have a real life moment that chimes with it so that you can bring some presence to them. So the symbols are borrowed but the feeling is mine, would be one way to put it. It can be that several years pass between when I find a subject and when the moment feels right to paint it.

**NJJ:** *I'm also interested in how the works relate to time. I know, in the past, often the works were made quite quickly, and I'm wondering whether that's still the case? Do you have any constraints or... sort of points where you feel things become overworked?*

**AB:** Most of my paintings are made in one go, usually in a day. Sometimes for practical reasons like using a lot of white paint or adding layers, it might take longer as it will need to dry between sessions. But even then, the actual time spent painting is short. I think it's interesting to me that there is a performative element: the time spent making the painting in one go becomes trapped within the painting. Especially when my paintings are about these moments and fleeting glimpses, it feels appropriate.

During Covid, I was thinking about how we celebrate 'good' anniversaries and 'bad' anniversaries the same way: birthdays and funerals will both have flowers and candles. To be present for something or to love something you have to accept that you'll be worried about losing it, so there is this binary nature to it. There is humour to counterbalance the sadness in my painting *Octopus Kite*. Even in *Last Drag*, it feels like it could be from a B movie and the inspector just finished his cigarette. And I'm ok with that, it's kind of like how we all see ourselves in our own films.

**NJJ:** *Is film a specific reference for you? Just thinking back to lighting and staging certain shots and the idea of things being cinematographic?*

**AB:** Yes. There is no reference to a specific film but definitely visual storytelling. I'm interested in the paintings having an element of narrative, although not in an explicit or literal way. When you listen to a song or watch a film, you want to imagine yourself in this totally different story, and think that you could be this person or that one... Maybe it's to do with moving, once again, and re-imagining your identity, and the paintings are maybe fragments of that in a way.

**NJJ:** *And does that lead into titling? I see here in some of the slides you wrote the titles and I wonder how you approach that?*



*Lights Out*, oil paint on canvas, 39 ½ x 51 ¼ inches, 2020



*Octopus Kite*, oil paint on canvas, 40 x 52 inches, 2020

**AB:** So there is *Laundry Day* for example. I like the deflect from what could seem like a romantic painting, and the title *Laundry Day* brings it back to a chore-like, everyday element. On the other hand with *Morning Fatigue*, it's a still life but the title is more about how I project my mood, how I identify with the wilting flowers. So I do take some poetic license with the titling. The cigarette is called *Last Drag*. I also like playing with more British words sometimes - Last drag could also be titled *Fag Break*. There are a lot of references from different countries in the show. This painting on the left is of a ceiling rose in Paris, the chairs in the rain are very American and upstate NY. In my head the titles appear like a vignette in a comic book about my paintings, like 'meanwhile...'



*Laundry Day*, oil paint on canvas, 39 ½ x 51 ¼ inches, 2020

**NJJ:** *You mentioned the title Sincerely, and I wanted to go back to that and how it relates to your approach to painting. I don't know if you have more to say about why you chose that title for your exhibition?*

**AB:** Yes, it's very central to how I paint. Because I paint a lot of different things, I always agonise about whether this or that is a good theme to paint, who cares about a painting of this versus that, then I remind myself that when I see a good painting, it never matters what the painting is of, I just know it's a good painting. It made me realise that my motifs only need to be important to me, because if I see meaning in it, the painting will convey that to the viewer. You really need to make a painting that you want to see, that you sincerely feel a yearning for. I think this is especially important with figurative painting because the experience of looking can get locked within the image, and the way to reach out to viewers beyond



the image is with feeling. And maybe there isn't enough earnestness in most of our lives, so I feel like painting is not the place to hold back.

**NJJ:** *That's interesting.*

**AB:** How do you feel about painting sincerely?

**NJJ:** *Well, I think it's an interesting one today, within the current field of painting. I think all the best painters approach it sincerely and spend much of their lives trying to work out what their approach is; how they're dealing with subject matter - in effect learning through the process of doing. But at the same time, I had a really disappointing conversation with a gallerist a few years ago at the exhibition of a painter whose show I was reviewing. I was saying how excited I found the show and he said: "Yes, but the problem with this artist is they're too sincere about what they're doing. No one is interested in sincere painting right now". I was really shocked by that, because I felt the artist was truly engaged with working something out, and that was really exciting to me. It's great to play and fail and practice, but if you're going to dedicate your life to something whether it's painting or anything else, it should be sincere I think.*

*I know that you're an avid painter, and going back to the idea of time, someone who often makes work quite quickly. But I know from talking to you over the years that often, coming to that moment and finding a subject can be quite a laboured process: to find something to paint and to get to that point of what was important for you to paint.*

**AB:** Yes, it can take weeks of failed attempts before the magical one-day painting session. It's a stressful and painful process.

**NJJ:** *That conversation about failure, about the paintings that don't get shown is important. The tens of paintings that get unstretched and thrown away because they're part of getting out of a slump is something to be aware of - That every painting doesn't just get knocked out. But I was thinking that while that process is happening, you are also an avid consumer of the paintings of others, going out and looking for inspiration in the world but also looking at the work of other artists. I don't necessarily see all your work as still life, but somewhere between landscape, still life, interior, various genres of painting. I'm wondering if there are any particular artists that you find particularly exciting, or important to your practice?*

**AB:** Well, there are a lot of dead people I could mention, like Manet. Specifically linked to my flower painting there is *Branch of Peonies and Sécateur*. Nature morte in French translates as dead nature or dead life, and this relates to this idea of absence and presence I'm interested in that I was talking about earlier. This painting with the freshly cut flowers and the scissors encapsulates this for me and it's one of my favorites.



*Branch of Peonies and Sécateur*, Edouard Manet, 1864

More current would be Anna Berger's work. She does paint figures but because she works a lot from found images, or maybe just because I know that, I think of the paintings as also being paintings of photographs, and that lends an inanimate quality that I enjoy. I like her use of paint where paint becomes a substance that almost swallows the image, and her dramatic cropping implies narrative and drama which is something I'm interested in with my own work.



*Descending/Odd*, Anna Bjerger, 2018



*Solid/Afloat*, Anna Bjerger, 2018

Then, going back in time again, this Velazquez is also one of my go-to favourites, of the woman poaching eggs. To me it's about the idea of painting being a transformative thing, like we were talking about

earlier, about conjuring up an image from paint. This painting celebrates that through the depiction of the egg cooking, captured in the middle of its own transformation.

Recently, I saw a show by Henni Alftan and I felt moved by her work. She has a different style and different process, not working from photographs at all but there is a similar interest in what it means to look at things, and what painting does and how it behaves. In this painting of a tablecloth, the creases and folds remind me of canvas folds and the process of putting together a stretcher. It reminds me of my parasol painting or even my unmade bed painting.



*Old Woman Cooking Eggs*, Diego Velázquez, 1618



*Heirloom*, Henni Aftan, 2020

**NJJ:** *I think you can find, not exactly quotes, but references or nods to other painters in your work, but at the same time finding your own language seems to be a drive too. This might be a good moment to open up and see if anyone else has any questions or comments?*

**AB:** Sounds good!

**Audience Member #1:** *I was wondering about your palette and whether that is something that you take a lot of liberties with or something rooted in a photographic reference or reality - just how you think of color?*

**AB:** I think this is probably my most colorful show so far... I'm a really a tonal painter so mostly every painting is one main color, and I've been trying to experiment with thinking more about color as a tool. Sometimes I feel that the color in the picture I take inspiration from is not what I want, so I have started making more of a point of taking liberties with it and going with what color feels right for the image and the kind of mood I'm going for. So that's been a new kind of area of experimentation for sure.



**Audience Member #2:** *I'm not at the show, but the space seems pretty big. Did you feel you had to go through a pretty serious editing process and select what you were going to show, or was it pretty obvious what needed to be in there? Because there's a real diversity.*

**AB:** Well my previous shows have been quite themed. So I felt that this was my chance to make a statement about the wide range of motifs I like to work from. So I deliberately wanted paintings of very different things, but which hopefully come together through my handling of paint and the mood I'm setting. While installing the show, the editing ended up being more about cutting out middle sized paintings, interestingly. There was something nice about the change in scale between the quite big paintings and the very small ones, which I think has something to do with balancing between a physical immersive experience and a more intimate, up close gaze.

**Audience Member #3 :** *Have you ever considered self-portrait?*

**AB:** I have tried portraits, but they feel too close. I think the only self portrait I have made was in school when I was younger, but I am not really interested in being in the work. I did once have this idea of making portraits of people who are miles away in their thoughts. So they would be there but also absent. That's the only way I could imagine doing it, where there would still be an element of absence.

**NJJ:** *Are there any portraits in this show or are they all absent of human beings?*

**AB:** There is the shadow of myself riding a bike and my shadow projected on steps. Some of the ones that were edited out actually did have people in them.

**NJJ:** *I think you paint things that happen around people and the things that people see when they're maybe not looking at other people. You can tell they are personal intimate moments you have with the world rather than with someone else.*

**AB:** Yes. When you see these things in real life it's usually when you're daydreaming. You see these things when you're not really looking, I think that's what those kinds of images are.

**Audience Member #2 :** *Can I ask something else? I know New York is a unique place during lockdown specifically because everyone took it so seriously and has been maintaining it a lot. Do you feel like you have been taking photographs a lot during lockdown of that absence or this moment even if you're not sure if you're going to paint anything from it tomorrow? Do you feel like anything has caught your eye?*

**AB:** Yes, I think it became an event to go out for a walk to take pictures. Before I was always rushing somewhere and taking pictures quickly with my phone. But during lockdown it was a treat to go out with my camera and just take pictures of anything I fancied. So far, I have not used any of those images for my work but it was very therapeutic to think of my surroundings as a visual all-you-can-eat buffet. I've seen some of your photos on instagram, and the shadows and the colors, and I definitely think one silver lining has been slowing down and taking stock of that, and finding beauty in the everyday. It's beauty that gets

us through, it's just really good for the soul. If you can see something beautiful everyday it makes a huge difference.

**Audience Member #4 :** *Did you see Spike Lee's movie that he made about New York during lockdown? I think he actually called it New York, New york. He went around with a super 8 camera or 16 millimeter camera and it felt incredibly dated. Thinking about it now, I feel that there's an incredible connection there with your paintings. Correct me if I'm wrong, but I think your paintings have a kind of dated quality, and it's interesting that you cited a lot of artists from a long time ago as influences. Do you want to talk about that a little bit? His movie was incredibly nostalgic. It was only a ten minute movie that he made back in May but I thought it was incredible. It was just random shots of New York and I think he said he rode around on his bike with a little Bolex, taking this footage, and there was something almost kind of indescribable about it that I found pretty amazing.*

**AB:** That film sounds great. It's funny that the car window painting on the slide right one is titled *Dated*. I do know what you mean, but I'm trying to think through exactly what it means to me... One thing that occurred to me when I was talking to Nicholas earlier is the nostalgia that stems from moving around a lot. There is that feeling that I left a part of myself in each country, that each place feels central to my identity yet I'm not really from any of them. So it's not so much nostalgia for when times were simpler or better, but it's a longing for every time I felt rooted and stable before having to leave again. I was 12 years old when I moved to England. I didn't speak a word of english and I remember being struck by how that stripped me of my identity. I had to learn to say really basic things way before being able to express feelings or make puns. I hadn't realised before that even humour could be so culturally specific that it won't translate. So I am aware that I am often looking back, trying to remember previous versions of myself, wondering which was the original. It feels safe to look back. You are right about the reference to the older artists. There is something about those paintings back in London when I used to go to the National Gallery after a big night out, something so direct about the touch of how they were painted and how they can still reach you right now . Maybe it has to do with the awareness of time, the time of when the painting was made and all the time you've known kind of folded into the present moment of observing it.



*Dated, oil paint on canvas, 40 x 52 inches, 2020*

**Audience Member #4 :** *I think you spend a lot of time talking about absence, but I think your paintings have such a presence. And they really make you think about this, they make you think about the history of painting, in a real emotional way, which I think is really important today.*

**NJJ:** *Having moved to different countries and places myself, I think you do find yourself looking back at where you were, or thinking about how where you are now compares to where you've been previously, or where you might go. You start to look around and compare how things are similar or how things are different. It affects how you look at the world around you and what you pick out. It's an amazing and difficult thing when you move to a new school even, let alone a new country. When you meet a group of people for the first time you can always reform your personality, you can become someone else. But maybe looking at things, photographing things, choosing which things to paint, how to paint them, spending time with them is a way of anchoring oneself in a place. And then editing the show is another step, picking works, thinking about which ones feel resonant for you. I was interested when you were talking about the idea of beauty earlier, which is a subjective thing: the paintings that are beautiful for you or resonant for you might feel a little sad or nostalgic for someone else, or optimistic for another person. But there is something in the works about capturing a moment and looking at a space that's poignant. I think poignant is a good word for these moments in between things that you capture.*

**Audience member #5:** *I wonder, what's the difference between the moments where you might have your phone? You say you didn't choose any of the images that you shot when you went walking with your camera. What do you think the difference is between those?*

**AB:** The phone ones work better although they probably look worse. When I go out with my camera with the purpose of looking, I end up photographing things that catch my eye, but not things that necessarily stir me in a way that's something I might paint. But with the phone, if I'm going to take it out it means something really stopped me in my tracks. Maybe because of that, I also remember the encounter of seeing it, which will inform the painting. I remember seeing it, stopping there, taking several pictures of it, trying to make mental notes of how I will paint that. You know how supposedly athletes do visual training I think, when they're lying in bed at night and imagining scoring goals? It's not unusual for me to lie in bed at night, thinking about putting down the strokes and how I'm going to paint something. So if I've taken the picture with the phone it's already more integrated in my mind, it's somehow more memorable than if I'm looking around through the lens of my camera ready to shoot.

**Audience member #5:** *Yes there's something interesting about losing feeling when looking through a lens or something.*

**AB:** It sort of removes you a little bit?

**Audience Member #5:** *Yeah exactly.*

**AB:** Because I guess if you're walking around looking, then the cropping happens with your eye instead of the lens. Somehow your gaze shifts and you notice something, it's not in a viewfinder but you've seen the potential for cropping it.

**Audience Member #5:** *It's more autobiographical as well when using your phone in these moments you didn't expect*

**NJJ:** *Thinking about moments, and the journey of one's practice, an exhibition is always kind of a stopping moment on a path in a practice. It's always a moment to stop - or at least I think so - and reflect on what you've been doing, to look at the paintings in a different setting, to talk to people around them. It becomes a moment that starts to form what happens next. So I'm wondering if you have any thoughts about how the process is continuing or what you're working on next?*

**AB:** I have actually been thinking about which pieces in the show work best for me and how I might take them further. I think I want to work more on paintings where the image is a lot like paint and when you're up close it breaks into paint and there's a thin line between that and stepping back and recognizing what you're looking at. I'd quite like to see if I can take that further by going larger or more close up where there is maybe less information but more feeling Also I did take a good picture today with my phone of a neon ghost in a halloween window, so that could be next!

**NJJ:** *We've been talking now for a bit more than an hour, I think that is a good point to wrap up on. Thank you to everyone for joining us.*