

ISOLATION INTERVIEWS

JESSE POLLOCK





ISSUE 5

Continuing the Isolation Interviews: a new series of weekly artist profiles highlighting current concerns, accompanied by a selection of available works.

We know that these are precarious and uncertain times for everyone and with so many people staying at home, self-isolating or social distancing, we want to be able to continue sharing some of our favourite art and artists with you. The Isolation Interviews are a weekly series of conversations with artists that will explore how these new circumstances are affecting their practices and productivity. We'll hear how they are finding solutions - and even opportunities - and what their plans and hopes are for the future.

Brooke Benington is committed to supporting and creating opportunities for artists. We believe that this is needed now more than ever. Most artists are self-employed, often supplementing their income by working as technicians, fabricators, assistants, teachers and a whole host of other jobs. Now, many have very suddenly lost a vital source of income. With this in mind, we are accompanying each Isolation Interview with a curated selection of work by that artist, available for purchase.

Thank you for your continued support. Stay safe and look after one another.

Lily & George
Directors, Brooke Benington

What is your usual studio routine and how, if at all, has it been affected or restricted by recent isolation and social distancing measures?

So my Studio is in Teynham, Kent and I live a 5 minute drive away in Faversham. I share the space with my partner Melloney Harvey who I also live with. So I still



go to the studio as normal, get down there around 8:30am walk my Springer Spaniel called Dolly, otherwise she will be whimpering at me all day. Luckily my studio is on a farm surrounded by apple orchards, so I give her a good run out.

I do sometimes feel guilty as to whether I am meant to be going to the studio or not, whether it complies with the Governments Guidelines etc, 'travelling for work purposes, but only where you cannot work from home', I don't think I should be welding up in my front room.

Perhaps unusually, you studied illustration rather than Fine Art sculpture. I think that this can be seen in the almost hand drawn silhouettes of your sculptures. Do you think that this grounding has given you a different approach or perspective to your peers?

There is a drawn aspect to my sculptures, however I think that this is down to my impatience, which rules everything I make. I want the sculpture made as quick as possible! I often sketch out an idea whether it's in chalk on the studio wall or on a bit of paper. I try to keep sketchbooks but they just end up somewhere I don't know. Any attempts at recreating a drawing goes out the window, I let the material do what it wants a bit, otherwise I smack it repeatedly with a hammer until the silhouette of the form looks right.

Whether studying illustration has given me a different approach to my peers I haven't a clue, maybe if I give you a brief run through of my time studying at Camberwell College of Arts it might answer your question?

The course was broad, the tutors encouraged different mediums constantly. I found ceramics and basically made pots for a year, then had to blag how these

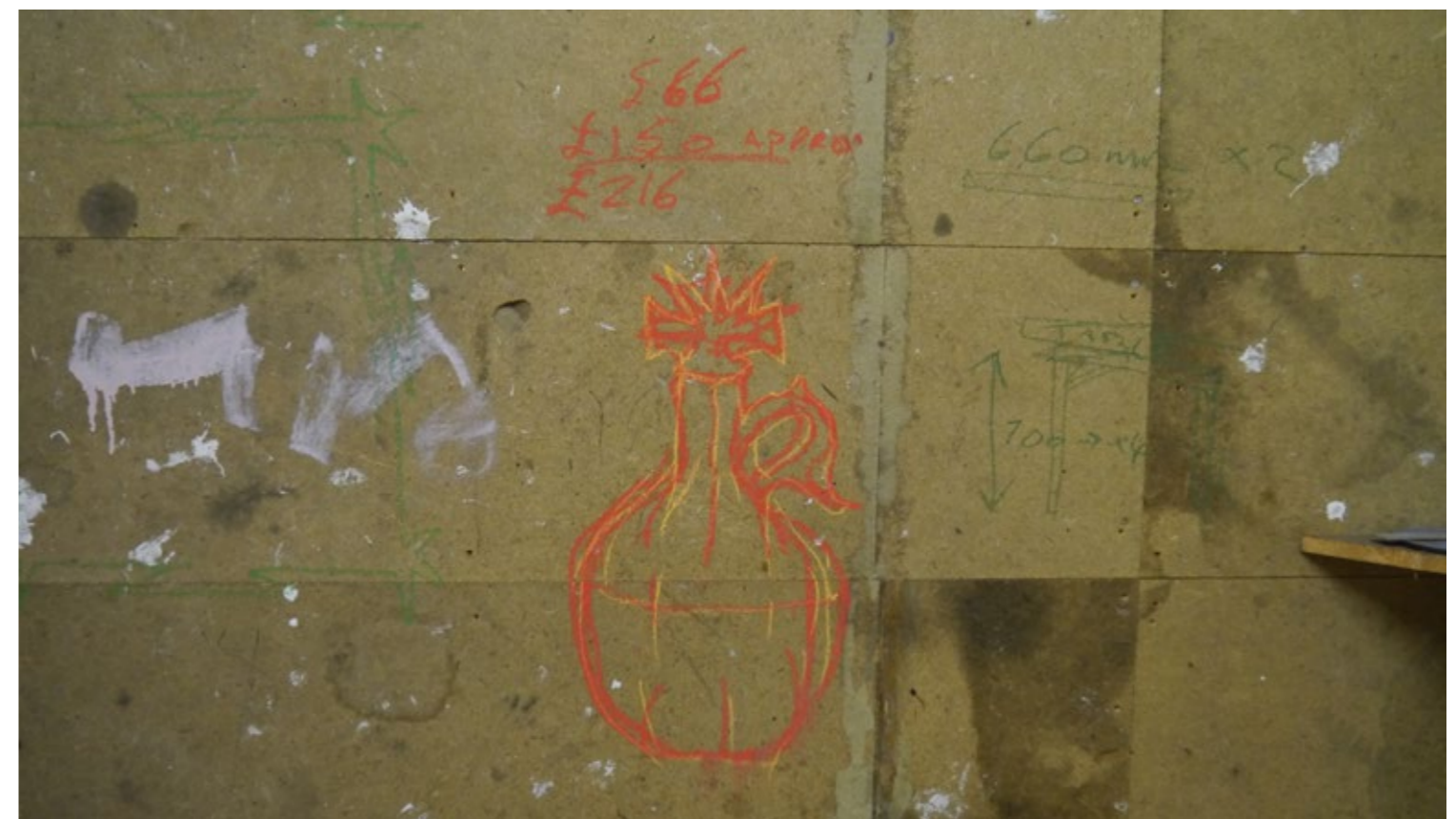


barmy pots and sculptures were produced based on a brief to pass second year. But in the ceramics studio I found artists like Peter Voulkus, who I greatly admire. By third year I spent my whole time in the workshops, trying to remake my ceramic pieces out of steel.

The visual vocabulary of your work is that of an Arcadian, pastoral ideal reimagined and distorted through an almost

dystopian lens. Could you talk a little about the imagery and influences within your practice?

It came from my observations of British society. The huge contradictions and loopholes of crap spoken in Britain whether it's on the news or in the pub, which I find pleasure in and am a part of. Obviously, Brexit is connected but I find humour in it, I don't dislike anyone for it I just accept that people think this



way, by accepting I'm not getting on my knees... it allows me to look at the contradictions and make work about it. For instance, moaning about immigrant workers, but now British farmers are struggling for workers due to Covid-19, I can't imagine there is as many Brits who are now out of work queuing up to do a 12hr shift picking fruit for minimum wage. Suppose I'm ignorant now. I use the image of the scorpion, The Sheppey Scorpion to be exact as a metaphor for this. The Sheppey Scorpion came to England from Italy, through fruit deliveries, then found refuge in the sea walls of Sherness, Isle of Sheppey. Throughout my work the scorpion can be found, depicting the connection of immigration and the scorpion establishing a home or identity within Britain.

I'm guilty of fantasizing British Countryside living, lush and pure; yet there is also a feeling of lawless freedom. I get a genuine feeling that I could get away with anything in out in rural Kent, just the other day I had to get a couple lads to stop shooting cans with a sniper looking air rifle so I could slip past walking my dog.



I've been making old fruit picking ladders, flagons and shotguns, all things I associate with 'the olden days' of Rural Britain, along with associated traditions. I'm trying to explore why I feel so patriotic, how traditions are continued and question what it all means today.

Across your practice you combine and juxtapose high and low tech; using 3d modelling and iPhone drawings as well as hand manipulated and roughly welded steel. How did this way of working evolve and how is it continuing to develop?

The 3D modelling on my Laptop were just a way for me to get ideas down to show galleries or curators what I had planned. I was working full time up until recently, so time was tight to make everything so this helped them imagine it and helped me make decisions.

Like I already mentioned, I am extremely impatient. The iPhone drawings started as ideas for paintings on steel, which I was making but weren't 'doing it' for me. I had heaps of these drawings; I was taking screenshots on google images of fruit in

relation to the Sheppey scorpion and fruit orchards. I then drew over these images using the colour swatch tool and pencil to make scenarios like scorpions getting shot or stabbed with pitch forks or just smiling wildflowers as sad smiled spectators of our contradictory nonsense.

The iPhone drawings then developed into silicone wall pieces and cushions for my steel sculptures. I thought of them as skins or hunting trophies. I haven't been making them as much recently, I lost the satisfaction. I'm only into the steel works now, they give me a real buzz when completed but until they are finished, I genuinely hate them.

As part of a new generation of artists making their way in an industry that has been disrupted and possibly permanently changed by this current crisis, can you see a potential opportunity for you and your peers? What changes if any would you like to see come out of this time?

I think this whole thing is going to mess people up financially, I hate to say it, but money says yes or no to making sculpture, for me anyway. I went self employed a couple months ago doing three days a week assisting a local artist, the rest of the time I was in the studio. I got it the best I've ever had it, but then obviously shit hit the fan for everyone so I had to fully accept it. I found myself wondering what I'd do for cash, luckily my previous job is considered vital work, so I've been getting days here and there, I recon I'm lucky.

Whether opportunities are going to grow out of this situation for me and my peers I haven't a clue. I know for a fact I will be cracking on in the studio, doing what I feel I have to do. If what people were doing within the art world prior to this is pure and honest, then we'll all find a way to resume. Hopefully this time the nonsense will get left behind.





JESSE POLLOCK

Jesse Pollock (b.1993, Gillingham, Kent, England) lives and works in London. He studied BA Illustration at Camberwell College of Arts, London. Recent exhibitions include: *The Garden of England*, Steve Turner, Los Angeles (2020) (solo); *Dieu To Old England, The Kids Are Alright*, Choi and Lager, Cologne (2019); *Super Zoom*, curated by Ferdinand Gros, Paris (2019); *Art Dusseldorf*, Steve Turner, Dusseldorf (2019); *Sunday Art Fair*, Steve Turner, London (2019); *Absinthe.s3*, Spit and Sawdust, London (2019); *Shooting Starlings*, VO Curations and Archive 18-20, Paris (2019) (solo); *Power of Ten*, Steve Turner Gallery, Los Angeles (2019); *Lookeezee*, Crewkerne, Somerset (2019); *Absinthe*, Spit and Sawdust, London (2019); *Material Art Fair: Representing Hannah Barry Gallery*, Mexico City, Mexico (2019); *Summer Show*, Hannah Barry Gallery, London (2018); *Squeeze Hard Enough It Might Just Pop!*, Hannah Barry Gallery, London (2018); *Moue*, The Chatham House, Kent (2018).



Clam, 2019
Steel, enamel paint
120 x 120 x 80 cm



Troff on Hoofs, 2019
Steel, enamel paint
75 x 90 x 60 cm



Sunburnt Scrumpy Slab, 2019
Board, epoxy plasticine, enamel paint
30 x 30 x 5 cm



Slob and Lychee, 2018
Steel, enamel paint, silicone
150 x 60 x 70 cm and 54 x 34 x 4 cm



Sheppy Smile Pot, 2019
Steel, enamel paint, cherry dust, sawdust
55 x 45 x 45 cm



Reminiscence on This, 2019
Steel, enamel paint
35 x 15 x 8 cm

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