

VISUAL RESEARCH

VERITY CHILD

A QUIET COMMENTARY

DOCUMENTING REALITIES AND LOCKDOWN BOREDOM

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RESEARCH STATEMENT

Over the past year, my research methods have changed with the pandemic - I was no longer able to absorb myself in social situations, gallery visits and library books. This forced a shift in primary research that has fed into my practice and reflected this unique moment in time. I turned to capturing quieter moments in time through photography and creating compositions through digital collage. In this way, I have been able to make more definite decisions and have greater control over the elements of lighting, pose and facial expression to tell the narrative and connect the viewer to the figure in the scene. Philip Lorca di-Corcia's work encouraged me within the first semester to consider the line between an unnatural stiffness, and that of a staged but realistic scene, that continued to influence me within the second semester.

I explore and understand materials through 'doing', in particular with Liquin and oils, learning the physicality's and characteristics of the material as I paint and work through any challenges, as well as discovering techniques and learning through happy accidents. I constantly note these occurrences and often find myself reflecting on my paintings at the end of the day using sticky-notes that pile up as research to inform future paintings. Furthermore, my paintings are informed through small intuitive studies of interior spaces, capturing a room without a person - a portrait in its own way; a tranquility that I continue to be drawn to. I extended upon this through graphite drawings of hands inspired by Marie Harnett, capturing the activities of hands during lockdown and the things people do to keep entertained, and those fleeting moments.

THE CONCEPTS OF MY PRACTICE

CONNECTION BETWEEN VIEWER AND PAINTED FIGURE

AMBIENCE

TO FOCUS ON THE FIGURE IN THE SCENE.

ATMOSPHERE

TO HOLD THE FIGURE IN THE SCENE, IN THAT MOMENT.

NARRATIVE

TENSION

**BRINGING AN EDGE - CONTEMPORARY APPROACH TO TRADITIONAL
PAINTING**

STAGING AND ARTIFICE

I began through exploring the theme of **boredom** in lockdown, seeking a composition of my sister in a domestic space with a tranquil pose to depict the **ennui of the well ensured**. I looked at the scenes of bucolic boredom in Pre-Raphaelite paintings and Alec Sloth's photography, in the **slump** that they had within the figure, whilst also considering fabrics and patterns that added a **dimension** to the scene.

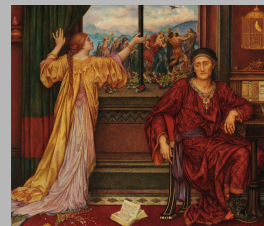


In progress- Florence 2020. (2020). Oil on board. 28x24x4cm

A smaller **scale** painting reflected the quiet **atmosphere** in the composition, and I experimented with a different **underpainting** technique of Prussian blue to add depth, bringing in cooler undertones for a **contrast** in the warm skin tones. I realised that this work did not reflect the context that I had planned to work in, as the compositions could have reflected any point in time. This was a **key moment** for me to figure out how I wanted to continue exploring compositions.



Alec Sloth, *Renata, Bucharest, Romania*, (2018)



Evelyn De Morgan, *The Guilded Cage*, 1901-2. Oil on canvas, 910 x 1087 cm



Auguste Toulmouche, *Dolce far Niente*, 1867, Oil on canvas, 40 x 54 cm



FLOP.

COLLAPSE



PRELIMINARY DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHS

With my parents working from home, I saw that my mother was wearing her dressing-gown over the top of her work dress in between meetings, for comfort and warmth, yet was removing it for online calls, switching to a more professional demeanour. I wanted to capture this unique moment in time, and reflect the fed up/frustrated feelings of constant meetings. I considered how I could **control and stage** the scene through angles and pose to create a **heightened** sense of reality.



Lynn and Shirley, 2008. Inkjet print, 40x60inches



W. September 2000 #6, 2000, Archival Pigment Print

PHILIP-LORCA DICORCIA

POSE



Untitled digital photographs, part of ongoing series 'Invisible'

NATALIA KREZEL

I considered lighting through the **connotations** in the windows- of isolation, altering the blinds to be half-open, half-closed playing on the idea of a **portal to the outside world**, just in reach. I furthered this exploration through looking at the contrast between the **tones** and variations in strength of the different **sources** of light- artificial vs natural in the computer and overhead light - inspired through the works of Friedrich and Krezel. Through directing these multiple sources of light onto the figure, it adds for an **intensity in emotion and expression**, changing the **ambience** of the scene.



View from the Artists Studio (left hand window), oil on canvas, year and size unknown.



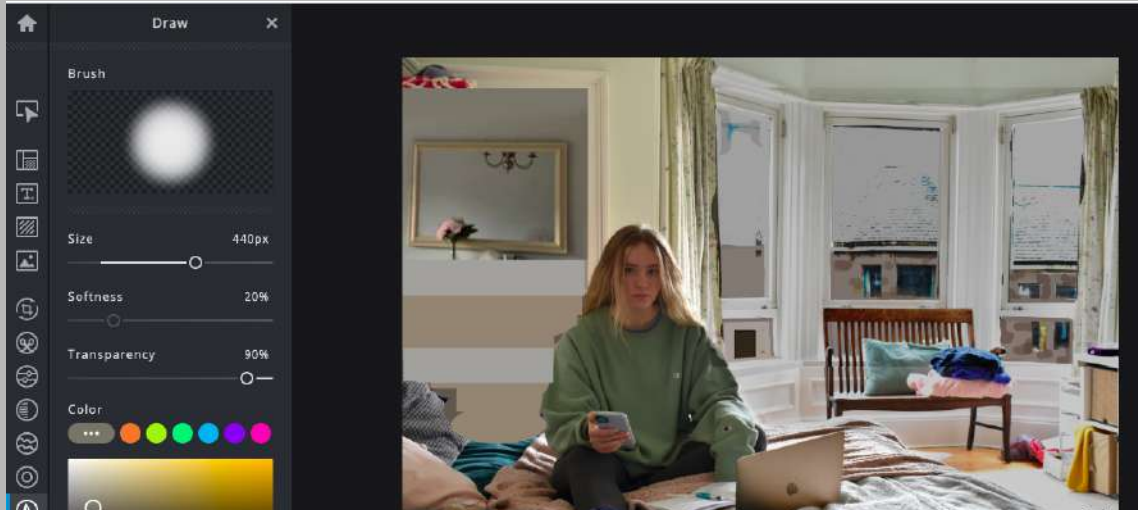
Woman at Window, 1822, Oil on canvas, 73 x 44.1 cm
CASPAR DAVID FRIEDRICH

LIGHTING



Throughout the initial shoot, I picked up on **objects** within the room, moving them around whilst thinking about how their **connotations** create **reliability**, as well as the relationships between the **shapes**- the repetitive circles and straight lines- and how they create **tension**.

Staging the scene to **reflect the reality** students face of online university- the bed instead of the desk, the phone as a distraction to an open laptop, the windows to the outside world behind- all purposefully selected.



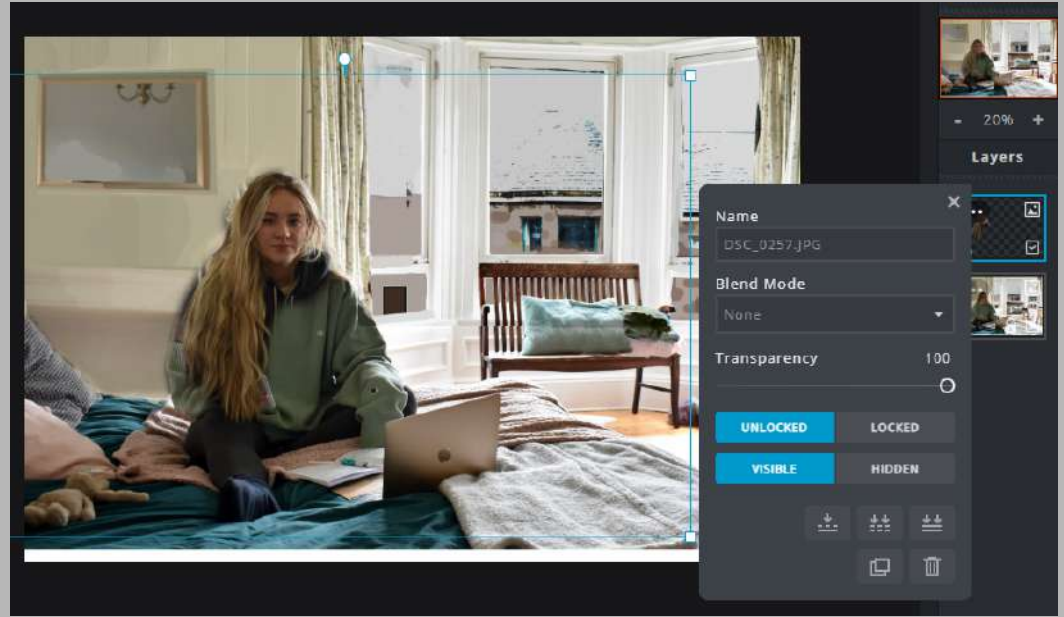
I felt that elements in the left-hand side of the original photograph were **busy and dominated** that space. I wanted to **simplify** the composition, and upon analysing it I realised certain aspects with the green jumper and the mirrored chandelier in the room, were similar to elements in the *Arnolfini Portrait*, so I digitally collaged a new composition that was **less distracting** from the figure inspired by this.



Arnolfini Portrait, 1434. Oil on oak panel, 82 x 60 cm

JAN VAN EYCK

LIGHTING ON THE FACE, FOCUS ON FIGURE, HIGHLIGHTING ANGLES AND EXPRESSION - CONNECTION TO THE FIGURE



Upon analysing the photographs, I realised that the light did not fall upon the face of Laura in a manner that displayed her **emotion**, and the structure of her face was lost behind the hair causing a flatness, and a less interesting gaze.

However, I wanted to keep the rest of the composition that I had collaged, and instead **merged** a new photo to create one final composition to paint from. This was the first composition that I had worked through and edited multiple times with completely new elements to it and was an **important moment** for me as I realised how **unlimited** the preliminary process could be.

COLOUR CHANGES FOR BALANCING, SHAPES, AMBIENCE AND REDUCE DISTRACTIONS AWAY FROM FIGURE

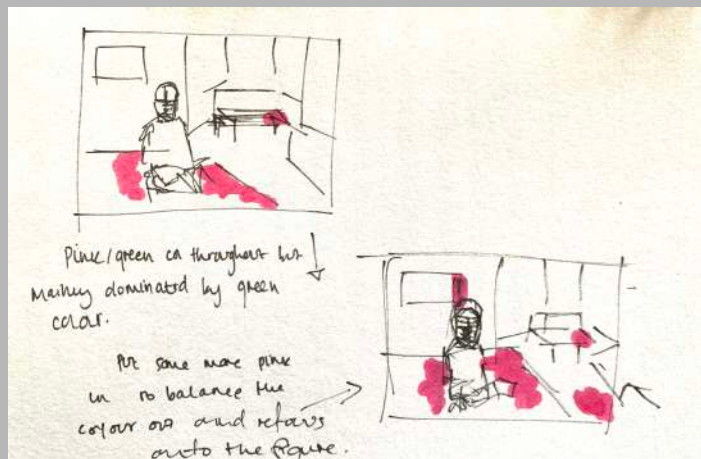


ORIGINAL PHOTO



PAINTING

I make conscious decisions of the colours within the composition, even as I paint. The bright blue, yellow and red objects in the original photo were unharmonious and distracting from the painted figure, so I **changed** it to a subtle green and removed the red element, **balancing** the work. I brought the pillow forwards for shape, creating a better **rhythm** across the bench.



I continue to change elements such as colour as I paint. In this work a predominantly green tone resulted in an imbalance in other colours such as pink and so I integrated pink as subtle washes or broad marks into new areas, bringing a holistic feeling to the work by drawing the viewers eye around the piece towards the figure, creating a better connection.



Continuing to alter colour, opting for a purple towel instead of yellow because its **shape** was similar to the fold in the sock **parallel** to it, bringing a **balance**.

CONNECTING THROUGH DETAILS

Within my paintings I add **tiny little details** that **catch the eye** within the work, for example the logos of branded clothing.



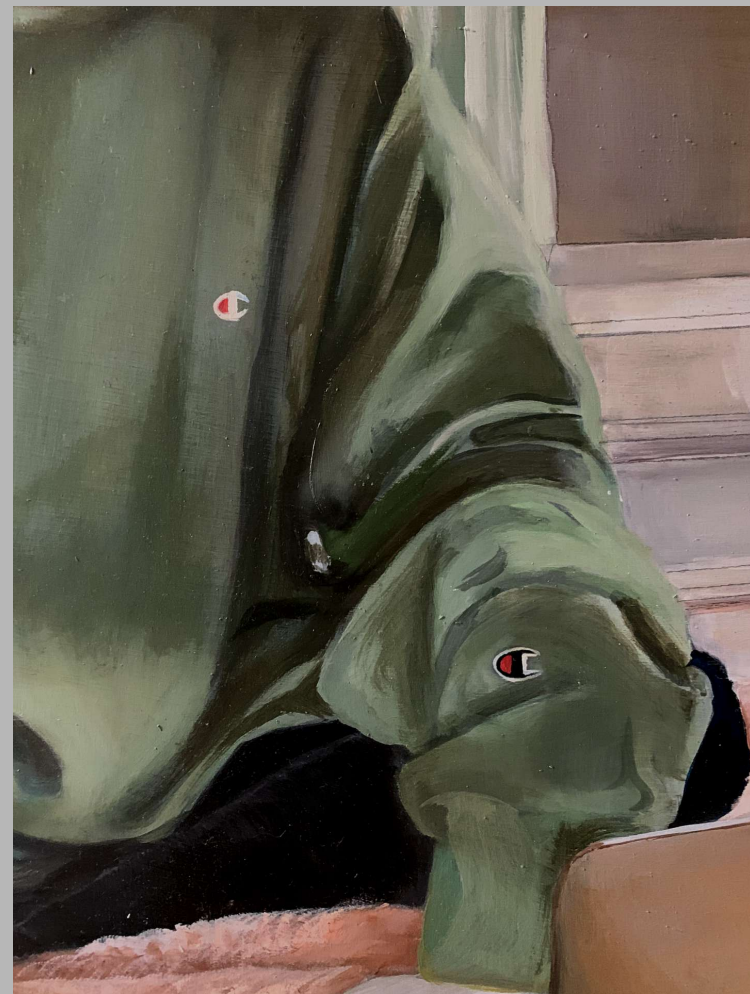
DAVID HAINES *Investigation into digestible and indigestible substances*, pencil on paper, 220 x 140 cm, 2009

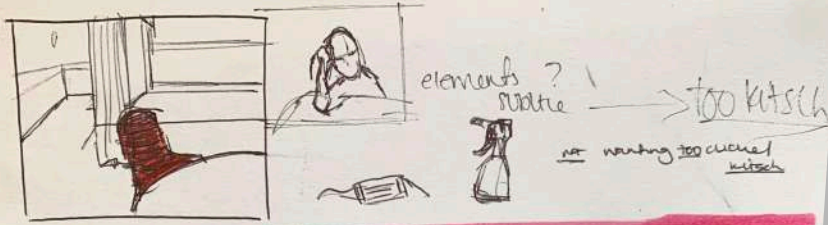


San Remo, Oil on canvas, 121.9 x 81.3 cm ,2013

JOHN CURRIN

I aim to create a **relatability** and place a time stamp to the work of youth and today's fashion. Through branding, I suggest modern **social stereotypes** whilst mirroring historic painting techniques, similar to Currin.

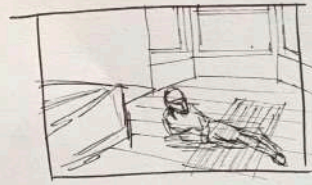




elements? subtle → too kitsch

not wanting too cluttered kitsch

not have workouts.



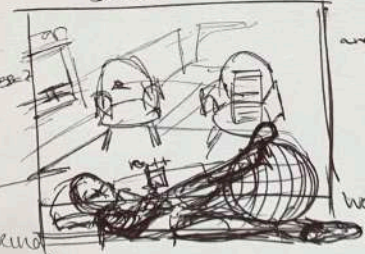
bedroom / large space

maybe to place it in a more confined area.

→ either through cropping of space

Kitchen / lounge.
add space to be workouts on.

space of boxes



Low workouts and boredom / lack of motivation.

workout ball.

or phone?
phone / not workout actually at all.

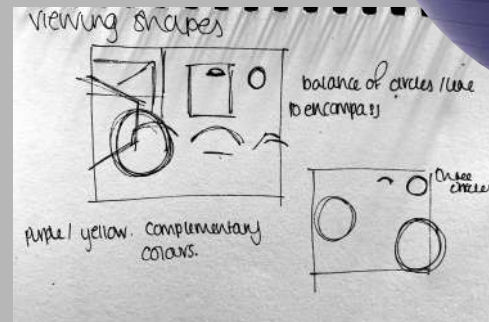
lines dynamic

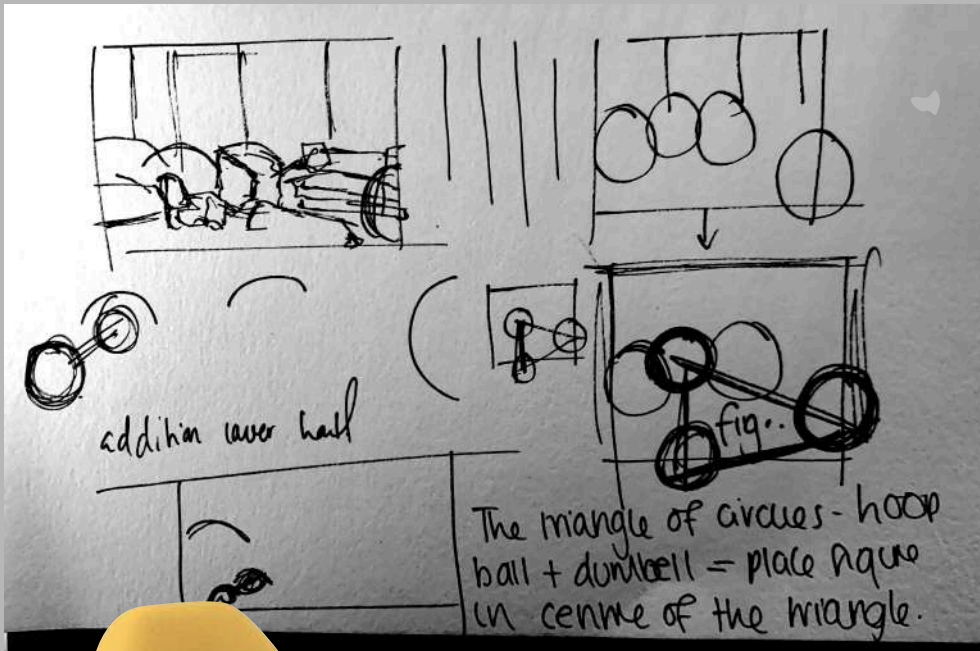
circulate repetition

Composition planning of *home gym* that plays on the idea of at home workouts, and the lack of space that people have. Considering all the details, objects, shapes and poses.



Staging the scene, I noted the **shapes** naturally occurring within the setting, the **rhythm** of the curves in the chair, **repetition** of the circles in the wall, the hoop in **contrast** with the structured window and radiator. However, I felt that something was missing, and to add greater **context** into the work I placed a purple exercise ball in, **balancing** out the shapes of the circles, bringing an element into the foreground.





The digital collage process gave me more confidence in adding **new elements** as I painted. I felt another element was missing in the original composition, for I wasn't connecting with the face of the figure through the **rhythm** of the painting and so I created a triangle of circles by adding a dumbbell, **encompassing the figure** as seen in the sketch.



Altering the red jumper to purple mid painting. More **harmonious** with other elements, and complimentary colours between yellow and purple. Draws **attention** to the figure through the **attire** that is not quite workout attire, and the pose of not actually working out.



ATMOSPHERE/AMBIENCE IN MATERIALITY



©Michael John Angel



I convert my selected photographs to greyscale, in order to consider tonal values more effectively and then paint in a grisaille underpainting method, after priming the board with blackboard paint inspired through Caravaggio. This adds depth to the work, focusing the light onto areas that I want it to draw attention to, and creates an atmosphere through the contrast between dark and light.



I start with the face, an important factor, as the **expression** it holds is the **anchor** to the work- **capturing** the viewer, and creating **connections**. I then start underpainting a broader area, continually taking photos of the work to reflect upon throughout and inform my process for future works.

A STICKY-NOTE SKETCHBOOK

Red - Net
harmours -
does it add to
the tension -
(tension purple / yellow)

Hand + phone

↓
light / dark
details

+ needs to sit on with
the sleeve of jumper
on the knee.

NB

Roof is too dark +
detailed → coming into
the room

LACKS PERSPECTIVE

View of window - too
overstated.

Push it back - think about
how there is
① a window
② a road
③ PERSPECTIVE

Make the chair the rhythm

tone of wall
Grey rail thing

shoulder v. flat
and no shape / structure
→ build it and bring
it around

C → C → ↓
✓

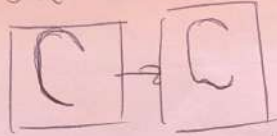
face lacking depth
and structure - titanium
white causing flatness
- consider flake white
here again + ochre.
for warmth +
added structure.

There should be an added element at the bottom - circle type shape → weight

- ① a lot of space
- ② more harmonious

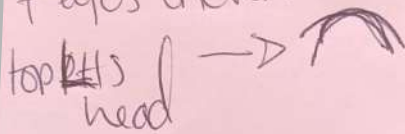


Jawline too flat

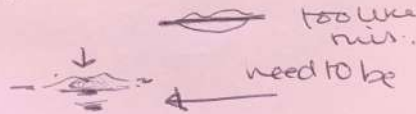


needs to have bump in it to reflect jawline + chin.

Egg shaped head.
+ eyes uneven.



lips too pronounced



IMB
Imbalance of

Pink

hint added to mirror and on flooring

Not enough weight in elbow
→ pillar

- darken and sink

- chair behind too bright (pillar)
push back.

→ floor perhaps too energetic @ Paul.

→ something will wrong w. lips?

→ background behind L
needs to be more
more structured.

wait for bridging area to dry, then

bring wire

FORWARDS →

→ currently v. flat

lot further than bench



I have been exploring the way in which the oils can be used with **Liquin** to impact the **perspective** and **light** for **ambience and atmosphere**. Using both wet on wet method for smoother blending and oil-liquid mix for a glaze overlay, I add **depth** to different areas. Through this medium I have changed my underpainting approach, placing brighter block colours down first, or painting an entire area with the same tone before using the liquin on top





PUSHING ELEMENTS BACK, TONING DOWN THE BRIGHTNESS TO FOCUS ON FIGURE/REMOVE DISTRACTIONS



I explored using liquin mixed with paynes grey and titanium white oil paints to **lighten** areas of the painting and create reflections in the windows. This pushed the stone buildings back out of the room, creating a better **perspective** and removing the darker, more **dominant tones** they had in order to **refocus** the attention on the painted figure. Additionally, the **rhythm** in the bench and windows was restored, creating a more **engaging** painting.



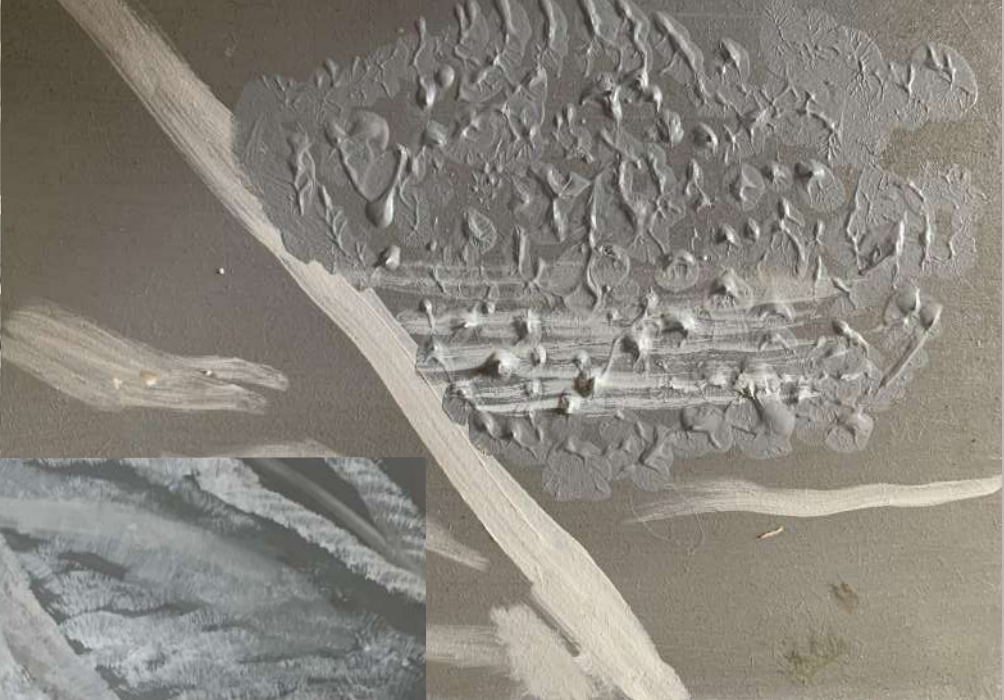
Structuring elements through **masking tape**, to add **concise**, clean lines in the window, adding **structure** and simplicity to the work, **breaking the composition up**.



A key moment within this painting and practice was when I decided to leave the blanket painted without detail. Initially I had planned on adding details, and carried out a study to explore texture and creating a fluffy material.

However, with other areas of high detail around the blanket, I felt the painting needed a break for the eye, and create a **tension** between the **simplicity and intensity**. The focus was now upon the areas that mattered and tell a **narrative, connecting to the viewer** - predominantly the face.

Additionally, it **brings an edge** to the work, and the painting is no longer confined to becoming a highly finished work, a revelation that has inspired me to think about how I can continue to change elements in my practice, perhaps learning to stop a bit earlier in some areas.



Blanket study becoming a useful tool for configuring **painterly decisions**, encouraging me to use smaller studies to inform large works in the future.



ZOEY FRANK *Hannah at Twelve*, Oil on canvas, 147 x 152 cm



KERRY JAMES MARSHALL
Untitled, detail, 2008
acrylic on PVC panel,



NORMAN BLAMEY *A seated lady in an interior*, Oil on board, 92 x 108 cm, 1988

Zoey Frank and Norman Blamey inspire me to continue experimenting with how much **information** I include, and how patterned fabrics against simple ones enhances the figure and add dimension. Kerry James Marshall's practice explores the representation of black artists, and through his technique of contrasting levels of detail he explores the line between **representation and abstraction**, which inspires me to think about how I can use my method for deeper meanings in the future.



CONTINUING THE EXPLORATION OF - HOW MUCH DETAIL DO I NEED? WHERE IS THE LINE BETWEEN ENOUGH AND TOO MUCH?



The choice of **scale** within my practice is important, for the **life-size** figures **connect** to the viewer as the direct eyes stare back and demands their attention. It holds a **presence** and dominates the space that it is within.



Florence, Oil on board, 28x24x4cm

In Between Meetings, Oil on board, 60x90x4cm



CAROLINE WALKER

Tarh, 10.30am, Southall
Oil on linen, 174 x 200cm
2017

Caroline Walker's presentation of larger scale works next to smaller works informed how I collated a **series of paintings** together in terms of different scales. It further influenced my considerations into **scale of the figure** within the space, particularly within *Home Gym*, in which Laura is not a life-size scale that I usually paint. I found it more difficult to paint but I think that it changes the pace of my practice within an exhibition, and opens me up to consider different scales of figures in future.