

## **Annabelle Shelton in conversation**

### **'Escape' Summer Exhibition 2017**

**Sarah Wiseman Gallery**

**15<sup>th</sup> July – 26<sup>th</sup> August**

#### **1. Can you tell us more about the beach paintings series; what inspired you to make these paintings?**

The Beach paintings evolved from a series of black and white drawings of people in place. I was interested in how people formed together in urban spaces and how the architecture and street arrangements formed people into pools, clusters and lines. The beach space offered more intimate arrangements on a vast expanse of coastline. I love the way people disappear into the horizon, or the beach becomes so overwhelmed with crowds of people that become the burgeoning tide. I am interested in the 'Modern Condition' and the here and now. I suppose these paintings are like documents of people in the present time. The absence of the skies and beach I believe, adds to this dynamic of the paintings.

#### **2. Can you tell us a little about your background – what brought you to making art?**

As a child, I always loved art and the act of drawing and painting but I was slightly baffled when told by my teachers to fill a page. I guess this is where my fascination in 'the absent' began to play an important role in my work.

#### **3. What are your working processes?**

I love working with watercolour. Introducing watercolour to white aluminium was a real challenge, however over the years I have mastered my unique way of letting the paint flow and lay on the surface. It's almost like a signature now. I would like to introduce some more experimental techniques to my painting. I am working on some studies in my studio.

#### **4. Can you describe a typical working day in the studio?**

As a working mother my day begins at 9.30am after the school run. I throw myself into the painting as soon as I arrive. The work can be painstaking, it's detailed work and requires patience. The easiest way to tune into my work is to listen to the radio. I have a ban on computer work in my studio, so the act of painting has precedence. Until 2.30pm when my role as mother begins again.

#### **6. Do you think it's important for artists to forge links with their local area?**

Absolutely. There is nothing like a 'home grown.' I recently finished a commission in my home town for a heritage trail for children looking at shops; what they were years ago, and what they are now. It's good to get yourself out of your studio and work in the community. Showing my work is important but it probably receives

more international feedback than local feedback, but I think that is to do with the nature of the work that refer to sunnier climates.

**7. How do people respond to your work – have you had any memorable reactions to your paintings?**

Some people think that my work is a form of photography, I guess this comes from the flat process of using industrial paints and lacquer. As the work is often seen online they do not see the process. Collectors have come back for more work as they like the process; they say it's 'Happy' work.

**8. What's next for you as an artist - Do you have a dream project?**

There are always dream projects but I think that being an artist is an extraordinary occupation. It's nice to know that you have work in various locations all around the world places that I have never been to! As I love travelling it would have to be a residency in a warmer climate.

**Annabelle Shelton July 2017**