

Fletcher Prentice in conversation

'Escape' Summer Exhibition 2017

Sarah Wiseman Gallery

15th July – 26th August

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

After leaving art college I always wanted to remain in a creative artistic environment. For a number of years, I designed textiles, greetings cards and painted on bone china. Coming from a fine art background I always kept painting and attending life drawing classes. I always saw myself as a painter and as time passed I decided to return to painting full time.

2. What are your working processes?

My garden is a great inspiration for me at the moment. I love the natural world and I spend a lot of time looking how all the colours relate to each other, how the light changes and how the seasons change the character of the plants and flowers. Song birds started to feature in my paintings as they visit the garden.

Rather than making sketches as preliminary work towards paintings, I take many photographs as reference and I am now reliant on my iPad while I paint.

I like to start on the blank white canvas, raw, after thinking about how I would like the painting to feel and what subjects will feature; in my case what flowers, composition and overall colour palette.

I like the energy to be fresh and have found producing [preliminary] sketches take away from this; [by] battling to recreate the feel of a preliminary sketch with poor results. If it all goes wrong then I wipe off the paint let the canvas dry and paint over, often using the [newly created] background colours to effect.

3. Can you describe a typical working day in the studio?

My typical working day starts with a coffee sitting looking at my paintings. I find the first impression of the paintings of the day exposes the problems that need to be addressed. I don't normally start painting until 11-ish then work through until I reach a point when I think the paintings are too wet to paint on.

I find working on several paintings at once, all at different stages works best for me. Oil paint takes time to dry and I like to build my paintings up with layers of colour and need to have each layer dry to work over.

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

Painting is a journey and I am always learning how to use paint, hopefully in a better way, and how to observe the subject and how to express it with painted marks.

The natural world continues to be my inspiration. My paintings are evolving slowly to a more figurative abstraction of the garden and this is something I want to explore. And I hope the results are favourable.

- **Fletcher Prentice, August 2017.**