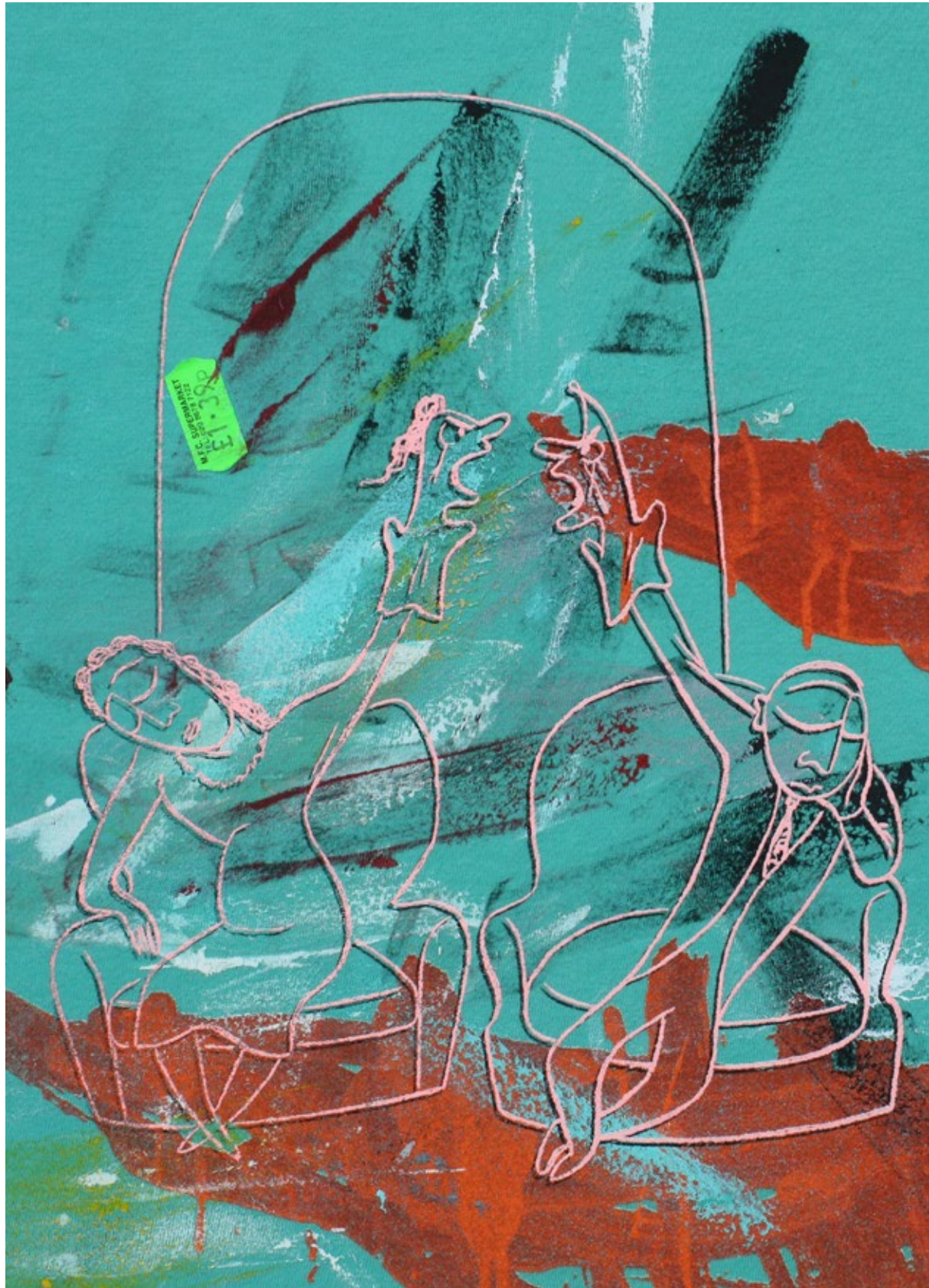
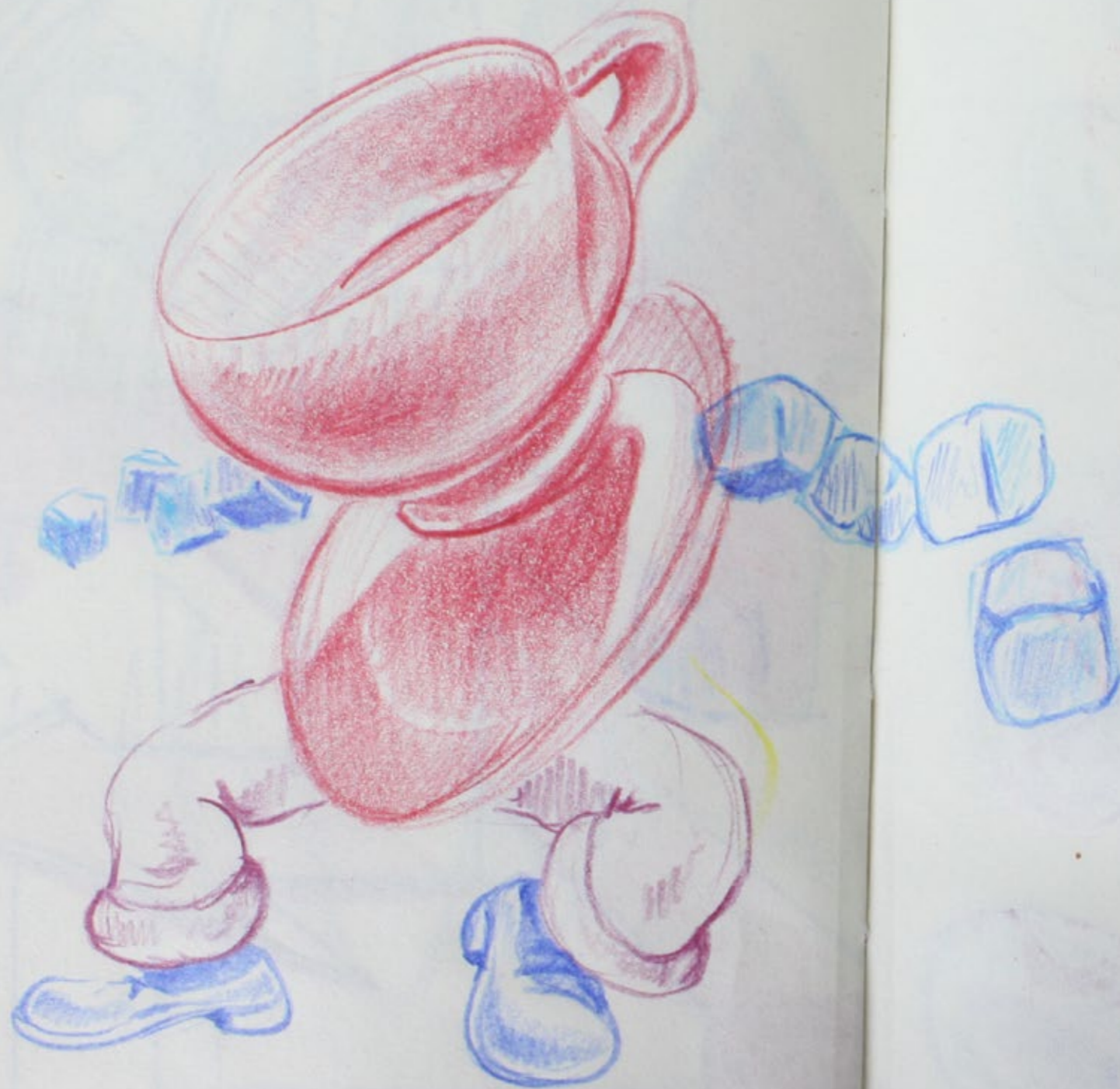


ISOLATION INTERVIEWS

JOHN TINEY





ISSUE 6

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



Your planned solo exhibition at Prism Contemporary has just been postponed. How else, if at all, has your practice been interrupted or disrupted by recent social distancing measures?

Yes my show 'My Reality, Your Reality, Its Reality And Shirts' was supposed to open on the 26th of March and right up until that week the government hadn't asserted themselves on the lockdown, we knew it was coming, a free fall period waiting for them to get it together and take some responsibility...

Working in my studio hasn't been disrupted too much, I can cycle there in under 2 minutes, without getting too close to anyone and I work in isolation quite easily - as artists we do this a lot. I have work commitments too, so I'm trying

to balance both and stay safe. I do feel we are all suffering low level anxiety, this anxiety seems to be in the air wherever I go and fuels the need for distraction as one seeks out some kind of security at this time. My distrust of the government is at an all time high, their economic predation was cruel for so long - now on a larger and much more immediate scale we can see openly the results of their callousness - if only the public at large would see through their gaslighting and realise these politicians are in our employ, and we have the capacity to remake the country as a more humane and caring place.

Could you tell us a bit more about your practice? You seem to have two strands that run concurrently; an active exploration and a reactive strand of works that is part by-product (in the case of the Shirt paintings series).

Painting is the main activity in the studio, born out of drawing by and large. I'm currently trying to reboot video making. I made my last one in 2012 and have been trying to find the fuel for it. Video making is not something I can do easily. More recently with painting I've been trying to treat each piece as its own unit, I found that trying to tie pieces together in sets does not suit me at all. If a painting ends up resonating with another, great, I'll try to acknowledge it, but I've definitely eased up on caring about an overall 'statement' in what I do. It's too restrictive for me and too misleading for any kind of viewer that may come across the things I make. The Shirts series started in 2012, they are a mix of screen printed and hand painted material. The support in each work is a t-shirt worn while painting - in most cases these have a pre-existing printed graphic, the expressionistic "gestures" on top of this are the accumulated marks from cleaning my brushes and hands on the shirt. This is then overlaid with a screen



print - my response to the combination of readymade and gestural, and an attempt to corral these juxtapositions into the same space.

In contrast to the automatic nature of the painted shirt I choose the drawings to be printed on top. In most cases it's a layer that blends into an overall camouflage, in others it acts as an overlaid glaze to read the gestures through. The drawings are from nowhere in particular, the first 10 or so were all from 'how to draw' books but now the net has widened - some are mine, many are found - some personal, most are not but the conceptual/ biographical/subjective process of introducing the drawings help me solidify the painting as a whole.

Q3: You often create a tension within your paintings by juxtaposing - apparently - contrasting illustrative and technical styles; historical imagery and graphics, splattered paint and refined drawing. Is this conflict something that drives the work?



I just think that's where the art is, in how all that stuff can live as neighbours within the same framework. I don't use anything I'm not interested in and I'm fascinated in the way different pictorial styles are classed. I find those classifications troubling and find a certain satisfaction grouping them on a level playing field. I try to find ways of patching elements to each other and exploring the way they survive, prosper or fail, like we do, society does and I'd like to make these partnerships stable and trustworthy in the way they are rendered.

Is an intended narrative or theme in your paintings? I have sometimes felt that your paintings can be read, a series of clues or references that lead us somewhere.

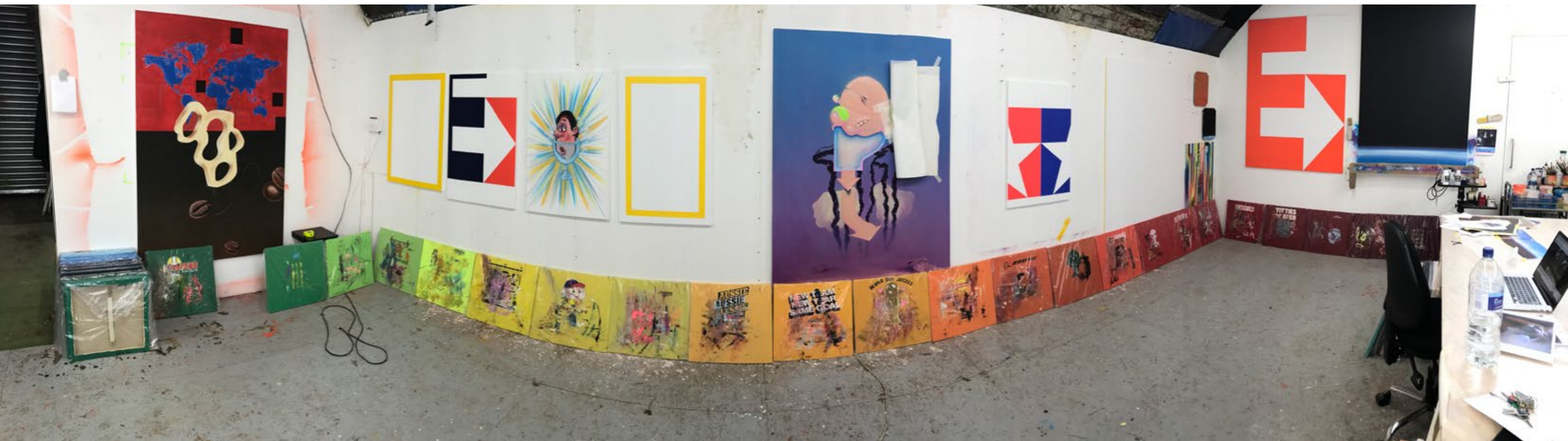
I don't think so, some are concise concepts but for me when they are realised I hope aren't quite so limited. Whenever one encounters any type of graphic or descriptive language I think it's natural to start and try to carve a logic out of it. There can be some messages in there, the logo pieces I've done look authoritative to me, red and white or red white and blue, stars, arrows point to the right, they look to me like an analysis of some kind of authoritarian propaganda but in reality the origins are very innocent and positive. The walls I've painted were from an interest in painterliness that one sees in certain 50's animations - While I get a big kick out of the detail in those paintings they also double as good selfie backdrops...

As you look forward from this uncertain and potentially transformative moment in our history, can you foresee any positive

change, in the arts or within wider society, that might come of it? And what, if any, responsibility lies with artists to reflect upon and record this time.

It's been uplifting to see the best of what this situation has produced, in expressions of care, solidarity and goodwill - locally and to some extent internationally. Also odd and disappointing that it's eclipsed the discussion of our impending ecological crisis, rather than emphasize it as a signal for change.

It's only going to get worse for the most vulnerable, and unfortunately I don't see this changing without a seismic shift in the priorities of the powerful. I always thought art had an important stake in current affairs but at the moment I'm not so sure. Like great comedy, art can propose change, but I wouldn't know where to go to see those proposals now, or which voices to trust within this luxury goods market. It seems to me that although a lot of art proposes radical change to the status quo, most of them are just refining their route in.





JOHN TINEY

John Tiney (b.1970, England) lives and works in London. He studied BA Fine Art at Exeter (1990-1993) and MA Fine Art at Goldsmiths College, London (2003-2005). Recent solo exhibitions include: *Solo Show*, Gallery Vela, London (2012); *In-n-Out*, Gallery Vela, London (2011); *Travelling Our Way*, Studio 1.1, London (2008); *Csiak Munka*, Gone Tomorrow Gallery, London (Collaboration with David Wilkinson) (2007). Recent group exhibitions include: *Idle Hands: tricks in the art of doing*, Chopping Block Gallery, London (2018); *Summer 2016 to Summer 2017*, Arch 1138, London (2017); *Dreamland*, Garis & Hahn, New York City (2014); *Myth & Market*, Studio 1.1, London (2013); *These Friends*, This Gallery, Los Angeles (2013); *The Response*, The Sunday Painter, London (2012); *Foreign Bodies*, Budapest, Hungary (2010); *This Was Now*, Sartorial Contemporary Art, London (2009); *70+Artists100+Hours*, Volume Projects, London (2009); *Parking in Rear*, Pawn Shop, Los Angeles (2007); *Grotto*, Studio 1.1, London (2006); *Bunny Incinerator*, Gone Tomorrow Gallery, London (2006); *Drive-Thru*, 3 Colts Gallery, London (2006); *Larry's Cocktails*, Gagosian Gallery, Heddon Street, London (2005). Residencies include: RAID, Los Angeles, California (2010).





Shirt #52, 2016
Acrylic on cotton
51 x 51 cm



Shirt #53, 2016
Acrylic on cotton
51 x 51 cm



Shirt #75, 2018
Acrylic on cotton
51 x 51 cm



Shirt #66, 2017
Acrylic on cotton
51 x 51 cm



Shirt #73, 2018
Acrylic on cotton
51 x 51 cm



Shirt #77, 2018
Acrylic on cotton
51 x 51 cm

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Design by mingomingo.co.uk