Caroline Walker Picture Window



Anomie

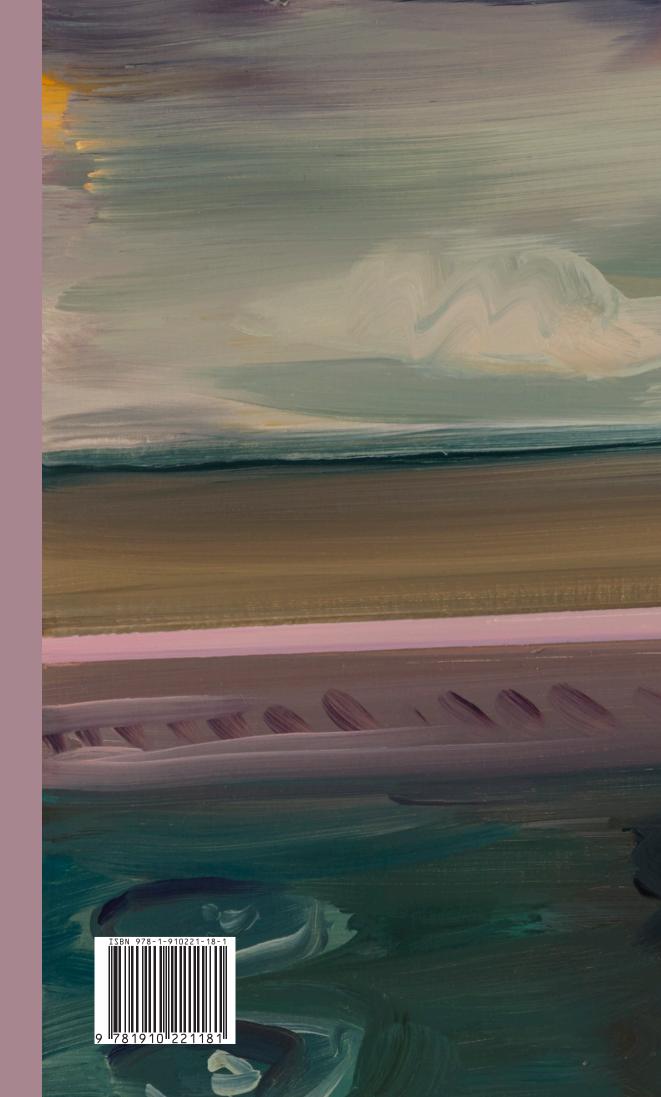
Caroline Walker Picture Window

Caroline Walker

Picture Window

Celebrated for her striking, sometimes playful yet often challenging paintings of contemporary women in diverse environments and architectural settings, Caroline Walker explores myriad social, cultural, economic, racial and political factors in her practice that affect women's lives today. Her works take us from the luxurious hotels of Los Angeles and Palm Springs to the temporary social housing of female asylum seekers arriving in Europe, from the nail bars, restaurant kitchens and offices of London to the private pools and nighttime parties of the European elite. Walker deftly broaches both everyday and more provocative subjects ranging from the pay gap to migrant workforces, the beauty industry to domestic roles, gender stereotypes to ageism. Featuring a significant essay and an in-depth interview with the artist by art historian Marco Livingstone, along with texts by Andrew Nairne, Dr. Rina Arya, and Dr. Lauren Elkin, 'Picture Window' is the most comprehensive publication to date on the work of London-based Scottish artist Caroline Walker (b. 1982, Dunfermline).

With her critical approach and through her painterly virtuosity, Walker is rapidly becoming established as one of the leading British painters of her generation.



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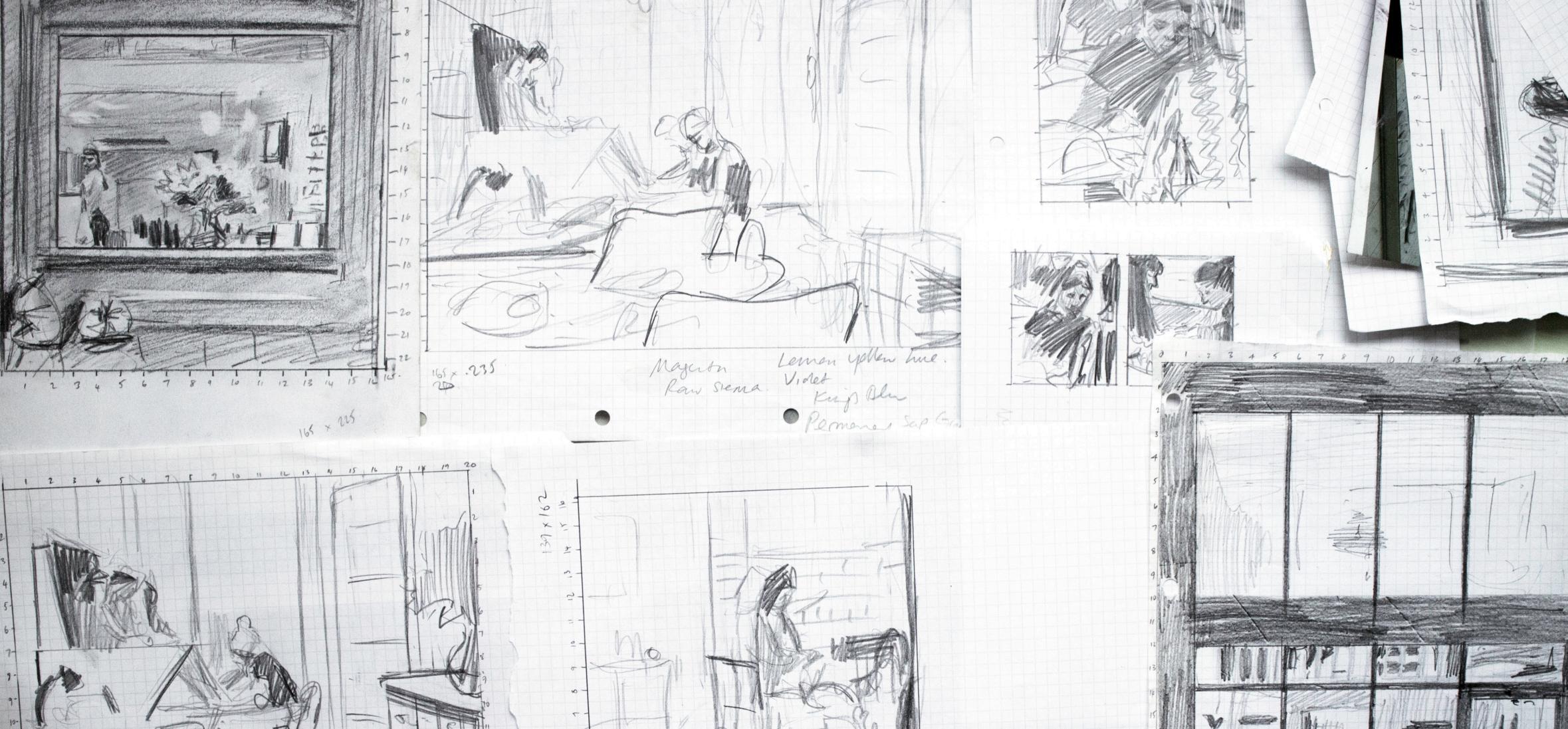
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Caroline Walker

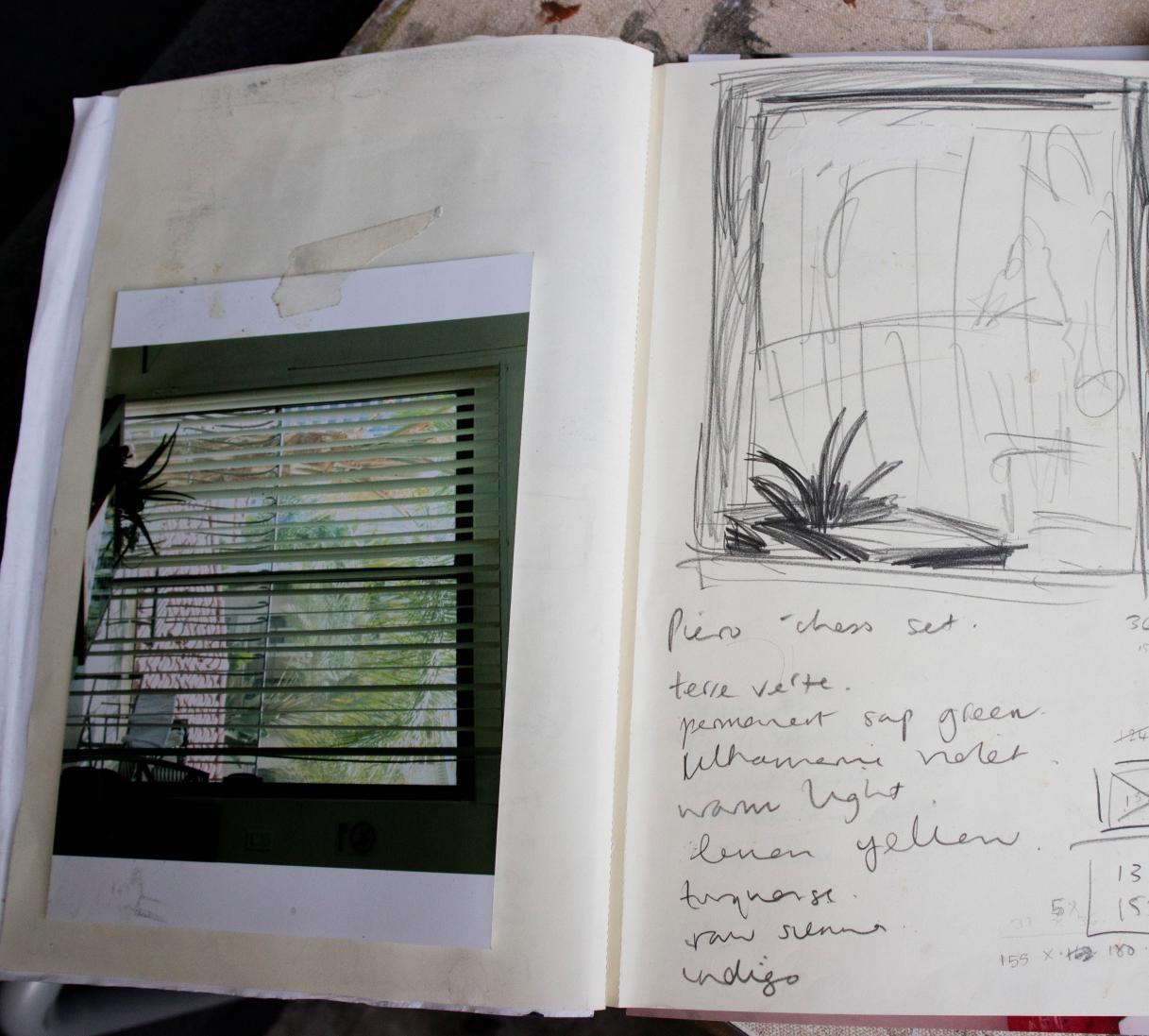
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Caroline Walker Picture Window

Essay and interview Marco Livingstone

Further contributions Professor Rina Arya Lauren Elkin Andrew Nairne



Caroline Walker Picture Window

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A Painter of Modern Life

Marco Livingstone

The paintings by Caroline Walker that are the subject of this book, created between November 2015 and April 2018, very firmly describe particular corners of the world and of domestic and public spaces from a female perspective. That is simply a matter of fact, as they are made by her from visual material she has amassed herself, usually through a process of finding suitable locations, choosing the people she wants to populate them, taking a great number of photographs and then reshaping that imagery by hand with brushes and oil paint. That gendered voice infuses the subject matter and the methods deployed in the construction of each composition. The pictures are populated almost exclusively by women of contrasting ages, backgrounds and races, each of them in some way functioning as a surrogate for the artist herself. These women, both young and old, apparently prosperous or surviving in more challenging circumstances, at home or in temporary accommodation, at rest or intensely involved in beautifying themselves, appear self-possessed and oblivious to our gaze even when the chosen viewpoint suggests that we gaze upon them as voyeurs or unnoticed intruders. The themes elicited by the situations have particular relevance to the experience of women, if one may be permitted to make such a sweeping generalisation. Perhaps even more contentiously, the paintings foreground, and in turn draw out from the spectator, qualities conventionally thought of as more associated with, or prized by, women than men: sensuousness, intuition, emotional intelligence. an appreciation of beauty and a capacity for empathy.

Although men have occasional walk-on parts in her paintings, nobody could fail to notice that the people animating the spaces in her work are almost always female. That has been the case since she was an art student and even, as she has explained, from the drawings that she used to make as a child. The decision to use female protagonists acting as a stand-in for herself therefore happened naturally, but she is of course aware of the repercussions in this choice that contribute to a subtle political statement. It would therefore be misleading to make a distinction between a feminist agenda or a wish to convey her own experience and identity, as the two impulses are inseparably entwined.

Yet the appeal of Walker's art is by no means gendered; it is universal. Many of the painters whose work is subtly echoed in her own are men, including such 19th and early 20th century artists as Édouard Manet, Edgar Degas, Édouard Vuillard, Pierre Bonnard and Edward Hopper, along with a few women such as the Impressionists Berthe Morisot and Mary Cassatt. Until our own lifetimes, the world conveyed in paintings, and the way that women were represented in them, was primarily one conveyed through the minds, eyes and hands of men. This was just accepted by most as the way things were. What a waste of human potential over hundreds of years that women artists had such obstacles placed in their path even for their training, let alone for the dissemination and appreciation of their work. Thankfully all this has finally changed, particularly in the period since Walker was born about 35 years ago, and the rigid stereotypes that confined both women and men to restrictive roles have begun to lose their grip. I know from experience that men respond to Walker's work as powerfully as women do, and even to experience an unconscious relief at not being led to respond to images of women in a sexualised way, as has so often been the case through the last half-millennium of the European painting tradition to which Walker's art is making such a vital, vigorous and affirmative contribution. The subjective responses evoked by her paintings in a sensitive, open spectator are liberating in their release of the capacity we all have in reserve for sensual and emotional release.

This is an art powered by, and giving permission to, the pleasure principle. I don't mean that to sound like a trivial matter. During a period in which 'aesthetics' and 'beauty' have come to be seen as problematic concepts, ones that are to be pushed to the sidelines in favour of critical theory, disruption, subversion and irony, it takes a certain kind of courage for an artist to persuade us that this is permissible, even welcome, to yield fully to the pleasures of the senses. In Walker's case, any guilt one might feel in revelling in the sheer beauty of her apparently effortless painterliness and unerring ability to create memorable images of desire ebbs away as one appreciates, through prolonged examination, the rigorous pictorial intelligence with which she consistently and repeatedly creates simulacra of environments we recognise through experience or by recourse to our imaginative faculties and capacity for wish fulfilment. Much of the work plays on collective fantasies of the good life, but the hold these paintings may have over the spectator goes far beyond aspirational fantasy or escapism. There is often a feeling of emptiness in them that implies a criticism of lives spent in pursuit of purely materialistic goals; certain series of paintings, moreover, in being rooted in a grittier reality, examine the flip side of that kind of cocooned existence. However long one gazes into the spaces of these pictures, one feels wholly and convincingly immersed in them, experiencing them from the inside rather than looking longingly from afar. The silence and stillness that permeate the paintings are an important contributory factor to this feeling of time having stopped. Though there is often a suggestion of narrative, there is little clue to what may have come before or what might follow: we are simply in a perpetual now.



I. Édouard Manet, A Bar at the Folies-Bergère, 1882

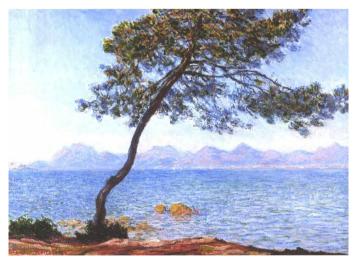
Walker is highly conscious of, and very interested in, art made by her immediate contemporaries not just in Great Britain but around the world, some of whom she counts as friends and with some of whom she has participated in group exhibitions. Among the names that come to mind, in no particular order, are Jonathan Wateridge, Hurvin Anderson, Lynette Yiadom-Boakye, Matthias Weischer, Hernan Bas, Benjamin Senior, Lisa Yuskavage and Celia Hempton. The focus of my attention here, however, is on her links to the past, since one of the great joys of Walker's paintings, at a time during which so many artists of her generation either want to disavow the past altogether or else to make reference to it in an arch and self-conscious manner, is how comfortably and naturally they sit within the history of European painting and quietly acknowledge their debts. Just as Manet took sustenance from Diego Velásquez or Francisco Goya, so Walker's painterliness welcomes them, and particularly Manet and those of the Impressionist generation, as predecessors while insisting on the contemporaneity of her own images. Like those French 'painters of modern life' of the 1860s – to borrow the phrase coined by Charles Baudelaire in the appreciation he published in 1863 of the work of Constantin Guys, an artist now in the shadow of his more celebrated contemporaries [1] - so Walker uses the immediacy of

her language of the brush – filtered through the evidence of her own photographs – to convey a cumulative picture of her own time and the society in which she lives.

There is a particular accord with Degas, who was among the first major artists to take inspiration from casual snapshots to construct bold, sometimes apparently off-kilter, compositions that suggest fleeting moments of day-to-day existence and of people captured off-guard going about their daily activities. A quotation from a diary kept by Degas between 1868 and 1872 comes to mind. Referring to begin with to the academic mode of the human head studied in isolation for its expressive possibilities, he wrote: 'Make of the tête d'expression a study of modern feeling [...] Make portraits of people in typical, familiar poses, being sure above all to give their faces the same kind of expression as their body. Thus if laughter typifies the individual, make her laugh!' [2] Where Degas, steeped in the Beaux-Arts tradition, deliberately transformed aspects of academic practice into his pointedly naturalistic vision, freed of rhetoric, Walker passed through art schools in Glasgow and London at a time when almost all traces of academic practice had disappeared. The representation of people going about their daily lives could now be taken for granted, as

seen notably in the work of Eric Fischl, which provided some initial guidance for her own figurative paintings; it was the rigour of academic painting practices, by contrast, that she had to teach herself, in that sense reversing Degas's situation. The urge to make paintings that were explicitly of their time, however, remained very close to Degas's mindset, brought into the 21st century not only by the use of sleek minimalist or modernist interiors as backdrops but by the frequent recourse to compositional strategies evoking a cinematic vision. The voyeuristic element often commented on in Degas's work, for example in the 'keyhole' glimpses through to nude women bathing or grooming themselves, has its counterpart also in Walker's work, but significantly now without the element of presumed misogyny often ascribed to her male predecessor. It is rare to encounter an artist of Walker's generation, now barely in her mid-thirties, who has so intelligently and apparently nonchalantly reshaped an understanding of the origins of modernist painting while conveying a highly personal vision that is unquestionably of her own time.

The Postmodernist habit of referencing other art, particularly from earlier periods and often in deliberately jarring conjunctions that place those references within quotations, is not what drives Walker. It is rare for one of her canvases or oil sketches on paper to nudge the viewer into remembering a particular work by an earlier artist, as is the case, for example, with the painting *Interval* (2014), depicting a young woman serving in front of a mirrored bar, which nods to a favourite painting of hers by Manet, A Bar at the Folies-Bergère (1882)¹. It is more a question of her having absorbed the art of chosen predecessors so as to add to her armoury some of the most effective strategies that propelled a sense in their art of the world glimpsed as if by chance through an unplanned encounter. Typically, Walker presents scenes of daily life that seem to have presented themselves fortuitously to an unsuspecting passerby or, more ominously, as the result of the deliberate spying of an unseen witness of whose presence the protagonists are seemingly unaware as they go about their mundane daily routines. In some cases we see them framed in



III. Claude Monet, Antibes, 1888



II. Éduard Manet, The Railway, 1873

brightly-lit interiors from an exterior vantage point at night, as in *Prerecorded Study* or *Birthday Party*, both of 2017.

Some of the compositional solutions employed by Walker for presenting a scene partly obscured from view take the breath away, as in the use in *Chess* (2016) of a rhythmic pattern of half-open vertical blinds through which one spies a figure resting against a balcony railing with a large palm tree and densely planted garden beyond. Another painting of the same year, *Pool Views*, employs as a device the glimpsing of an idyllic scene through the regularly placed metal bars of a fence, which serves many purposes at once: it activates the viewer's curiosity about what lies beyond, it excludes us from participation in what comes across as a vision of paradise, it divides the composition into a rhythmic pattern of equal zones (suggesting the passage of time), and it establishes a clear demarcation of space between the picture plane and the spatial evocation of a welcoming external space.

For antecedents of these arresting visual solutions – which simultaneously create bold compositions. locate the viewer within the depicted space and in relation to the figures portrayed and make sense in terms of the depiction of a scene that strikes one as convincingly real rather than contrived – one can look again at the work of those late 19th century French painters. In Manet's The Railway (1873)^{II}, a well-dressed woman sits next to a young child, standing and seen from behind, whose firm grip on a set of vertical railings establishes her exclusion from the busy workings of the Gare Saint-Lazare that is the focus of her unseen gaze; that we are likewise deprived as spectators from a view of the train and its locomotive, concealed in a cloud of steam, contributes to the bittersweet atmosphere of longing. In Claude Monet's Antibes (1888)^{III}, a painting that Walker would know well from the collection of the Courtauld Gallery in London, the prominent elegant silhouette of a pine tree in the immediate foreground

acts as a screen against the distant sun-drenched landscape. The brooding oversized plant painted in a dark impasto at the front of the poolside view of one of Walker's large new Los Angeles paintings, *Training* (2017), performs a similar function.

My point is not to suggest a direct relationship between these and other paintings by Walker and those painted over a century earlier by artists whose work she clearly enjoys, but to indicate the extent to which she has internalised imaginative compositional solutions almost by osmosis from years of intense looking at historical paintings and at the world through the viewfinder of a camera. The lineage, moreover, goes back further and in more directions than the examples I have cited. Behind the blunt cropping of imagery and unexpected angles from which late 19th-century painters working in France, including also Paul Gauguin, Vincent van Gogh and Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, presented their painterly paraphrases of reality glimpsed in passing or via peripheral vision lie the inventions of the great 18th and 19th century Japanese woodblock print artists. Without necessarily having to examine the art of Utagawa Kunisada, Hiroshige or other masters, Walker remains indebted at least through the intermediary of the French painters to the innovations by which those Japanese artists depicted the 'floating world' of contemporary urban life in their own society.

The visual opulence, one might say even the seduction, of Walker's art, which accounts for much of its immediate appeal, is held in check by the economy of means by which she summons her imagery out of the fabric of the paint itself. That elision between the materiality of the paint and the brushstroke as a thing in itself, on the one hand, and on the other the absolute certainty with which one consumes the image as an equivalent for reality, lies at the heart of the delicious transformations that are central to the pleasure one feels in front of her paintings. Her eye for an evocative, immediately appealing image and composition helps one to hold her paintings in one's memory, and accounts for her almost eerily high 'hit rate'. But where a more graphically inclined artist might be satisfied to leave things there, Walker entices the viewer to approach the surface, where her deft but unshowy manipulation of paint provides a separate and quite distinct sensation of pleasure.

There are many prompts to physical sensations in Walker's paintings, and to one's memory of what objects are like, often because of the specificity of her choices and the particular ways in which paint is handled to evoke a material or surface. By contrast there are also passages, like the foliage in *Training*, that are not very precisely described. In that case one is presented with what seems like a half-remembered sensation of what that garden looked like. If there had been a crime committed there and one were asked by the police, 'What was the garden like?', one might be struggling and not getting much further than, 'Well, it was quite thick vegetation.' And that's the feeling you get here. It is not possible to describe precisely what is going on in that garden,

how deep that space is, what goes on behind or what the plants are. What she conveys, very effectively, is just a feeling of being in a thickly vegetated space.

One feels oneself to be taken along almost as co-author, as if as the viewer one were also involved in the very act of making the painting. Certainly the shiver of satisfaction that I experience when looking at her paintings close up often comes not from the ostensible subject matter but from the unaccountable magic of the paint itself. Having planned her pictures carefully through the photographs that lie at their inception, then in oil sketches and finally in the full-scale quick charcoal drawings that help her decide the precise dimensions of the stretched canvases to be ordered, most of the essential decisions have been made. In so doing, Walker leaves herself free in the final stage of production to paint intuitively, spontaneously and very quickly. A large canvas might take her as little as three days of actual mark-making, not counting the weeks of research, planning and preliminary work. Since even the colours to be used are known to her before she makes the first mark on the canvas, there is little to delay her in reshaping the composition and its constituent images. The result is paintings of great freshness and vitality.



IV. Caroline Walker, The Party Animal, 2006

Walker's focus on figures within domestic spaces occurred towards the end of the completion of her first degree, at Glasgow School of Art, where she was a student from 2000 to 2004. The short text that she wrote for the John Moores Liverpool Exhibition 24, where she exhibited a large canvas at the age of just 23, ^{IV} remains an informative statement of intent more than a decade later.³ After a three-year gap in her studies, during which she continued to exhibit her work and also to learn about the mechanisms of the art world through a part-time job at a commercial gallery in Glasgow, she went on to obtain an M.A. in painting at the Royal College of Art in London between 2007 and 2009. It was during this latter period that she began even more consciously to take as her subject matter women pictured in domestic interiors. For these student works she often used the same professional model in the various homes occupied by her for short periods while house-sitting and looking after the pets of their absent owners. The reliance on rooms with which even the inhabitant was not entirely familiar established an atmosphere of 'un-at-home-ness' that has proved potent for Walker's subsequent work, a vague feeling that neither the artist nor the people she represents fully belong in the places in which they are seen. The evocation of disguiet and unease, sometimes even a sense of not being comfortable within one's own skin, is tricky to pin down, but it is a recurring mood in the pictures and one that transforms what might otherwise have been cosy and inviting images of domesticity into a far more psychologically charged landscape.

The many stages involved in the process of making these paintings contribute to their very particular atmosphere. In 2010 Walker began to create her work through an elaborate process to which she has been faithful ever since. She scouts for suitable architectural settings, whether lent to her or rented for perhaps just a few days through an outlet such as Airbnb; she chooses (and often pays) the women who will interact with these spaces under her direction, while she photographs them; and then she paints from the photographs, first in relatively small oils on paper and then on a much expanded scale on board or more usually canvas, with the oil sketches as templates for the final compositions. Always keeping her options open, and wanting to create a greater variety of mood, situation, palette and light, she quickly expanded her sites from enclosed interiors to the more open external spaces of gardens and swimming pools, also moving from an initial concern with the stillness of single figures to pairs or larger groupings that introduce a more dynamic and explicitly social dimension.

Walker is still in a minority among painters working today for embracing, or at least hinting at, narrative, and for doing so in a knowing way that places her in a lineage of painters of domestic life going back as far as such 17th century Dutch masters as Pieter de Hooch and Johannes Vermeer. Rather than telling a story, though, her paintings function more like stills from movies we haven't seen: often a mysterious, unexplained, quiet moment, with the viewer left to speculate on the events that might have preceded it or that may follow on.

Each of the six large canvases at the centre of the *Sunset* series of 2017 conveys an episode in an unspecified narrative about the unnamed middle-aged beauty who is seen going about her routine during a typical day: lazing in her swimming pool, taking exercise to keep in shape, admiring herself in a walk-in mirrored wardrobe as she decides how to present herself to best advantage. Walker had considered making the entire series about this particular



V. Edward Hopper, Automat, 1927

woman inside the house, as if trapped in the isolation of her gilded cage, but she expanded this to include a single piece of evidence of her solitude following her also outside the safety of her own home: in *Desayuno* she is spied having breakfast at the luxurious Beverly Hills Hotel. A luxury hotel's elegant restaurant, intended as a site of conviviality and public spectacle, is the kind of place where many people would be reluctant to sit alone. Nevertheless there are two plates of food on the table, suggesting that a second person has perhaps just stepped out. This highlights the fundamental ambiguity: is the woman on her own, or is she waiting for someone? As so often with Walker's work, there is more than one narrative possibility.

Much of the effectiveness of Walker's paintings arises from the fact that as a spectator one is simultaneously looking into other people's lives and putting oneself in their place. Desayuno, with its perhaps unconscious echoes of Hopper's Automat (1927)^v, is a case in point. We all know what it is like to sit alone in a public space, feeling self-conscious; your mind drifts and you can find yourself suddenly daydreaming, hypnotised by the quality of the light. The painting thus conveys how you would feel yourself in that kind of environment. This might not be a conscious decision on the artist's part, but it adds to the atmosphere and psychology of the picture, to the sense that you are putting yourself in her place or that you as the spectator are at another table gazing absent-mindedly at the woman but also looking around the room in a way that would not happen if you were in conversation with someone else. Walker confesses that she is not always sure herself why she chooses a particular photo, out of all the visual material she has amassed, as the starting-point for a painting. I see this as a strength, that she is working intuitively and allowing herself to make decisions that are not necessarily rational or intellectual. That there are things happening in one's peripheral vision that suddenly get one's attention, rather than everything being focussed on the central event, also somehow animates the whole space.

As Walker's work evolves, there is a sense of her consciously broadening her subject matter, much as Degas did, while remaining rooted in reality. In her case, over the past decade the scenes depicted have migrated from the claustrophobic rooms of Victorian domestic architecture both to more prosperous modernist domestic settings and to communal spaces - including Hungarian bath-houses and the increasingly popular nail bars in which female Londoners are attended to by women from Southeast Asia or Eastern Europe – that could be described as combining the private with the public.

Two of the most recent series of paintings at the time of writing, Sunset and Home, represent opposite poles of experience: the former showing a middle-aged woman alone in the opulent surroundings of a luxurious house in the Hollywood Hills, the latter documenting the situation of female refugees from various countries living in London, in a more painful layered isolation, in modest temporary housing. For her first solo exhibition in New York, in spring 2018, her initial plan was to make a series of paintings depicting the silent and largely unnoticed domestic staff of luxury hotels. When it began to prove difficult to obtain permission to photograph within the walls of the hotels she had in mind, she came up with the idea to wander around central London photographing women at work in a variety of locations including a restaurant, a restaurant kitchen, an upmarket tailor's shop, an office building at night (again with strong echoes of Hopper), a bakery, a perfumier, a bridal shop, a hairdressing salon, a shop selling beauty products and a nail bar. The resulting show, titled Service in recognition of the dutiful roles assigned to her protagonists, introduced a new terrain into her work that will undoubtedly continue to feed her imagination. By covering such a variety of industries in which women toil silently, often barely acknowledged, Walker has substantially expanded the possibilities for her subject matter and imagery while remaining true to her core concerns.

The ease with which Walker moves from sites of privilege to locations associated with women living on the edge, or doing their best to survive in challenging circumstances, implies a critique of the extreme inequalities within society and the pacts that each of us makes in either colluding with or reacting against our allotted place. In presenting such a range of experience and circumstances, Walker reminds us not only of her ambition to represent modern life in its many guises, but also of her conviction that even under duress people need not be passive victims, but on the contrary can operate defiantly with as much free will as they are allowed

There is a growing subtle political subtext to particular subjects of which Walker is aware from the time that she embarks on her research and image-making. For example, just as she began to take photographs in London nail bars for a series of paintings to be shown in Korea, articles began to appear in the press about these businesses being a hotbed of human trafficking, slavery and exploitation. On the surface, these paintings focus on concepts of beauty and the ornamentation of the body, but once one knows about those other issues it is difficult to view them in such an innocent way. The Home series, by addressing the plight of women refugees and asylum-seekers living in temporary London accommodation, moves even further into political territory.

Given her fascination with cinema, it was perhaps inevitable that Walker would eventually find her way to Los Angeles. She nearly went there in 2010, having secured a grant to visit the city specifically on a reconnaissance mission to make paintings in houses that had been used as sets for films, but the funding fell through and it was finally only in August 2015 that she made her way to southern California for a three-week stay. Most of that time was spent in rented accommodation in downtown Los Angeles, with a few highly productive days in the desert resort of Palm Springs. In July 2017 she returned, this time only to Los Angeles, for a period of two weeks, renting a house in the Hollywood Hills and re-employing a model, a former Miss America contestant, with whom she had worked during her first stay. The six large canvases and related smaller works that emerged from this most recent sojourn were made specifically for her first solo show in that city.

When David Hockney first arrived in Los Angeles in January 1964, he felt immediately that it was a location free from art historical baggage. 'My God, this place needs its Piranesi', he said. 'Los Angeles could have a Piranesi, so here I am!' [4] Walker, on the other hand, had to circumnavigate not only Hockney, but also the work of Ed Ruscha and other painters and photographers who have immortalised southern California. It could have been daunting to set herself up against them, or on the other hand too easy to be tempted into making knowing references to other artists, which would have resulted in a very different kind of painting. Apart from the occasional subtle echo, she has remained committed instead to the creation of a world that seems entirely her own, managing to put those existing images by other artists out of her mind when she was gathering the photographic evidence from which to make her paintings. There are many artists living and working in Los Angeles, and none of them have produced work like this, even though she has visited for such short periods. Walker thinks that possibly because she is an outsider there and that she habitually works in spaces that she does not inhabit herself, she has become accustomed to responding quickly and decisively to alien or unfamiliar locations. That was true, as she points out, even with the paintings set in London nail bars: she is not in the habit of having her nails done, so there is an intrusive element even to those.

It seems scarcely credible that the impressive sequences of paintings reproduced within the pages of this substantial book were produced within such a short period, particularly given the increasingly large dimensions of many of the canvases and the compositional and thematic variety animating the artist's

confident and affirmative vision. That Walker proceeds with such logic and deliberation, but also with such strength of intuition, is apparent from the clusters of paintings and oil sketches produced for each of the exhibitions she has had in the space of barely two years at Grimm in Amsterdam and New York, at ProjectB in Milan, at Space K in Korea, at Anat Ebgi in Los Angeles and at Kettle's Yard in Cambridge. Each of these shows is documented in a separate section of this publication, with its own accompanying text by a selection of writers chosen for their sensitive appreciation of her work. The paintings are grouped together here to maintain their visual and thematic coherence, from the sun-drenched vistas of Palm Springs in The Racquet Club to the deliriously inviting nocturnal mysteries of *Night Scenes*, and from the high living of Beverly Hills and the Hollywood Hills depicted in Sunset to the more mundane reality of London nail bars in Painted Ladies or the cloistered temporary accommodation in which refugee women are cocooned in Home. Whatever the setting, Walker continues to expand her horizons and to ensure the continuing vitality and allure of her unabashedly beautiful and absorbing art.

Notes

- 1. Charles Baudelaire. Un Peintre de la vie moderne. Le Figaro. Paris 26 and 28 November and 3 December 1863.
- Quoted in Richard Kendall, editor, Degas by Himself: Drawings, Prints, 2 Paintings, Writings, Macdonald Orbis, London, 1987, p. 37.
- 3. The exhibition took place at the Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool from 16 September to 26 November 2006. The painting she exhibited was *The* Party Animal, 2006, oil on canvas, 130.5 x 150 cm. Her statement reads in full

'My paintings are formalised fictions concerned with the strange or ambiguous which can arise in the everyday and the banal. They explore the notion of disappointed expectations and a kind of faded grandeur of what could have been.

The paintings deal with domestic situations but investigate different aspects of these by the presence of the human form in an emotive space, with the viewer taking the role of voyeur. This voyeurism is not intended in a confrontational manner but as a passive observation of the idiosyncrasies of people's everyday lives. In The Party Animal the subject is engaged in some private act but it is unclear what this is and why she is in a state of undress. Her pose and position within the painting make her appear more vulnerable. By keeping the central area of the painting quite empty the attention of the viewer is focused on the objects in the room and their importance as narrative tools.

I investigate the connotations of the figure alone and how this can be interpreted in an unsettling way. Perhaps it is not that the figure is alone: rather, the context is created of a person in a space where there could or should be other people. Narrative is suggested in the work, without it being clear if there really is any story. There might be something happening but equally, there might not.'

4 David Hockney, quoted in The Listener, London, 22 May 1975.

Images

- I Édouard Manet, A Bar at the Folies-Bergère, 1882, oil on canvas, 96 x 130 cm | $37^{3/4}$ x $51^{1/8}$ in, courtesy of the Courtauld Gallery collection.
- II Éduard Manet, *The Railway*, 1873, oil on canvas, 93.3 x 111.5 cm | 36^{3/4} x 43^{7/8} in. courtesy of the National Gallery of Art collection. Washington D.C.
- III Claude Monet, Antibes, 1888, oil on canvas, 65.5 x 92.4 cm | 25^{3/4} x 36^{3/8} in, courtesy of the Courtauld Gallery collection.
- IV Caroline Walker. The Party Animal. 2006. oil on canvas. 130.5 x 150 cm | 51 3/8 x 59 1/8 in, courtesy private collection.
- V Edward Hopper, Automat, 1927, oil on canvas, 71.4 x 91.4 cm | 28^{1/8} x 36 in, courtesy of Des Moines Art Center collection.

Marco Livingstone is an art historian and independent curator with a special interest in Pop Art and figurative painting. His numerous books and exhibition catalogues include Pop Art: A Continuing History (1990) and monographs on David Hockney, Patrick Caulfield, Peter Blake, Paula Rego, R.B. Kitaj, Allen Jones, Jim Dine, George Segal, Tom Wesselmann and others. The fourth edition of his monograph on Hockney in the World of Art series was published by Thames & Hudson in late 2017.



Service

by Lauren Elkin

Everyday life in the city is a collection of disjointed moments. We're on the move, only passing through; we get glimpses of other people's lives, but they're gone before we can wonder anything else about them, replaced by something or someone else at the speed of our bus, or our stride.

The art of the city has always grappled with this fragmentation, both formally and thematically. In her paintings, Caroline Walker explores this tension between the fleeting moment and the suggestion of a life beyond the canvas. The paintings in this series are built up out of snapshots taken as Walker -talk about nominative determinism- made her way on foot from Bloomsbury down Oxford Street, down Bond Street, up Savile Row into Fitzrovia, quickly photographing the women she saw at work behind the plate glass windows of their hair salons, nail bars, restaurants, office buildings, quickly moving off again before anyone noticed they were being captured on film.

Who are these women? Where do they live? How do they define themselves with relation to their work? In our current social climate, as we're asking questions about the value of a woman's labour, as companies are being required to own up to the gendered pay gap on their books, as we're becoming aware of the abuse and exploitation of female workers in the beauty and housekeeping industries, these paintings become more charged, the answers to these questions more pressing.

Walker seizes on the architectural features of the buildings these women work in, to gesture at different stories about women and their jobs. The window panes between us and them are always visible, creating another kind of frame, another level of distance, echoing the frame of the canvas itself. In *Forecasting*, we have a Hockney-esque view of a woman in an office building, enclosed in her corporate geometry, spied from below, at flâneuse-level. Whereas in *Preening*, the enormous double Ss of the front doors all but obscure

the young woman who works there, pulling her hair into a ponytail, a bored look on her face, which is almost interchangeable from the glamour shots that line the wall behind her. And in *Cut and Finish* the frame of the window divides the space in two, cutting off the woman who's waiting to get her hair done from the woman who is, and the way the mirror doubles the hairdresser in a way that makes it unclear whether we're looking at her back or another woman altogether.

There are different stories happening here, each woman isolated in her own moment of her own day, the hairdresser perhaps glad she has only one more client before she can meet her girlfriends for drinks, the women being coiffed caught in this moment of pre-presentation, preparing themselves to be seen, but not expecting it to happen quite yet. Certainly unaware that a painter -Walker- lurks outside, struck by a detail, inviting her viewers to see what she sees, to do their own bit of street-haunting, right there in the gallery. The power of these paintings lies not only in their imposing size, or their smaller, more keyhole-sized meditations, but in the way they open the gallery out to the street, implicating the viewer in their voyeurism, and enriching our days in the city with a few more moments glimpsed, a few more lives other than our own.

Lauren Elkin is the author of Flâneuse: Women Walk the City (2016). She lives in Paris.

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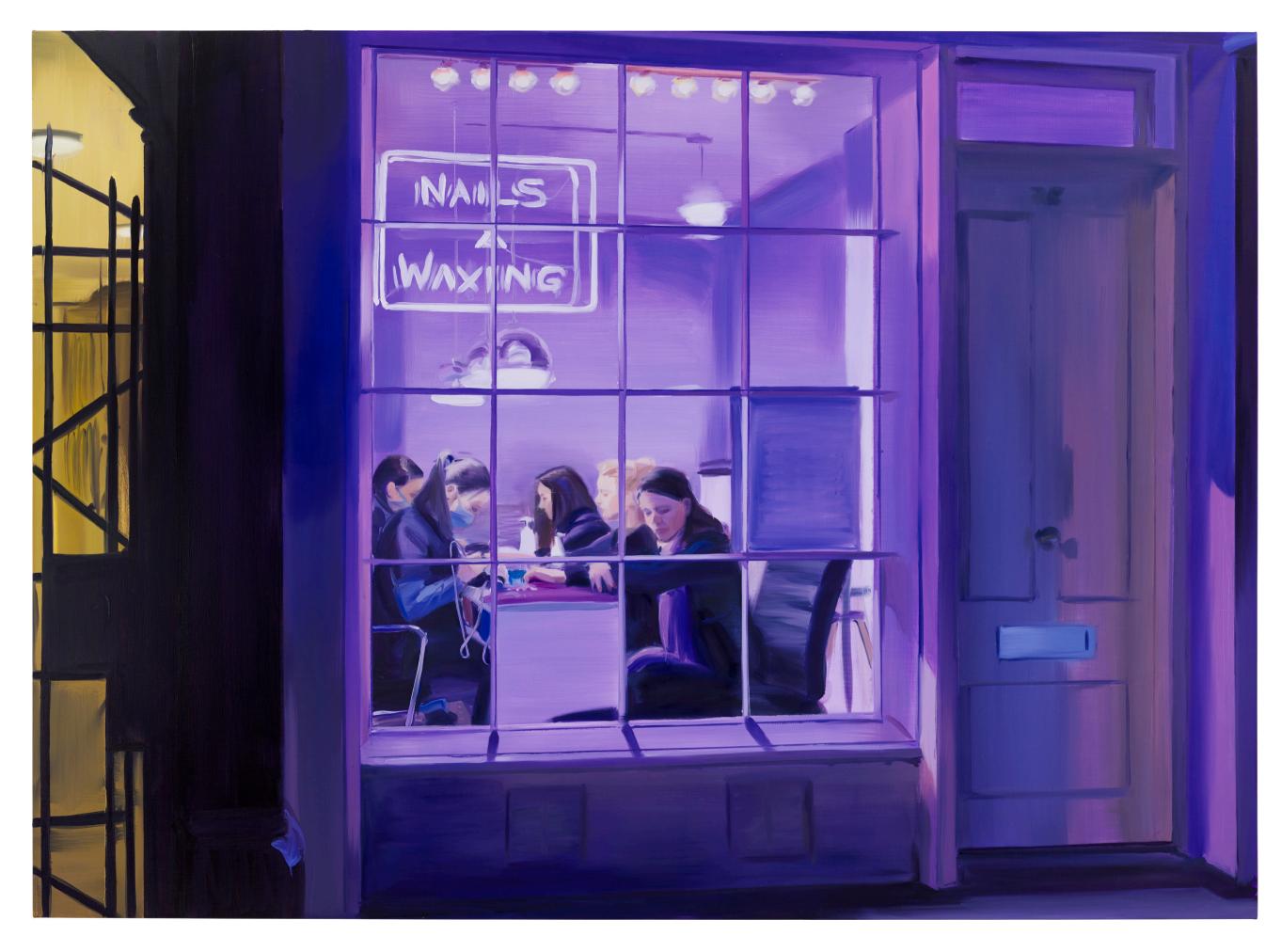


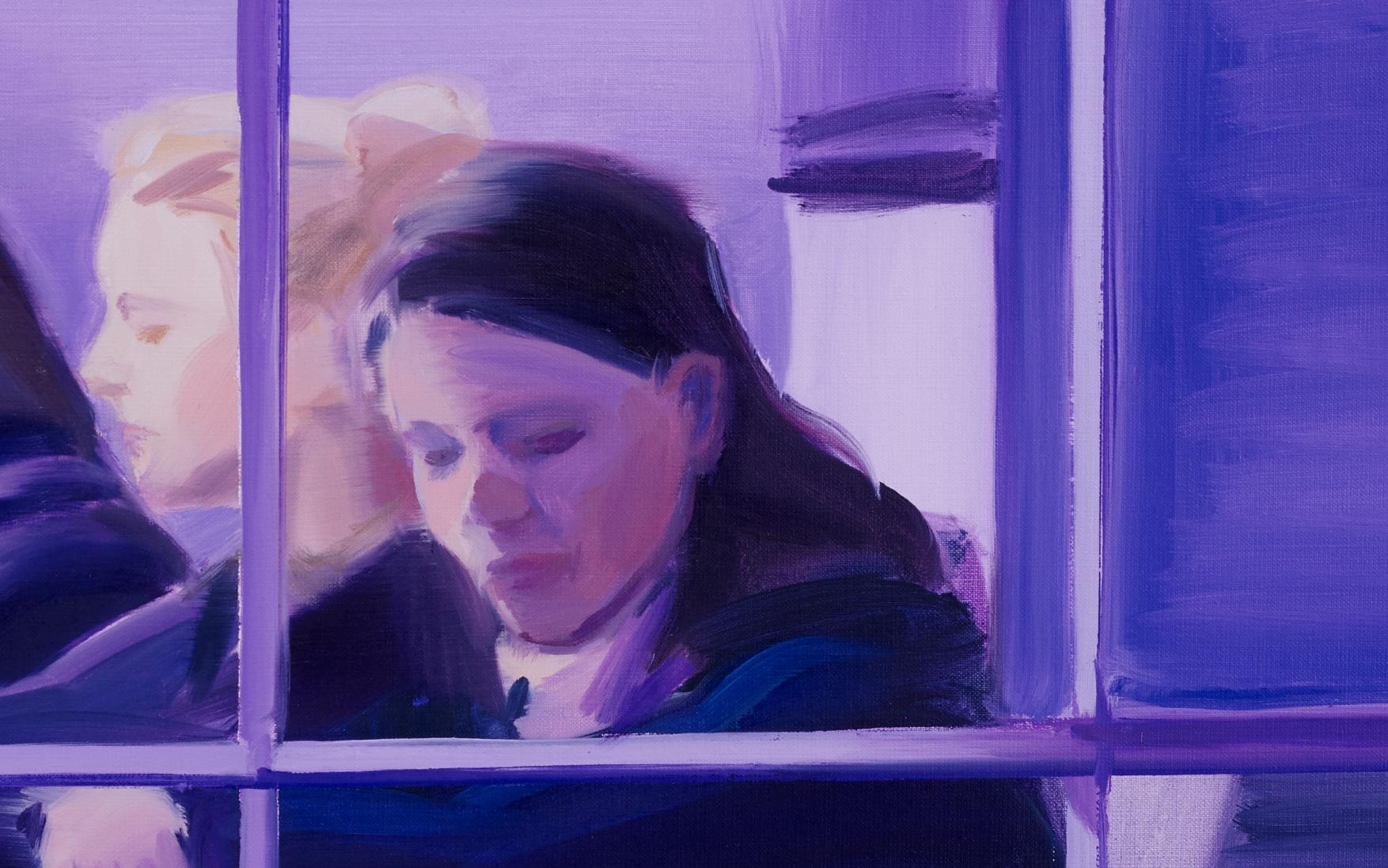


















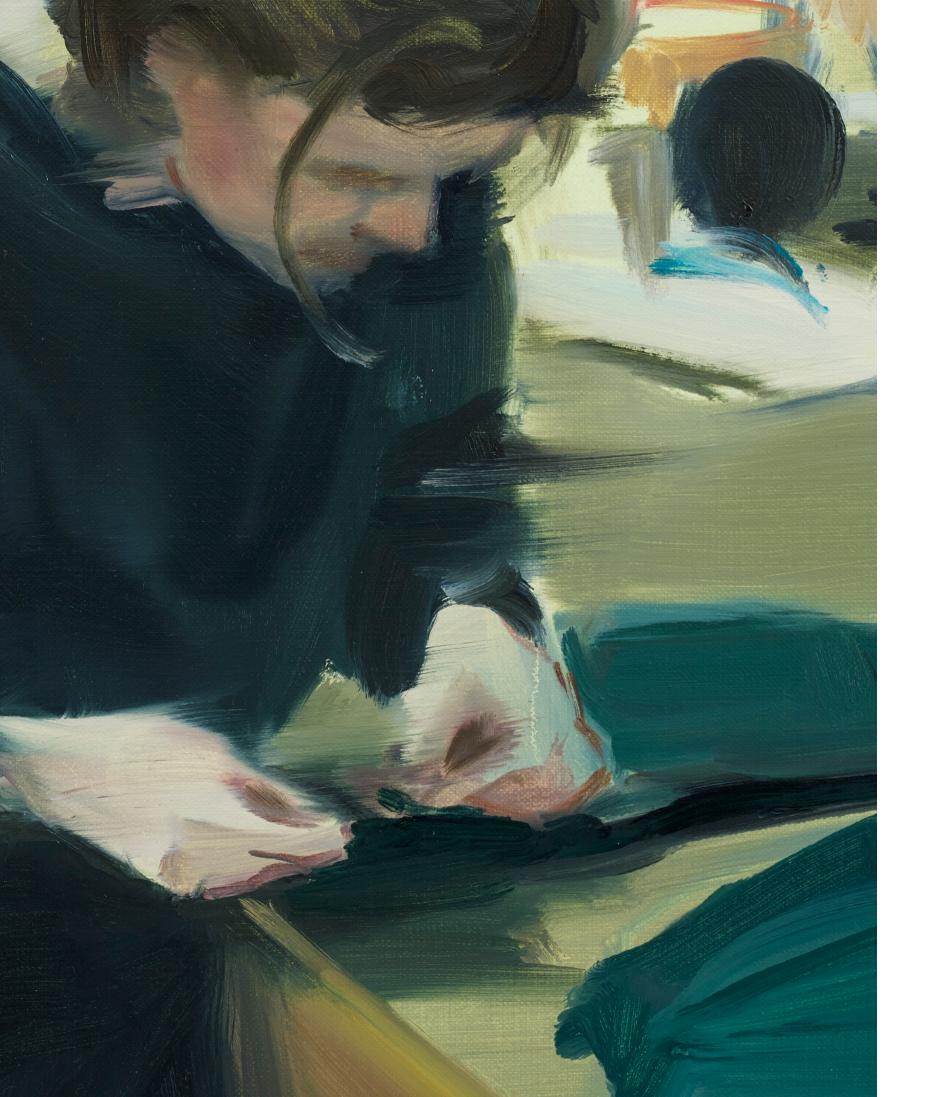






















Home

Home

by Andrew Nairne

The scene is familiar but rarely seen in a painting. A black woman stands by the sink in a bathroom. Dressed, but wearing slippers, she is perhaps engaged in cleaning: pulling off one red rubber glove, while the dash of red in the sink may represent the other. The time noted in the painting's title Joy, 11am, Hackney makes sense of the morning light flooding in, catching the shiny floor tiles and Joy's cheek and forehead. The viewer's eyes are drawn to areas and touches of red and blue, especially a bright blue mark above the bath. Like a 17th century Dutch painter of interiors, Caroline Walker observes and preserves a moment in time through paint. Yet this small work is more a sketch, an impression. The artist's visible, sometimes flickering, brush marks capture the essentials of the room as the eye does, recalling shapes and colours and most of all the feeling of a human presence.

Joy is one of five women who Walker met and photographed in London in the summer of 2017, introduced by the charity Women for Refugee Women. The paintings, based on the photographs, were made over a period of months in Walker's studio. While images of women in different environments unite all of Walker's practice, the series represent a significant shift. Walker has written:

'The collaboration with Women for Refugee Women has been transformative to my practice, first and foremost because it's led me to engage with the women I'm painting on a personal and specific level, to make paintings which take their individual lives as a starting point. I had neither met most of the women nor seen their accommodation before the visits, so the starting point for my response was coming entirely from the circumstances of these women's lives rather than anything dictated in advance by me.'¹

Titled *Home* (2017-2018) the series offers the viewer a less familiar portrayal of the continuing refugee and migrant crisis. Walker's sensuous handling of paint

brings to life the institutional and the commonplace. The warmth with which Walker depicts the women, contrasts with and foregrounds the potential isolation and latent anxiety of their situations. Their lives are safer but they are in exile from their families and friends and from the homes they have had to leave behind.

In other paintings, we see Joy again, this time half sitting up on a bed, staring out at us looking in from the doorway and we see Abi, lying on a mattress on the floor surrounded by boxes. Next to her is a bag stuffed with clothes. Her makeshift bedroom and pose suggesting someone waiting, in limbo, a characteristic all the women share. In *Tarh, 10:30am, Southall,* another woman sits on the edge of a bed looking through some papers. She seems calm, patient. On top of the wardrobe are suitcases and bags, ready and waiting for the next move.

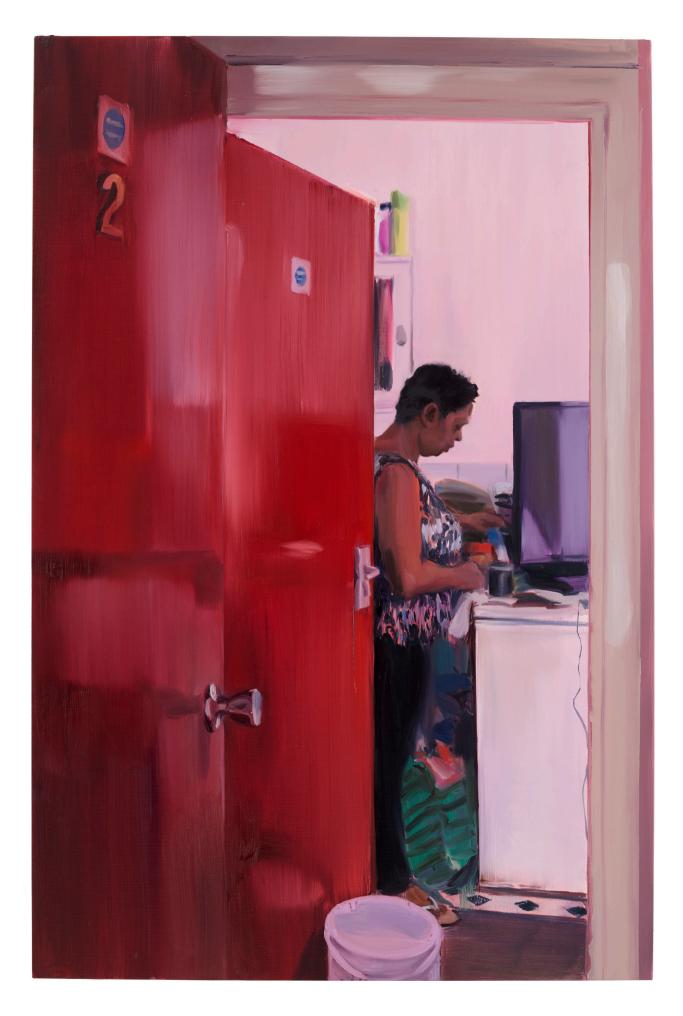
Caroline Walker's paintings make us notice, drawing our attention to those invisibly among us for whom 'home' seems a dream that is constantly deferred. These quietly intense new paintings give a powerful sense of the individual human stories beyond the politics and the immigration statistics.

Notes

 Actions. The image of the world can be different, Edited by Sarah Lowndes and Andrew Nairne, Kettle's Yard University of Cambridge, Cambridge, 2018, p. 94.

Andrew Nairne is Director of Kettle's Yard in Cambridge (UK) since November 2011. From 2008-2011 he was Executive Director, Arts for Arts Council England. In this role he led the development of Arts Council England's 10 year Strategic Framework for the Arts, 'Achieving great art for everyone', published in 2010. Nairne was Director of Modern Art Oxford between 2001 and 2008 where he curated exhibitions by established and emerging artists from the UK and around the world.



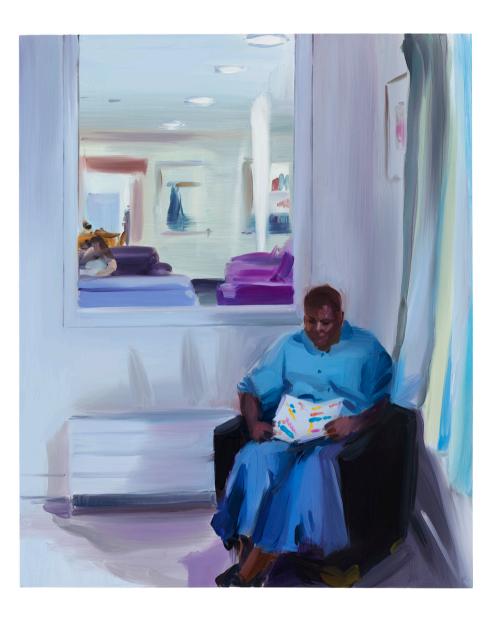




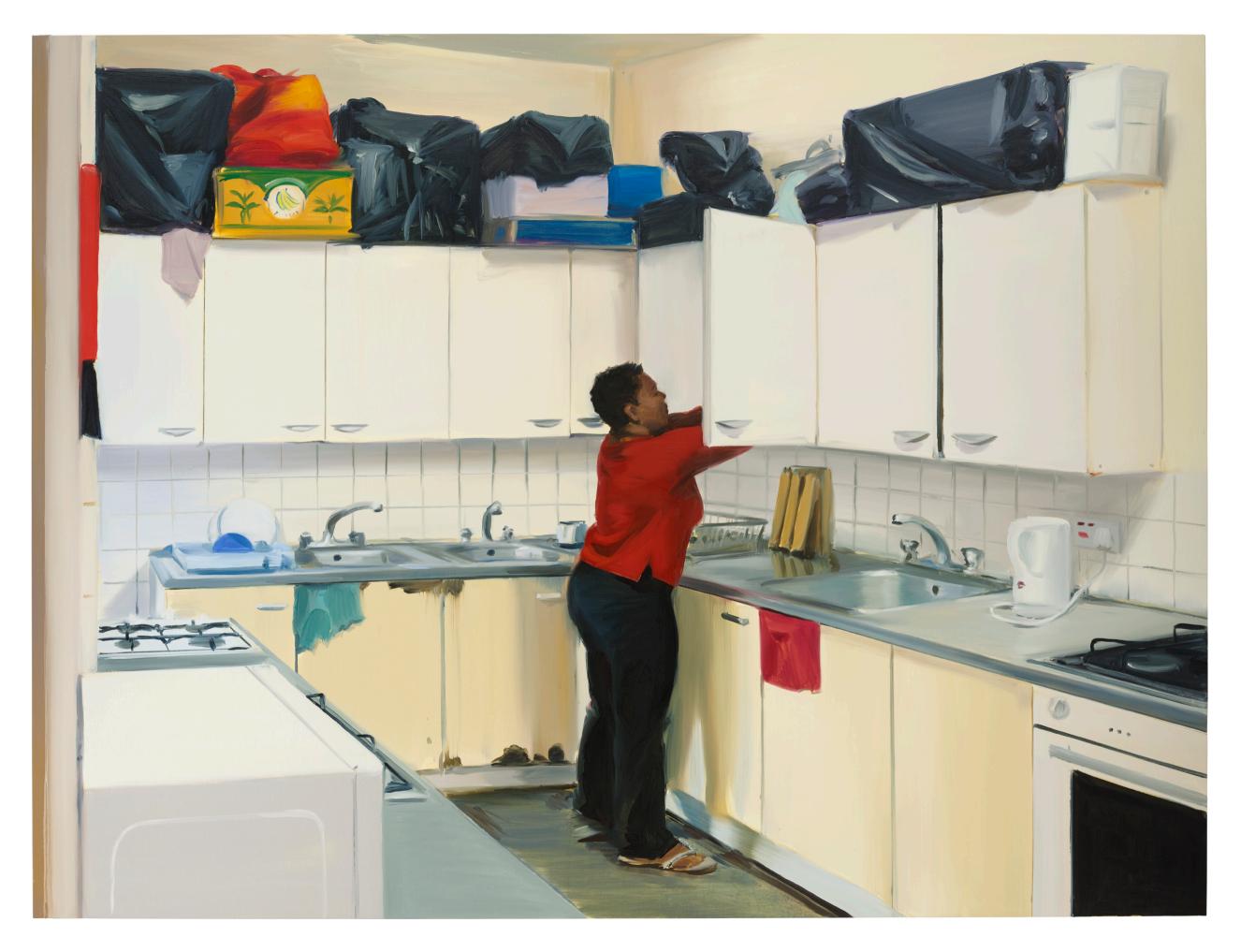
















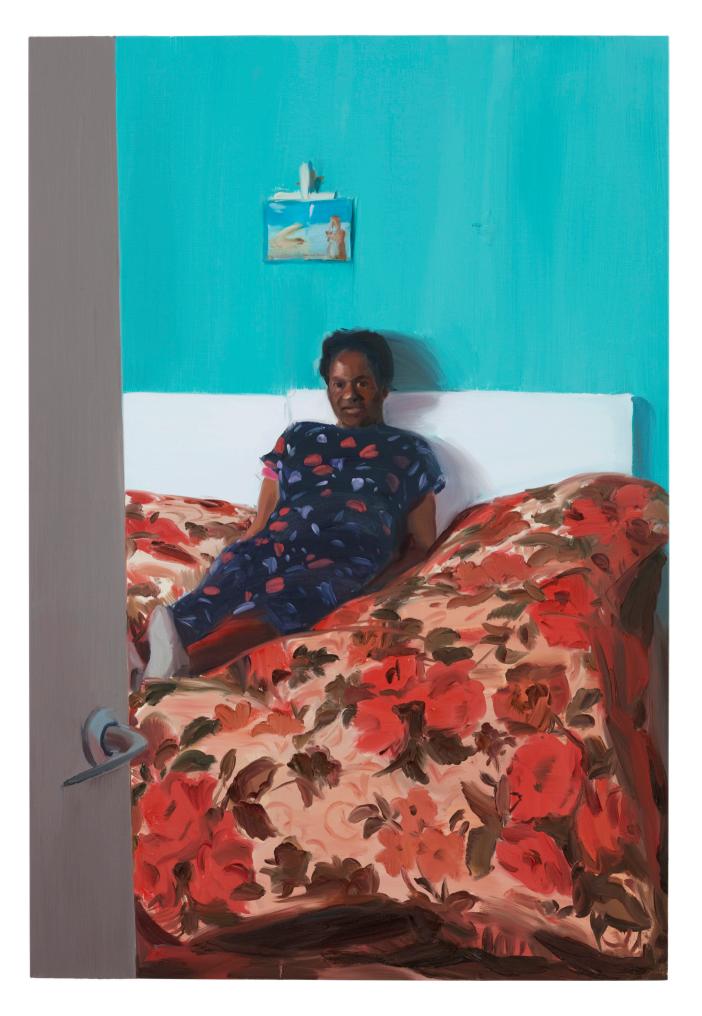


















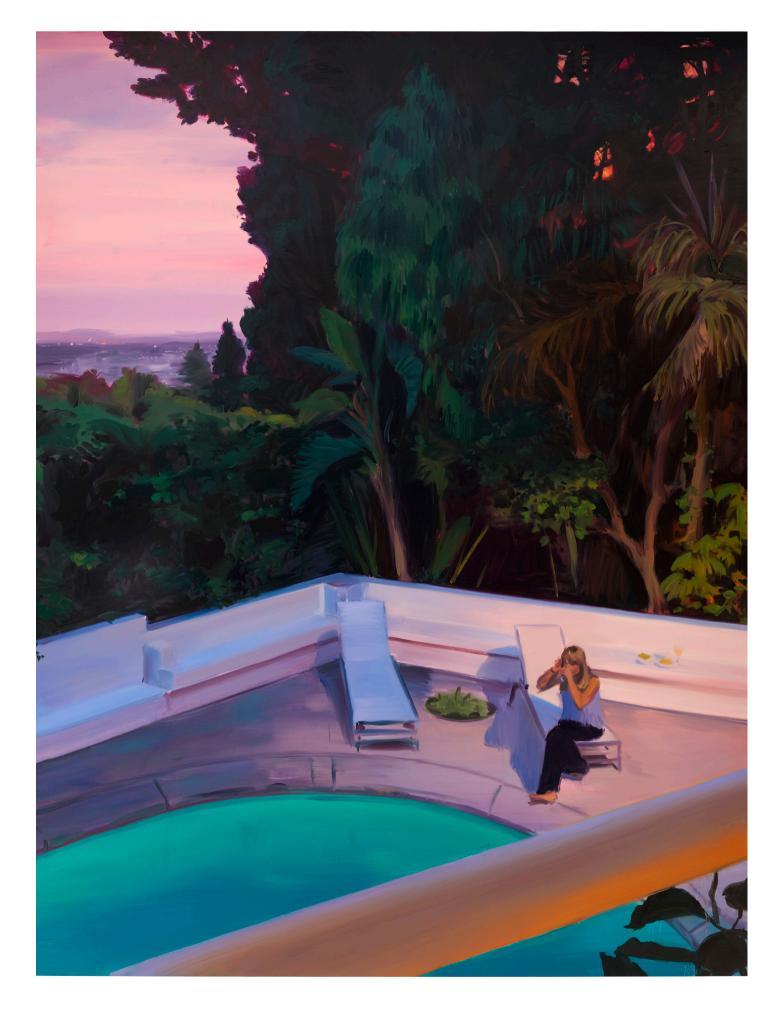


Sunset

Inspired in part by docu-soap reality TV, in part by anecdote, and in part by meeting the model who would star in them, the paintings in *Sunset* follow a day in the life of a woman in and around her home in the Hollywood Hills.

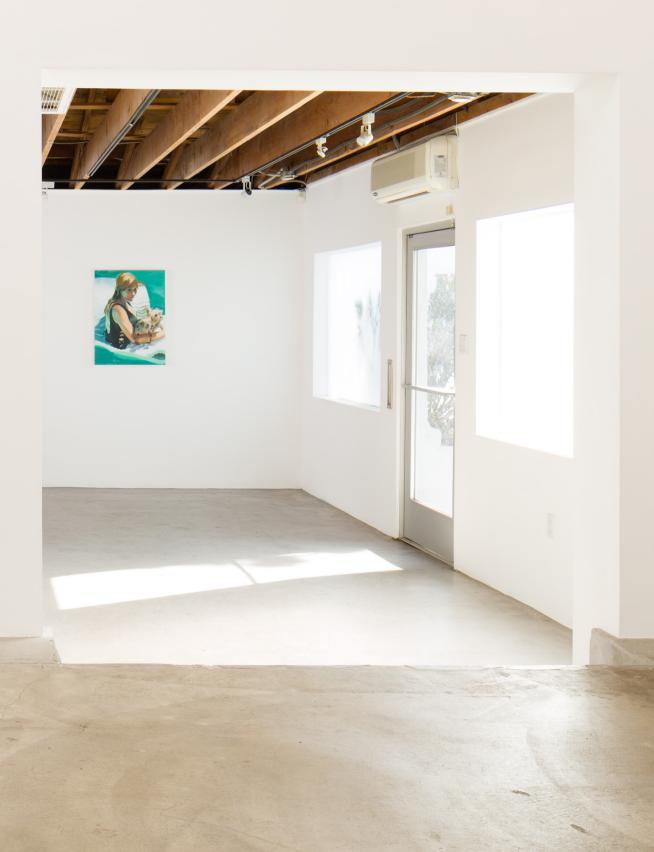
As a former Miss America pageant contestant (Miss Colorado 1977), the model was more acutely aware than most of what it is to be looked at and the limitations of that. In the paintings, the woman we see is an entirely fictional character with a very different narrative to that of the model, but perhaps they share complexities of character which go beyond the aesthetic.

The mirror and the window frame are recurring motifs which fix her within the space of the house but also suggest a hyper-awareness of self-image and the impossibility to manage that. We are witness to both the invisible incidental moments of the everyday, and the stage-managed displays designed to be visible. Moving from one scene to the next, the woman appears most often in solitude, though the voyeuristic position of the viewer is suggestive of the omniscient gaze of another. The lush surroundings seem superficially glamorous but over the course of the day give way to a sense of alienation. The title of the series reflects the location of the house and alludes to the woman's stage in life. It is also the title of the largest painting, which shows the protagonist cocooned within the grounds of her home, far from the twinkling lights of the city below.





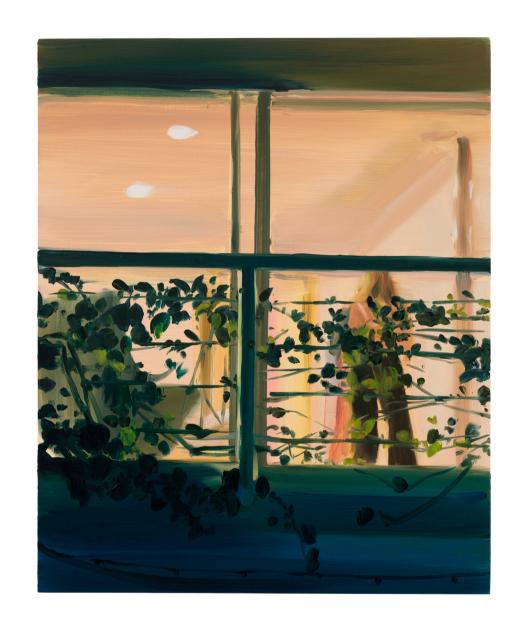




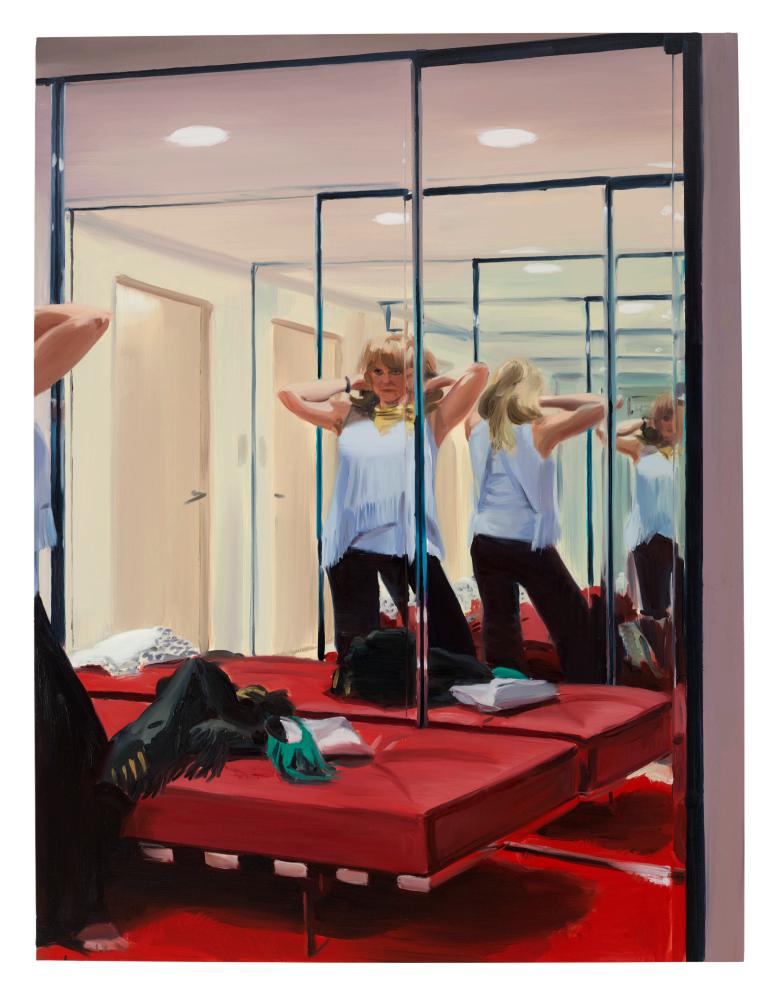






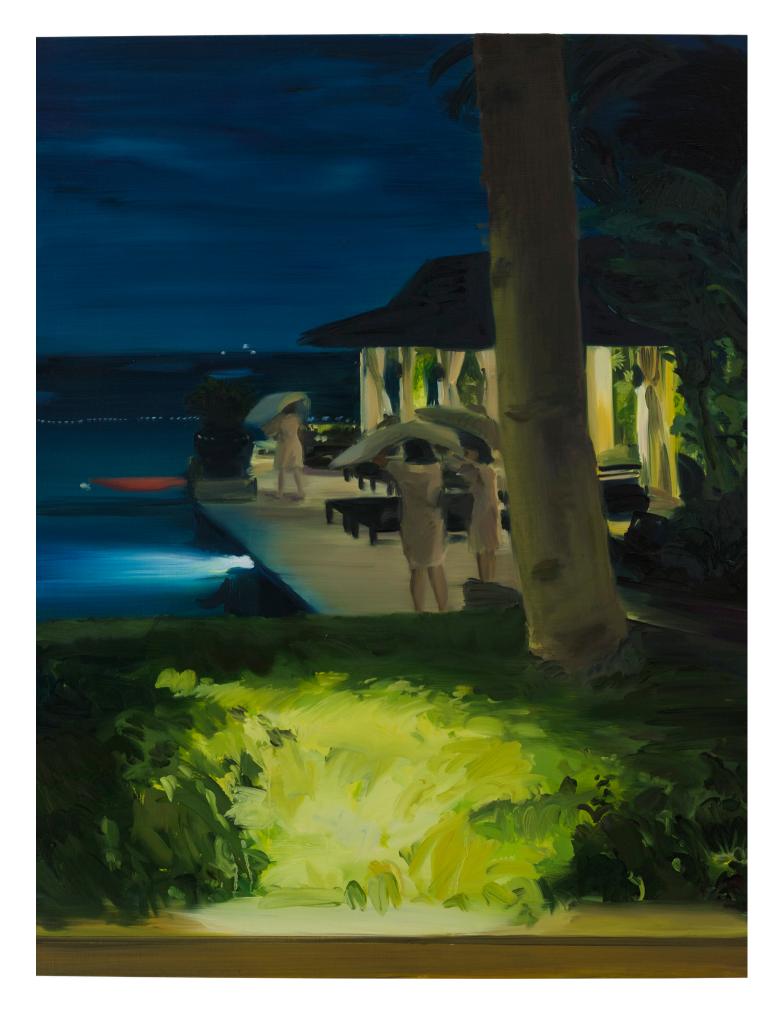






Night Scenes

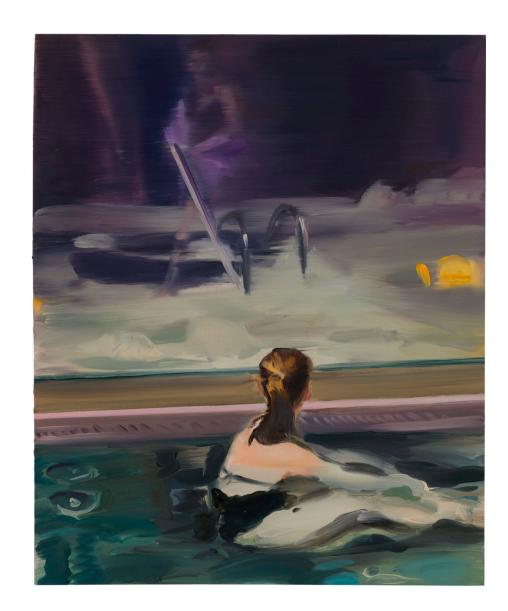
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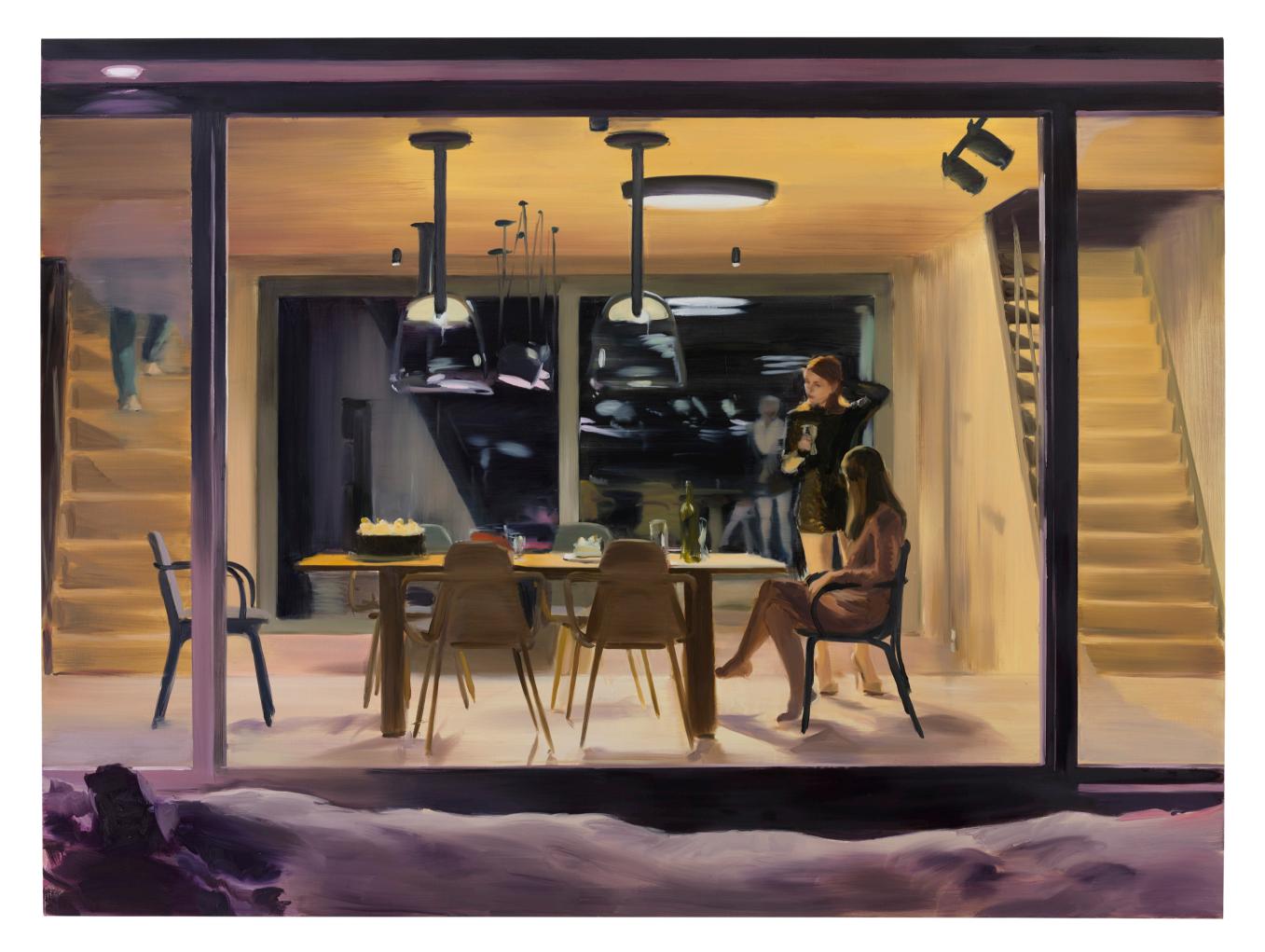




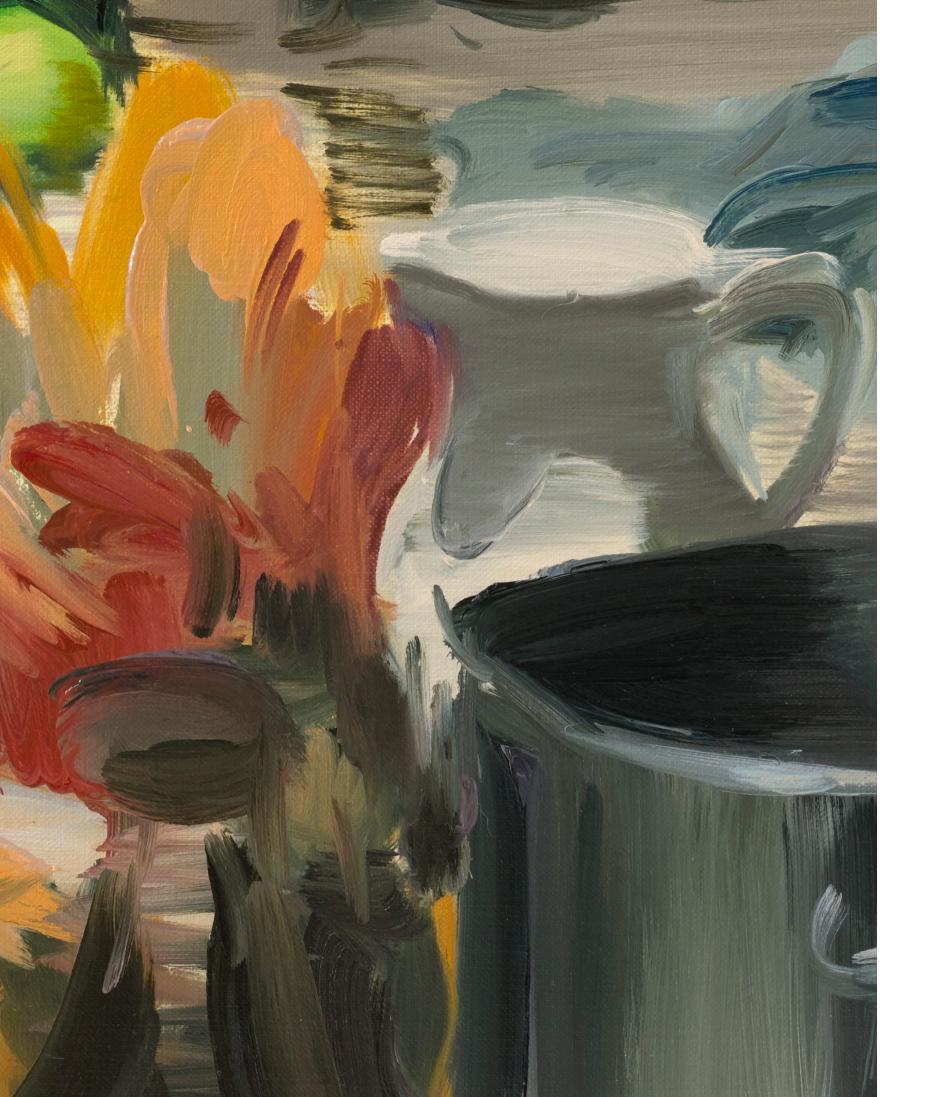










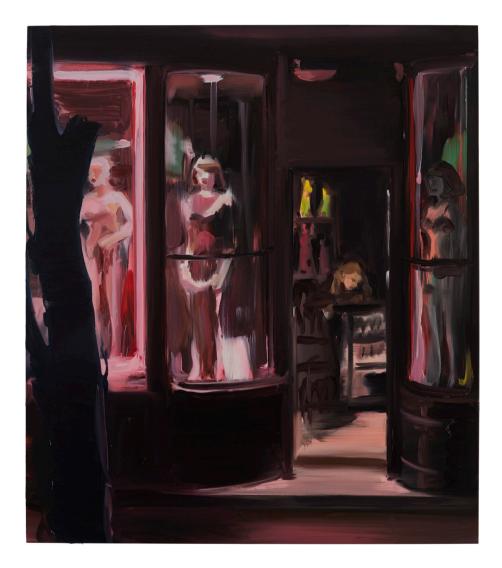






























Painted Ladies

Manicuring the perfect: Nail bars and other stories

by Professor Rina Arya

The last few decades have seen the proliferation of nail bars in major cities in the UK and beyond, inviting women to get their nails manicured at affordable prices in salons run by migrant communities predominantly from South East Asia but also from Eastern Europe. These treatments specialise in efficiency and the mass market, intending to fit people in without appointments or waiting lists, so that they can enjoy the perks of the latest trends in nail art, which sometimes means that compromises have to be made about the time given to pampering. These types of salons vary, with some working to the ethos of brute efficiency whilst others have a more convivial ambience. Clients turn up, make choices of what colour and contour they want their nails styled, and are then subjected to a brisk routine of processes to shape and finesse. With minimal verbal communication, this formulaic transaction can be depersonalising and yet strangely intimate. Hands are touched and fingers stroked in mechanised movements that resemble factory production. Uniformed nail technicians, in manner and dress, don gloves and masks focusing solely on the intricacies of their practice.

The theme of the nail bar, a place where women go to treat themselves, adding to a long list of therapeutic cultures, complements Caroline Walker's ongoing interest in exploring the representation of women in interiors. Her razor-sharp analysis is focused here on looking behind the lens at the silent spaces existing between the two parties, customer and manicurist, as they meet through touch. With fingers splayed, women sit side by side looking down or sideways. In the stark absence of conversation they focus on the magical transformation enacted through the chipping, filing, brushing and polishing, with the flashing of the minute instruments of their craft. Walker gets behind the public façade to interrogate spaces that are not visible, even shut out, from the exterior. Tables are encircled with chairs and lit by lamps and magnifying devices to assist the workers. Managers loom spectrally

in doorways monitoring the steady flow of clients. The shop facades vary; some more gaudy and cluttered whilst others are more clinical and spacious. Common to these places is the combination of the natural with the artificial. Bouquets of flowers break up the sterility of tables, adding a point of distraction and, counterpoised with the ordered rows of wooden shelves, coloured nail varnishes splinter the monotony.

Different viewpoints are captured, some displaying inter-spatial relations between outer and inner, framed by the shop windows, while others home in on the intimacy of the manicure. In Beauty Box we glance into a warm interior, from outside a strong facade, but soon have our gaze averted by an insider. The converse happens in Pampered Manis and Lacquered Up where the inner hive of activity is cut off from the outside world, which remains on the other side of the window. The intrigue of the viewer is challenged more defiantly in Nails and Brows as we are punished for looking. Bombshell Nails gives us a snapshot of what we are missing, while Pampered Pedis reverses the orientation as we witness the industriousness of the worker. Photos of beauty shots are scattered in interiors exposing the voyeuristic pleasure of looking and raising the question of where the gaze should fall. They also operate as a foil to the representation of the real women portrayed, making us reflect upon who is looking at whom. The three places depicted, each rendered in strong palettes of contrasting tones, define the range and variety of these bars that are found in and around the streets of London. In their luminescence the bars take on a futuristic space-age quality, reflected particularly in Passport to Happiness and Bombshell Nails, with Treatment Chair leads the viewer to an inner sanctum of transfiguration. While taking seriously the pursuits of generations of women, the representations also operate to poke fun at the foibles of women who endure the sharp edge of pain in their desperate cultivation of the perfect self-image.

One of Walker's central themes is the representation of spaces that are almost exclusively occupied by women and she has explored this in different contexts, some of which are in glamorous stateside locations. Another interest key to her work is the construction of

femininity in an epoch that emphasises the manufacture of a skin-deep version of beauty. Both aspects combine in this exploration of the mundane, the everyday nail bars, that have increasingly popped up on British high streets and that are frequented by women of all ages and backgrounds but whose presence is rendered with mystery and the futuristic uncanny, typified in Lacquered Up where the action is shrouded in a purple evanescence. And, like Bathhouse, another powerful body of work that concerns itself with the intimate spaces of public baths, in her studies of nail bars she returns to expose invisible encounters. Allowed different degrees of control depending on the specific environment, she casts her lens on the chance meetings between women with the common goal of getting their nails done. Piqued by her own anthropological curiosity of what is being offered, Walker's work deepens the viewer's understanding of encounters between women, which invariably involves destabilizing conventions of cosiness, warmth and sociability.

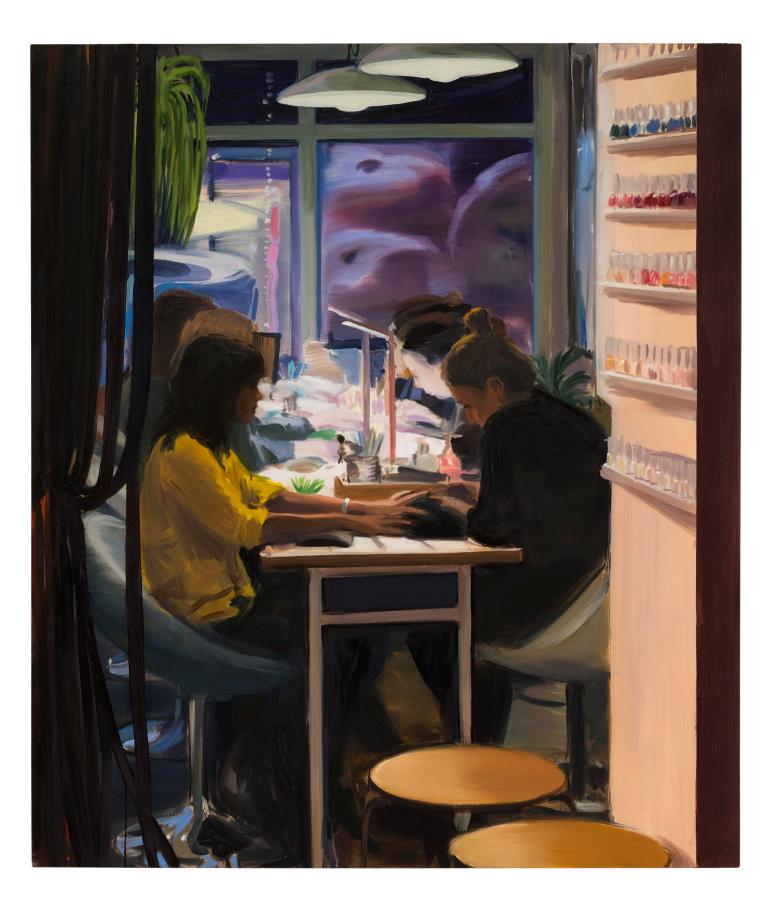
With this body of work Walker's view falls on a subject little explored visually but rife with speculation in the media about the subtext of trafficking and the louche. She conveys the regularity of these beauty rituals that are tinged with mystery, discomfort even, by the silent transactions that occur in social spaces. Reflecting globalization, these nail bars are recent offerings of cultural exchange in plural spaces that only partially overlap. They strangely resemble another cultural phenomenon. Internet cafés, rendered redundant by the ubiquity of digital technology. Here too, people nestle side-by-side looking into virtual space, quick to avoid the gaze of the individual facing them. Like these nail bars, visits are only ever purpose-laden and are lacking in shared pleasures and sociability. They belong to the continually increasing therapeutic industries that seek to heal and make whole.

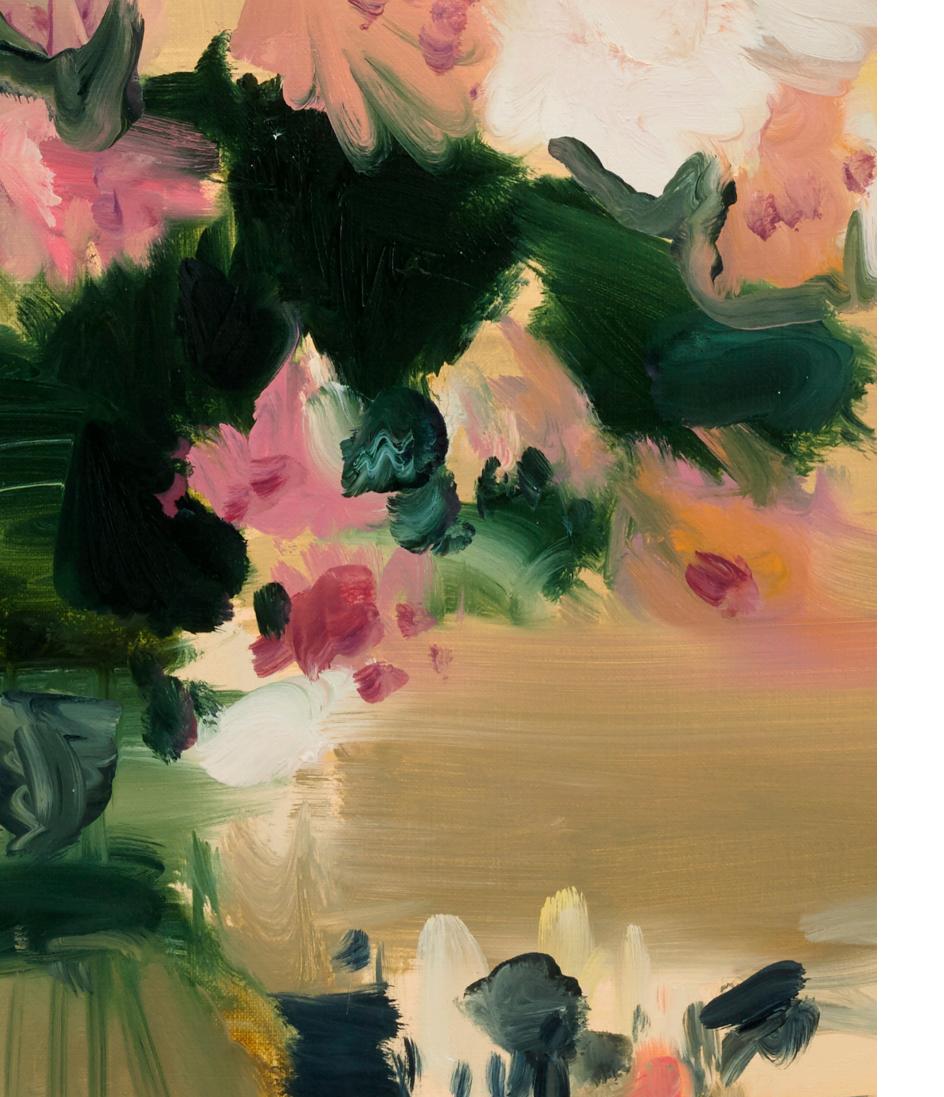
Professor Rina Arya is a Professor at the University of Huddersfield (UK) who is interested in the visual and material culture of religion. Author of *Francis Bacon: Painting in a Godless World* (2012) and *Abjection and Representation* (2014), she is currently working on a study of cultural appropriation in a Hindu context.

















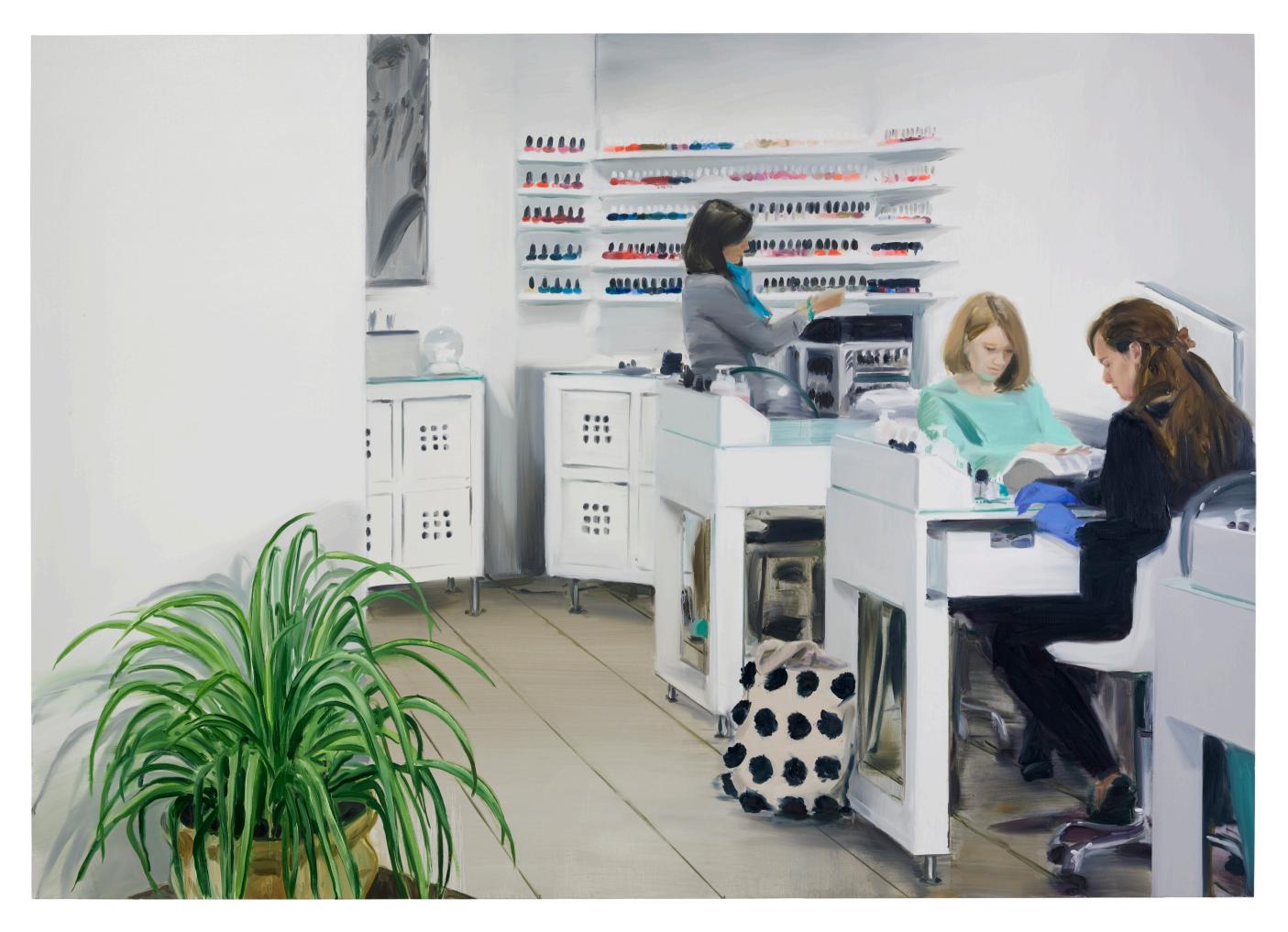










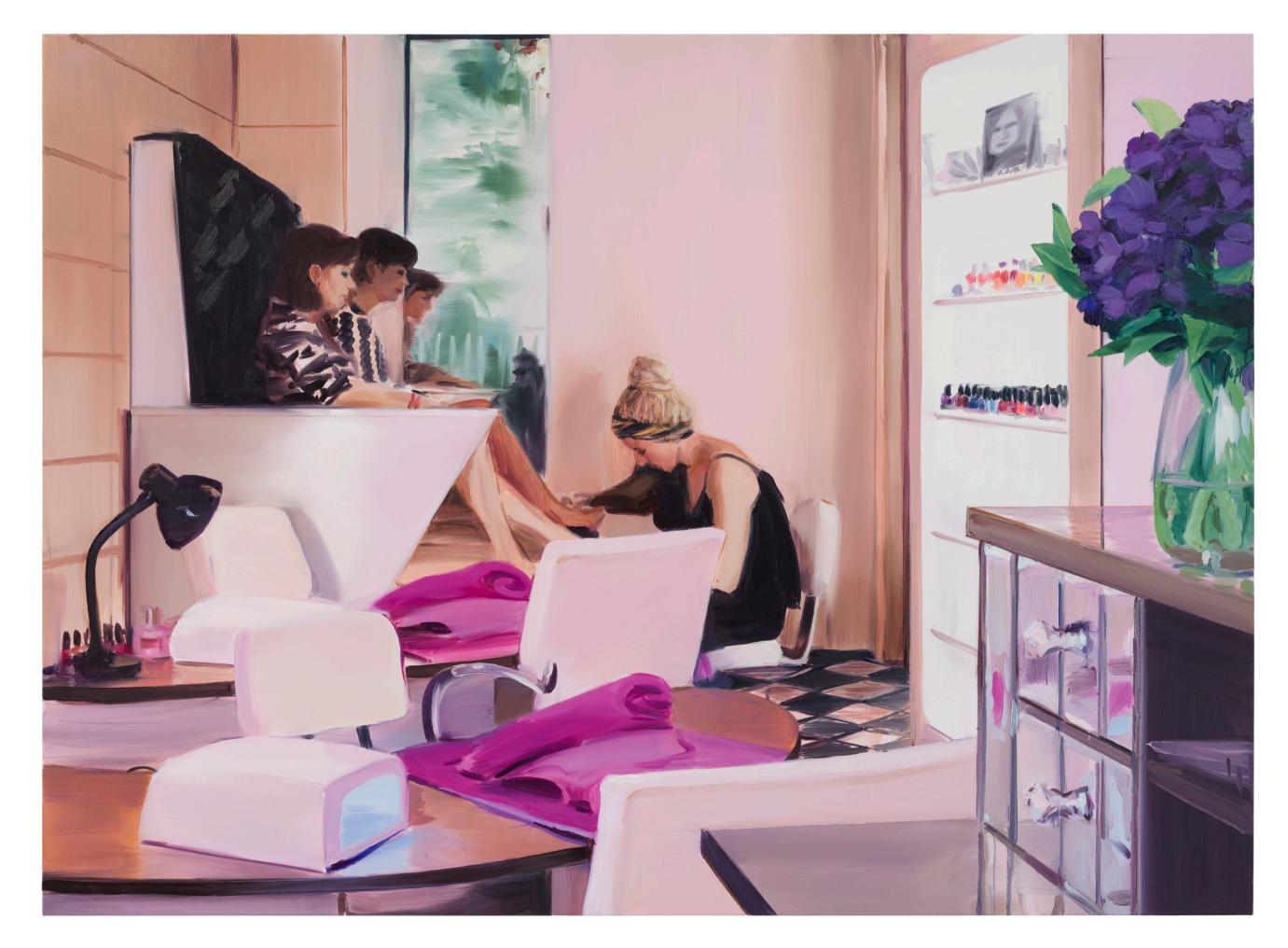




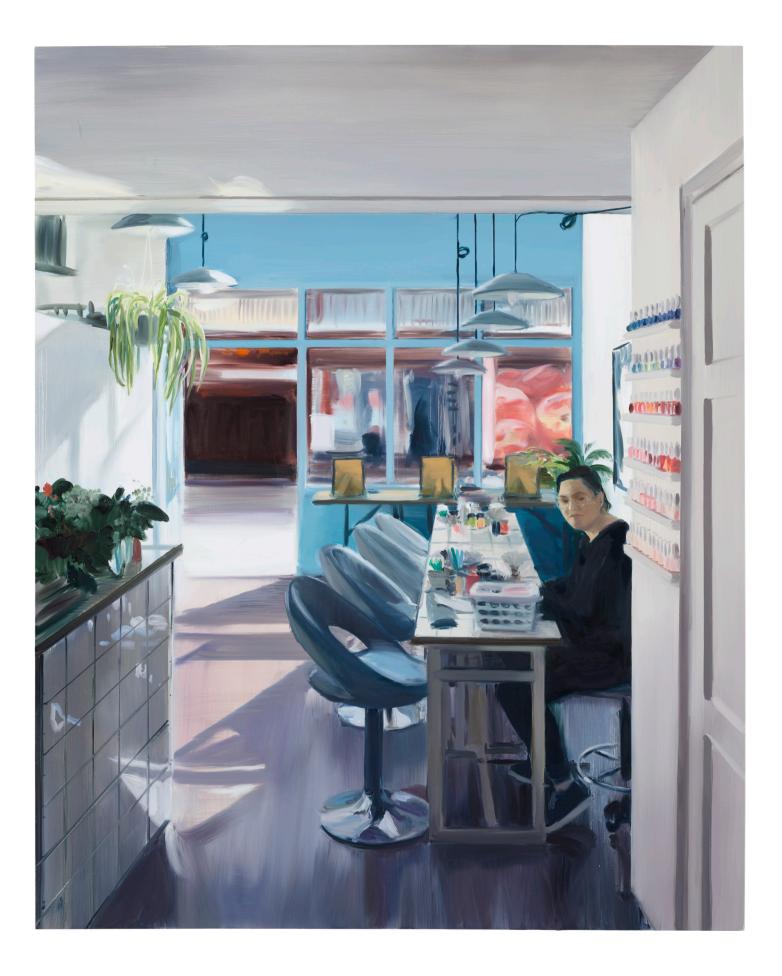




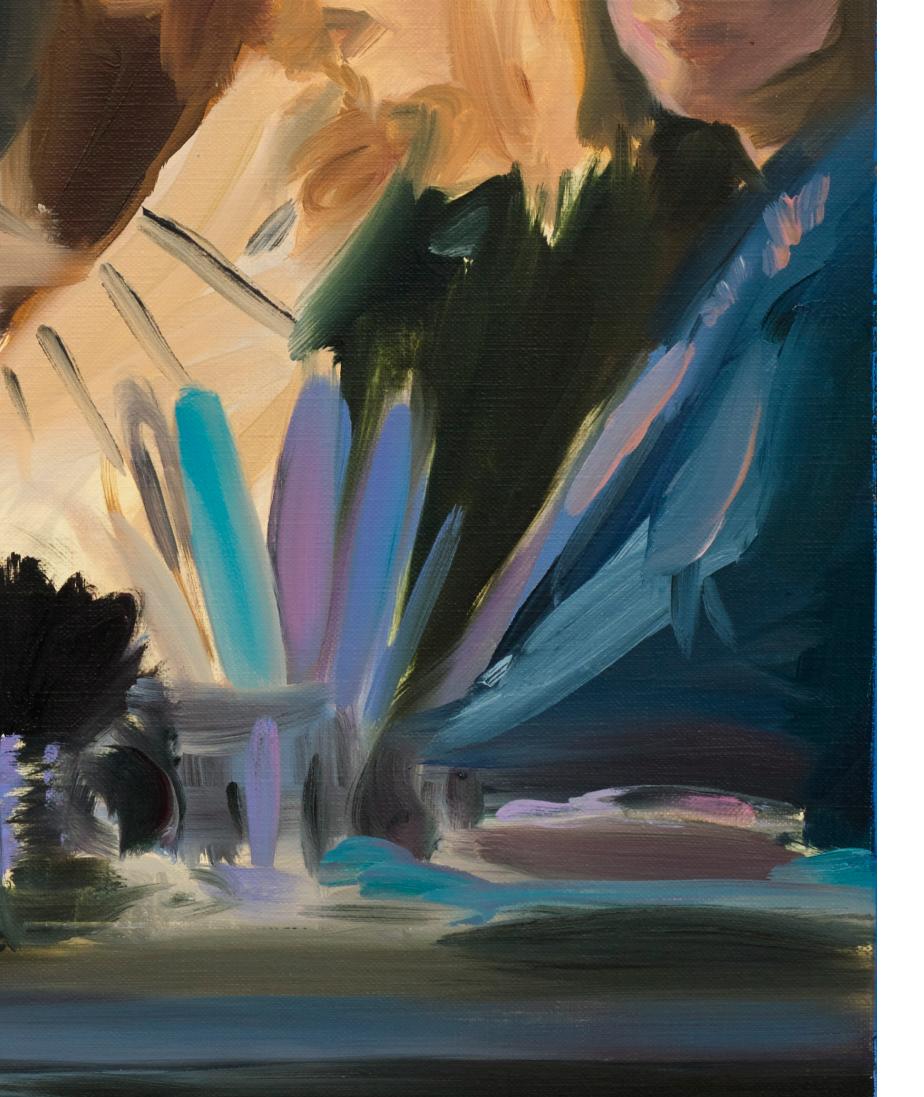


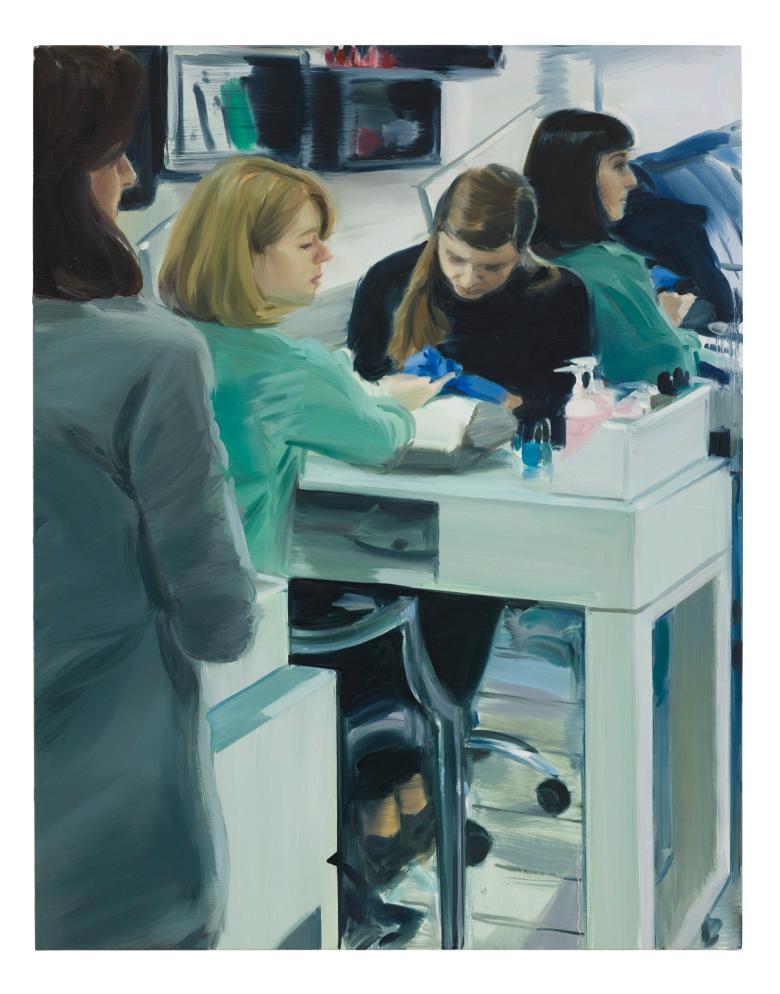
















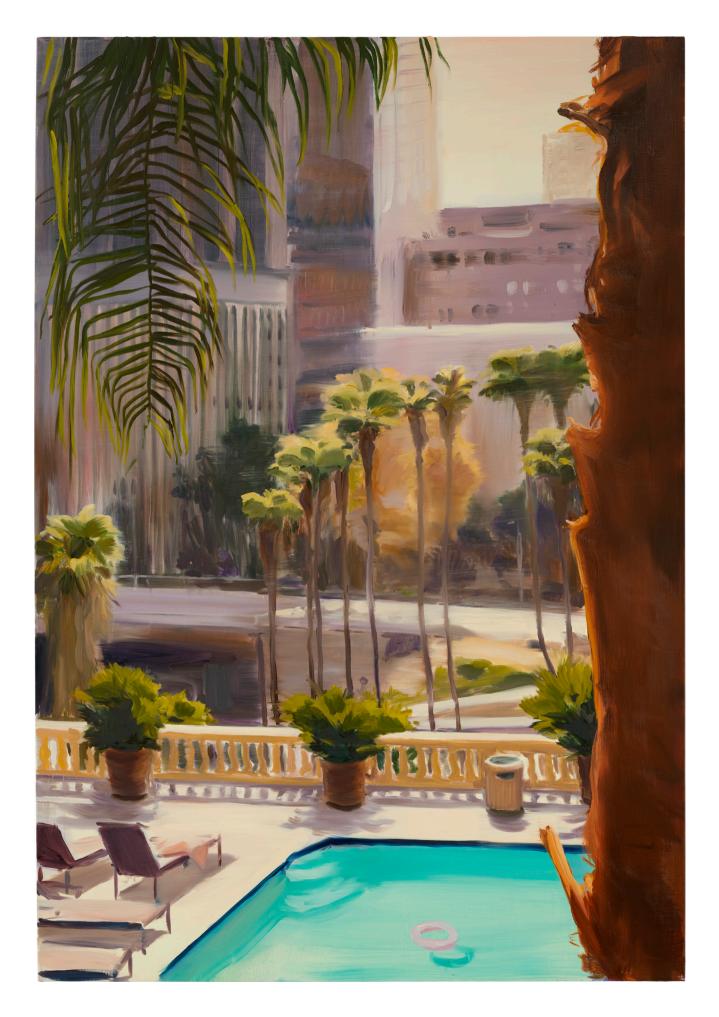
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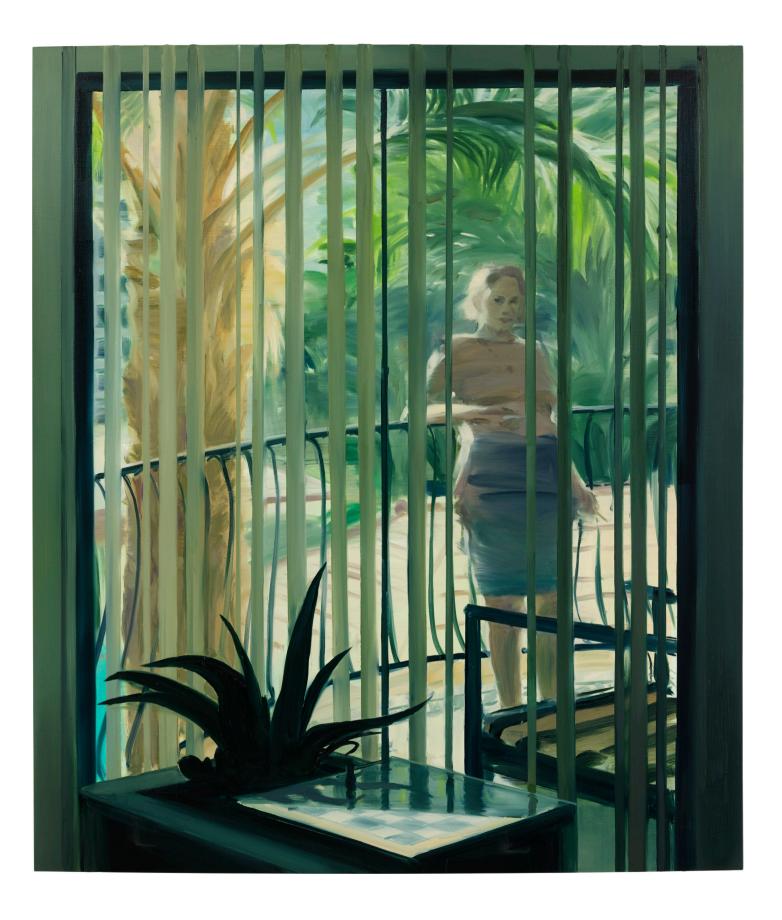


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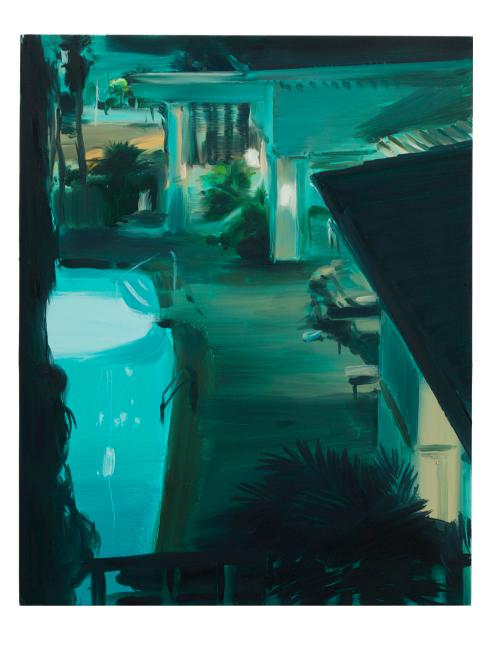






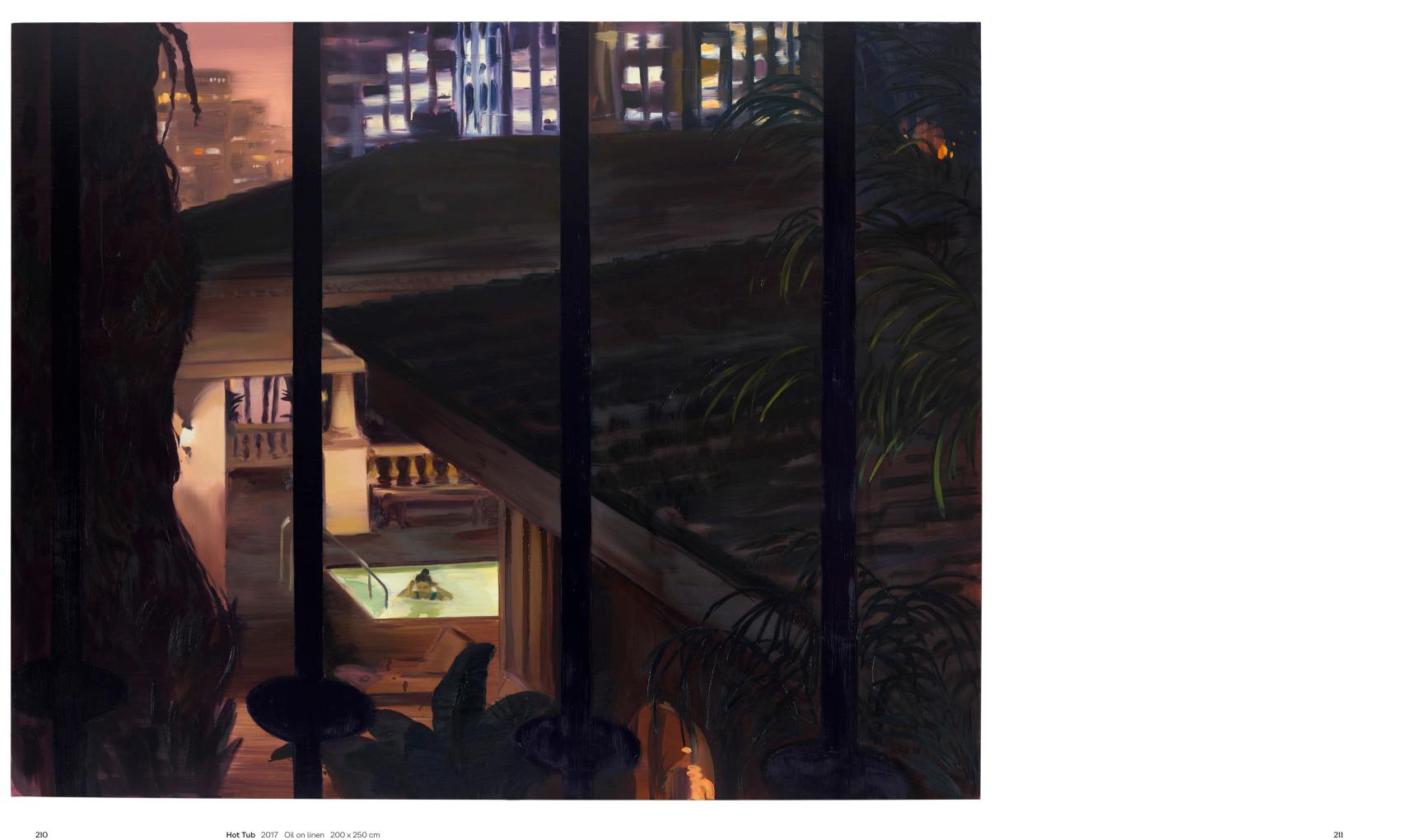












Palm Springs

The Californian desert city of Palm Springs, once developed for LA's upper class and Hollywood's biggest stars in the 1920s, is famous for its mid-century modern architecture and design. The town embodies an artificial sense of 'the good life' with its lush gardens, turquoise pools and cooling on-street water misting, all of which defy its desert location. The city has often served as a source of inspiration for literature and film, as there is something about this manufactured wouldbe paradise that suggests the possibility of a darker psychological undercurrent.

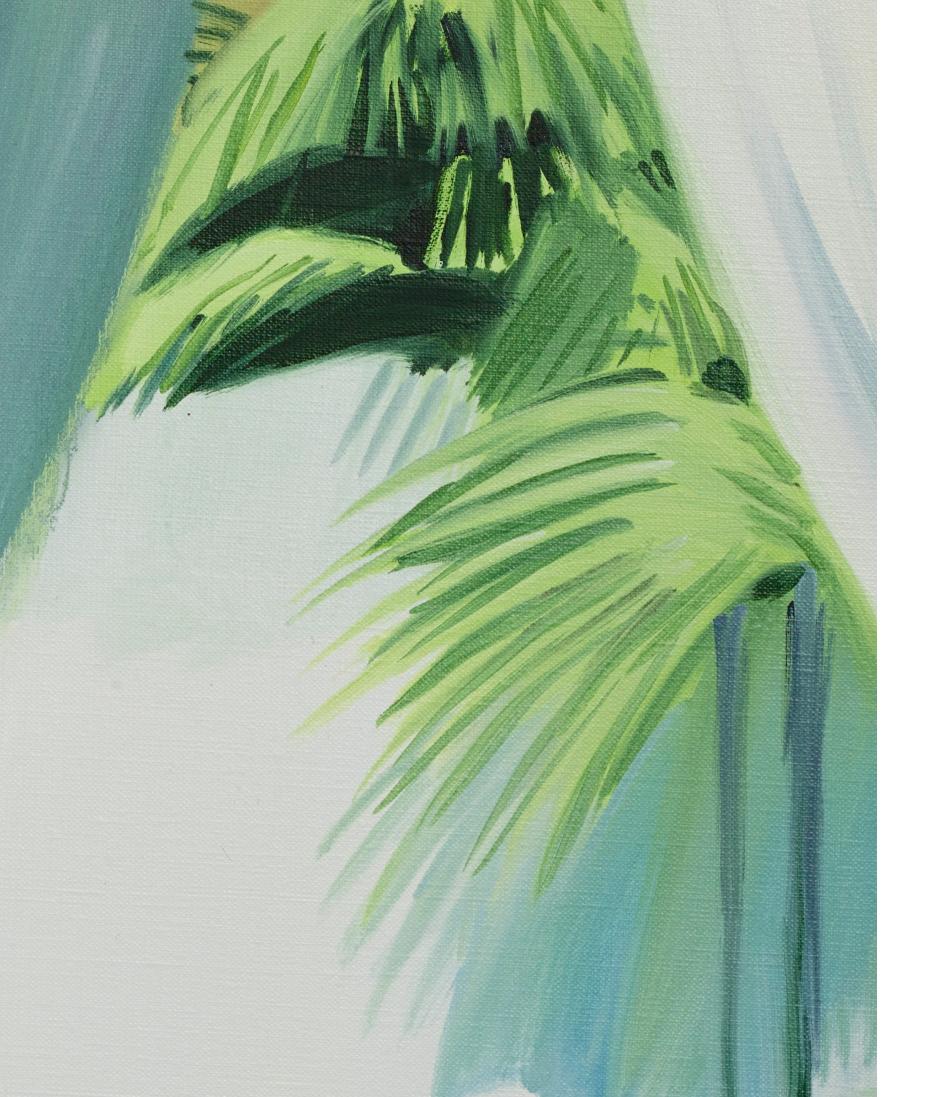
This is reflected in the title of Caroline Walker's exhibition at Grimm in Amsterdam in 2016; *The Racquet Club* was the name of a popular resort that opened in 1934, a place for excess that eventually crumbled into nothingness and was demolished in the late 20th century during a period of decline.

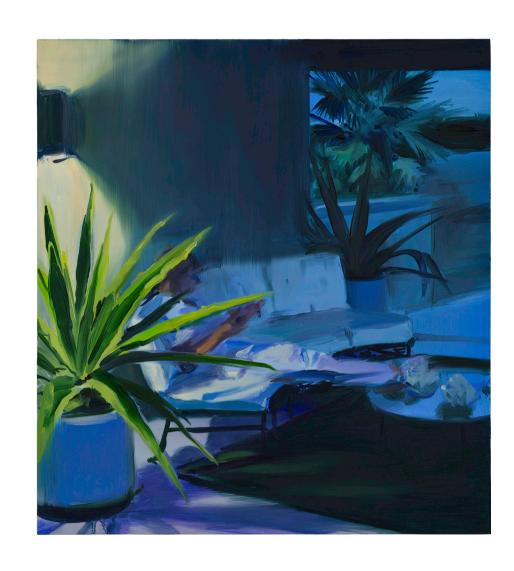
These days, Palm Springs is enjoying a resurgence and is once again a destination for the rich and famous. Walker's paintings provide us a glimpse into their luxurious lives: using two locations in the city –a private house and a hotel– the paintings re-imagine the space of the resort club and the people that occupy it; from glamorous holidaymakers to the staff that serve them. Walker creates a filmic sense of narrative in her paintings by combining the existing contents of the house, found imagery, memory, imagination, and highly considered photo shoots with models on location.

The resulting paintings are part illustration of a day spent in the company of strangers, and part fiction. The large canvases depict architectural structures: walls of full height glass, open floor plans, outdoor swimming pools and low-maintenance gardens with sculptural desert plants. Walker plays with perspective, offering glimpses of her models from different angles, while giving us a voyeuristic gaze into their lifestyle. The smaller works bring specific objects and characters more into focus as Walker manages to capture the desolation of her actors in their modern setting through exquisite paint handling and technical virtuosity.

















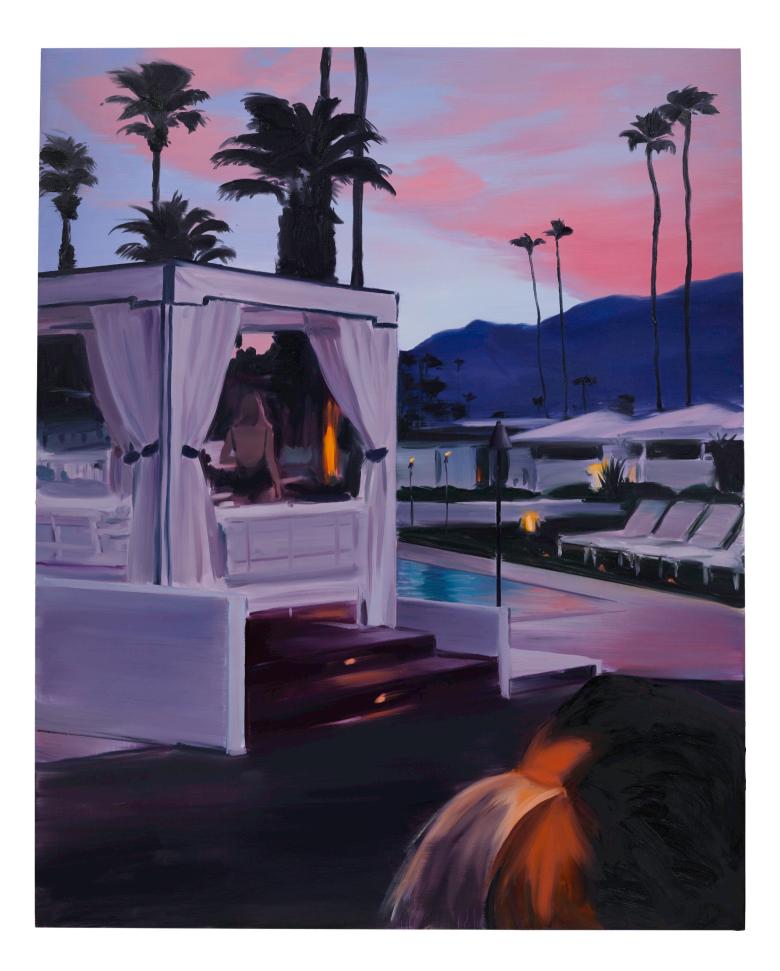


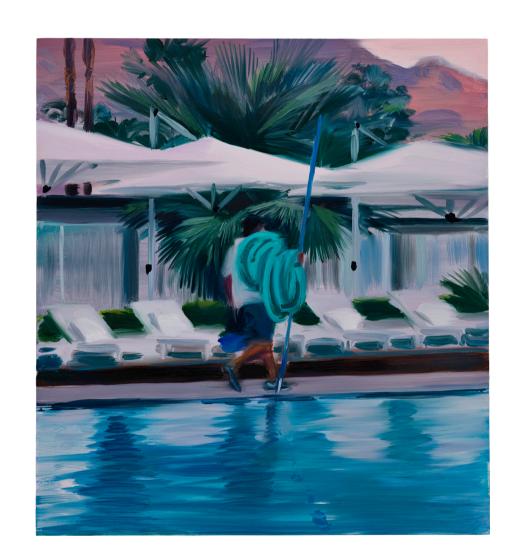






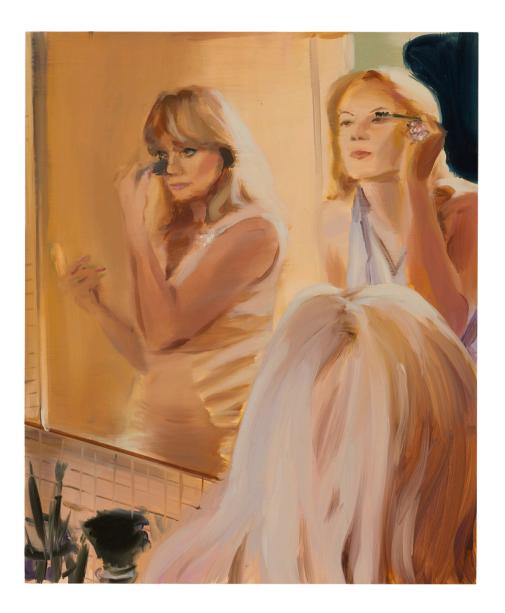




















Exchanging Confidences

Marco Livingstone in conversation with Caroline Walker

Marco Livingstone

- We are in your London studio surrounded by the paintings you have made for your first solo show in Los Angeles, opening in January 2018, to be titled *Sunset*. Though they represent only a fragment of your prodigious recent output, it will be useful to keep coming back to them in this conversation because we have them as concrete evidence and because they are particularly on your mind right now. As with much of your recent work, the settings are as important as the figures in them. Why have you so often chosen modernist architecture as a framework for your understated human dramas?

Caroline Walker

– I think it started as a reaction to what I had been doing. I had always been painting Victorian-period houses, even if they were decorated in a contemporary style. Somebody said in my last crit at the Royal College, 'We are looking at quite a middle-class, banal interior, and they could have been painted at any time in the last 150 years.' So initially it was: 'What can I do to make my subject matter look like it's about something that's happening now?' Although choosing modernist architecture wasn't necessarily the way to do that, because a lot of that architecture was at its youngest 50 or 60 years old. Most of the buildings I've used are modernist-style architecture, rather than modernist period. I think only the house I used in *Palm Springs*, and the hotel there, are actual modernist buildings.

I would still bracket them as modernist, because that's the look of them.

Yes. I think it had started as well as a formal interest, from a purely compositional perspective. I liked the way that kind of architecture split up the space of the canvas. And also it blurs the line between public and private because of these huge plate-glass windows, as a contrast with the Victorian homes, where it's much more about a private space that is cut off from the outside world. So much of my work has always reflected my interest in a voyeuristic gaze, or those boundaries between public behaviour and private space, or between private behaviour in a public space. So that architecture lends itself to that kind of looking in. It's also much less fussy as a setting than Victorian rooms would have been. And I suppose, because there are often these large expanses of glass, not only does it allow you to explore that relationship between the interior and the exterior, but is bringing a lot more light into the spaces. I can see that all of that may describe what you've used the modernist architecture for, but it doesn't explain why you chose them in the first place.

I think that choice was primarily aesthetic, but it has luckily fit in with the way I think about making my paintings, which is about a constructed sense of a place and what people do in that place. What interests me about the modernist project in the home is that it considered so much how people would live in these spaces and how they might move around them, in a way that marked a real break from previous forms of domesticity. To me they're like ready made sets waiting for a narrative to unfold.

Have your travels, particularly to southern California, been motivated as much by a need to find suitable modern domestic architectural settings – more difficult to locate in the UK – as by the light, the vegetation and the landscape? Is it all of those things, or is it primarily the architecture?

I think it's all of those things. There are examples of modernist architecture, maybe fewer of them, in this country. I think what really interested me about Palm Springs, in particular, is that, though it isn't all modernist architecture, almost the whole city was built in a very short period of time. That Californian modernism in housing is so specific and is typified in Palm Springs.

The first time you went in order to gather together material for paintings was in fact the first time you'd been there. This wasn't reflecting your own experience or your own way of living. So it's intriguing that you chose to go somewhere that you didn't know, specifically to examine a different way of living and a different kind of architecture, vegetation and climate.

I often seem to be attracted to things that are not part of my experience. I'd never even lived in anything other than a Victorian house. I'm from Scotland, and there are no outdoor swimming pools there to speak of. The whole thing is quite alien to me. There's something intriguing for me in that. If I was looking for a set from which to generate a narrative, it almost seems easier to choose somewhere that isn't anything to do with me.¹

Patrick Caulfield once quoted to me a remark he had read from Willem de Kooning, saying, 'When I'm in the studio, I think of things far away.' I think you're kind of doing that in your paintings, too. You're here in north London, in this rather grey climate, and you're imagining yourself back in a place you visited briefly. De Kooning obviously meant something very different by it. What you do is closer to Caulfield's reinterpretation of that line, which is that through the imagination, you take yourself out of that 'cell' that you're working in to another environment altogether.



I. Caroline Walker, Illuminations, 2012

I think I've always had quite an active imagination, but for a realism that exists somewhere else. I was never one of those kids who, when asked to write a story... I wouldn't write a story about a completely invented planet or something, which a lot of children do. I wouldn't be interested in something that had anything to do with me, but it would be something that could exist in the real world: a kind of imagination but always within the realms of possibility.

Could you remind me when it was that you first went to LA, and then the second trip?

The first trip was in August 2015, and that was for three weeks. About two and a half weeks were in LA, and then a few days in Palm Springs. The second trip was in July 2017, for a couple of weeks, and that was just in LA.

Both trips were specifically research expeditions.

Yes.

What made you so confident that you would find what you wanted there?

I wasn't! I wasn't sure if I was going to find anything good. But I tried to set up enough situations where I thought there would be a good chance of me finding something that I'd want to paint. So I made sure that everywhere I stayed could be potential subject matter.

In a way you had already started making paintings that looked as though they could be set in southern California.

So many people had said to me, 'You've got to go to California, you'd love it.' I suppose I was confident that aesthetically I'd find something that I'd want to paint. It was just working out how that would mean anything.

When you painted swimming pools before that, which weren't obviously American, were those already a way of thinking yourself into that type of environment? I don't think I'd thought that far ahead. I think it was only when I'd made the paintings of a swimming pool in London, which was a bit of an accident... I went round to look at a house that somebody said I could use to as a location, and they said, 'Oh, we have a pool as well, you can use that if you want.' So the interest in swimming pools developed out of that, not necessarily intentionally. I had made a conscious decision to make some paintings that might be about somewhere that is much more instantly appealing. I had been interested in creating an atmosphere that might be a bit threatening, relying on a certain kind of interior or lighting to do that. I made the decision to try to create a similar atmosphere, but by using a setting that was much more superficially appealing. It was only by doing those that I then started getting the idea that it might be great to do a trip to the States.

If you had been choosing gloomy, big Victorian interiors, it could have pushed it into the Gothic. But by choosing a setting that seems quite neutral, it could be more ambiguous. Did you have a shortlist of other places that you might have gone to instead? Or you knew that it was going to be California?

Actually, I'm telling a lie about that swimming pool, about the house in London being the start of this. I'd actually applied and got funding to do a trip to California in 2010, but unfortunately it fell through.

So the seed was already there.

Yes, though it was a bit of a blessing in disguise, because I hadn't asked for enough money, and I couldn't really afford to put in the money that was needed to do it properly. But that project was about an idea of using houses which had been used as sets in films. So I was already thinking a lot about... It wasn't just these sun-kissed pools of California that were interesting to me. It was about places that represented artificiality, the set and constructing narrative.

Could the French Riviera have proved just as rich a source?

Not really. It might hold some of the same aesthetic qualities, but it doesn't have the same familiarity. Certainly the first time that I went to LA, I found it quite strange, because everywhere looked incredibly familiar, because you're so used to seeing it on TV and in film. But actually none of it is familiar, and the experience of being in the city is completely different from looking at it on the screen. So all of that stuff was interesting to me. I didn't know whether it was going to go into the work or not, though.^{II}

To what extent were you conscious of artists of an older generation having made paintings of Los Angeles? And, if you were, was that daunting, or did you just disregard it?

Maybe daunting is not the right word. But definitely I was conscious of the fact that I had to make sure it looked like it was my work, and not like it was referencing someone else's. Obviously the David Hockney reference looms quite large in them, but probably more so,



II. Caroline Walker, detail of Desert Modern, 2016

for me, somebody like Eric Fischl. I was thinking a lot about those paintings he made in the 1980s of dystopian suburban American life. I'd always loved those paintings. They're not specifically of California, but I knew there was a similar look. So I suppose I had to keep in mind my own interests and how what I might make from the trip would be different. I think in general though, I try not to look at a lot of contemporary painters when I'm thinking about what I'm going to do.

It was neither something that was going to block you nor that would enrich what you were doing. It was immaterial, in a way.

Sort of. It was good to have all that stuff in the back of my head, but I was either going to make something interesting or I wasn't! I think almost regardless of being aware of those other artists. I didn't feel like it would block me, because my interest was different.

The way people have lived in London has changed a lot in your lifetime. There are many people who live in glitzy, high-rise apartments, which could also have been an interesting subject for you but which you haven't addressed yourself to.

I suppose the most high-end sort of housing I've painted in London was a house by Regent's Park, which was very flashy. In some ways I don't really know why I went all the way to the other side of the world to find subject matter when a lot of it could have been found here. When I do one of these trips, it's like I can put a different head on, and my eyes are open all the time.

When I first visited your studio in early 2012, the paintings I saw included some that were based on a photo-shoot you had done in Berlin. So you were already looking to other locations. Maybe this was allowing you to be freer and less tied to your own culture.

Just the gathering of source material can be exhausting, but sometimes if it's encapsulated into a trip it can be easier. I turn on

that bit of my brain for a couple of weeks, and then I go back to the studio.

There's going to be a time limit on finding the location, getting the models and all that, so there is an intensity about the process of gathering together the material. In London you would know that you could carry on and return to collect more imagery.

Yes, I think it depends on the project, and for those highly staged photoshoots I can find it easier if it is all intensified into one event. However, for the Kettle's Yard project, titled *Home*, this was done in London and my process was far more drawn out. I visited five women over a period of time, with the first few visits within a couple of weeks of each other, then a two-month gap before another two visits. I actually enjoyed that much more spread-out approach for this project, because it gave me the chance to make a few paintings, then go back to the research stage. These paintings were taking individual lives as their starting point, so although there was an intensity to the visits, it wasn't one based on making major aesthetic decisions about location, models or narrative.

The Home series came about as a kind of commission, when Andrew Nairne from Kettle's Yard in Cambridge suggested you travel to Calais with him to see the refugees who were living there in the hope of seeking asylum in the UK.

I did go to Calais, and it was a very affecting experience which gave me much to think about, but I decided after that trip that the camp itself wasn't something I could respond to creatively. It was difficult to work out what the right way to approach the project was and whether it was the right project for me at all. I was worried that I might be perceived to be exploiting my subject matter and also about doing something that didn't represent my work, or that compromised my practice. I'm used to working with a model, I pay them and then I do whatever I want with the images I come up with.

I thought about it for a few months, and I decided that if I was going to do it, it had to be about women and it had to be in London. I did some research and found a charity called Women for Refugee Women. They are based in Old Street, so I felt it was in my neighbourhood. It's like a drop-in centre. The women don't live there. It's more like a network for refugee women in London. They offer them support, maybe they help get them legal advice or legal representation, give them English classes. A lot of the women I met are in the process of seeking asylum and that process can take years and years. The ones I've met are all on their own, not with their families and most had been here for years, some over a decade. The overwhelming sense I got from the women I met was of being in a permanent limbo where they can't work and build a life here but they also can't go back to their country of origin. Two of them are from Nigeria. One is from Cameroon, another is Pakistani and one from South Africa.^{III}

Even though I'd made the project London-based and focused it

on women. T was still worried about whether T was the right fit. given my usual subjects, and about how I would approach this very politically potent subject with subtlety. Andrew was very understanding and encouraged me to do the research and then see how I felt, offering to take the show off the table in the meantime. which really took the pressure off. After the first visit, which I had really enjoyed, I thought, I definitely want to make paintings about this. It just didn't feel that far away from my usual work once I actually started looking into it. These are all paintings of women in interiors. And there was something very specific about it when I began to hear their stories. Their circumstances seemed in part to be a result of them being women, or they were certainly not being helped by that fact. It didn't feel a million miles away from the people I had been painting in the nail bars, or from the particular woman I painted repeatedly when I was at the Royal College. She had a transient life, moving from one form of temporary accommodation to another, and she wasn't at home in any of those places. So in some ways, it felt like a return to that kind of subject matter but with a more politically loaded backstory.

This is such a different subject for you, not just because of the political dimension but also because of the circumstances in which they are living. Yet they are still very seductive as paintings. It seems weird to feel seduced by paintings of people living in extremely difficult circumstances. You can see that it's a shabby interior, the person's belongings are shoved in, the cupboards are unpainted, but you still want to draw the viewer in by making the paintings attractive to look at. It must be easier to achieve that when you are dealing with very seductive locations in Los Angeles or Palm Springs. When you're depicting people who are living in exile or in limbo, it's a much more problematic situation, and yet you are using a very similar painterly language.

I suppose for it to still feel like my work, it had to be executed in the same way. It's that visual seductiveness that I hope draws the viewer in and makes them want to engage in that subject and think about who those women might be and what situation they're in. I've no idea how the show will be received but so far the responses have been positive, and I believe the women themselves were happy with how they were represented when they've come to see the paintings.

They're being treated respectfully as human beings. They are not being pitied or looked at as victims. They've still got their inner core. These particular paintings are closer to conventional portraiture.

That's true. The titles of the *Home* paintings start with the woman's name in each case. Some of them are their real names, but in other cases the names have been changed at their request. All of the women seemed to be in quite precarious circumstances, and their living conditions could change overnight.

One of the small paintings is of a woman, Consilia, who was staying in a mental hospital. I wasn't allowed to go into her room or take photos in the communal area, so we used a little meeting room. It



III. Photo of Joy at her house in Hackney London.

was very small and impersonal, so I asked Consilia to bring some things that were important to her from her room, so that it would add some of her personality to the scene. I wanted to represent what the women would be doing if I wasn't there, and I'd noticed Consilia had fantastically painted nails, so I asked her to bring some of her nail varnishes. She also brought get well cards and a card that she had made for herself which was full of positive comments to make her feel better. Being surrounded by these things helped her feel optimistic.

Another canvas depicts a woman called Joy resting on a bed. She has a powerful presence and she looks very self-possessed, but the explosion of flowers and foliage on the bedspread almost overwhelms her, becoming a big part of what one responds to in looking at the painting. The half-open door is quite suggestive about this feeling of intruding into her space.

I thought it was quite important to acknowledge my position in relation to these women as a subject. I was just getting a little glimpse into their lives, dipping in for a few hours and then coming out again. I wanted there to be a sense that I'm not claiming a position inside of their lives.

The sitter in this painting is looking slightly wary, as if she were

thinking, 'Why are you here? Can I trust you?' And the bed becomes almost a kind of landscape; it feels quite alive.

I started research for the *Home* series in June 2017 about a month before I decided exactly what my subject for the upcoming LA show, later that year, would be. Working with the refugees had a big impact and ended up influencing my approach to the LA series. I was making portraits, maybe not in the traditional sense, but the paintings were about individual lives, and I realised that could be quite powerful. That led to me working with just this one woman in LA for the Sunset exhibition, and making it about her, even if she is playing a fictional character. The whole show is about an individual, and I haven't really done that for a long time. It has opened a door for me. When I first started working with models I had a couple of experiences that made me feel I was becoming too close or involved in my models' lives, so I withdrew for a few years, and made them less about the individual and more about 'types'; they are just templates for people. The *Home* project has made me interested again in making paintings about specific people.

There is an interesting relationship between your more typical paintings and the *Home* series, because in most cases you go out looking for people to pose for your photographs in locations that you've found that are not their own homes. The *Home* pictures show people in the actual environments that they know, but which are not homes that they have chosen to live in. So there's a kind of weird symmetry there. In the paintings of refugees we see people whose environments have been imposed upon them, places that might feel unfamiliar or unsympathetic to them, and which they would not regard as home. In the more 'upmarket' paintings, people are encouraged to imagine themselves having moved up in the world, to be living in the kind of environment that they were not able to afford.

No one's really 'at home'.

People often comment on the cinematic qualities of your work. Was that a big factor in you wanting to go to southern California?

Definitely. Like I said, I was so familiar with LA from film and TV and had even almost gone there once before to do this project which was all about the use of that city almost like a big film set in itself. There aren't really any references to specific films that are set in LA, I suppose it's more taking inspiration from the mechanisms of how films are made.

Did you go to any of the film studio tours while you were there?

No.

You didn't have time, or you didn't want to see them?

I'd love to go on a tour of a film studio, but I'm not very interested in the ones designed for tourists. I would love an insight into that world, but I'd prefer it via meeting somebody who works in that industry.

In a way, the whole of Los Angeles is very artificial in its kind of architecture and suburban landscape. The entire city is rather like a film set. When you see houses side by side that are built in completely alien styles to each other...

Mock tudor and mock gothic next to a modernist house. It's that pastiche of everything. In fact, maybe that's the thing about the modernist architecture there, it's pretty much the only thing there that isn't a pastiche of something European.

In the early 1990s I was working on an exhibition of Hockney's California pictures for Japan, and I was trying to find the location for *Peter Getting out of Nick's Pool*, painted in 1966. I knew that it was where Nick Wilder, the art dealer, had lived, and because of the title, which suggests private possession of the pool, I imagined it was some glitzy modernist house. I went looking for it, as I knew what neighbourhood and I think even what street he had lived on. Eventually I found it, and it was a slightly seedy block of apartments, and it was a communal pool. It wasn't at all what I had expected. It wasn't a rich person's house. It was a modest environment lived in by somebody who was just getting by, a very ordinary apartment block that happened to have a pool, as many of those places did. So what I had taken to be a signifier of luxury wasn't that at all. So I suppose it's the way one experiences things, as well, or the way they are presented, that you can take a location that isn't inherently glamorous or high end and still make it look like that.

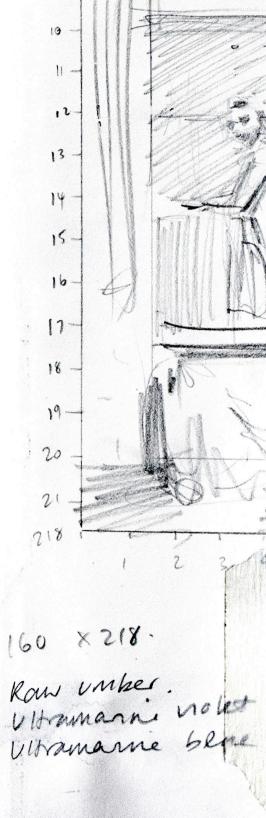
The setting of your painting *Sunset* looks like a wealthy person's house, with a big private garden high up in the Hollywood Hills, with the Valley in the distance. So that, I think, is quite explicitly the home of a person with quite a lot of money.

Yes. But then I suppose when you look at that one with the pool boy, *Fishing*, that could be a communal pool in a back yard. It's about how it's framed, isn't it, and also about who is looking at it. Maybe it has a different connotation to someone like me, who would very much associate a swimming pool with luxury and an aspirational kind of life, because that's not something that I've ever come into contact with, partly because I'm from a cold country. Swimming pools are ten a penny in LA, it doesn't necessarily mean that you're loaded.

We have been talking about the *Home* paintings, which have a very specific political context, but even the earlier nail-bar paintings have a political dimension. After you had begun making them, I was reading articles about nail bars being investigated as possibly connected to human trafficking and sexual slavery. You must have known about that when you were painting them. Was that political aspect of the situation in your mind, was that part of the paintings?

It was, in a background kind of way. I became interested in painting nail bars about two or three years ago. I mentioned this to a friend visiting my studio, before I had made any of them or taken any photographs or anything, that I wanted to work with nail bars as a subject. This girl worked for the BBC, and she said, 'You've got to read this New York Times article.' It came out in May 2015, and it was an exposé of the nail salon industry in the States.¹ And it was all the same things that we've heard about happening over here. Although I wasn't making a direct link between that and the nail bars I was painting here, I thought it added another dimension to how the paintings could be seen. That actually they could be indicative of much wider social and political issues in western society, rather than just a beauty trend. It wasn't until I actually started making paintings of the ones here that the allegations about the British ones started. So there was a connection to that idea, but not specifically about what was happening in this country.

It's interesting to learn about things that are happening in plain sight. There have been news stories also about men washing cars outside supermarkets. And that's also a business where people are said to be paid very badly, living in very poor conditions. It's easy just to see them as people who are performing a service. You don't necessarily know, until it is explained to you, that by employing them you are actually contributing to their exploitation.



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You can't quite imagine that people who are out there working in a nail bar, or on the street washing cars, are caught in a situation from which they can't escape because their passports have been taken away from them. You think, 'How can they be enslaved when they are outside, and they could just escape?' But they might be here illegally...

Yes, so they can't go to the police, they don't know where to go for help. They might be frightened and they probably don't speak very good English. They wouldn't know what to do. One of the things that really stuck in my head from the New York Times article is, if the manicure costs \$10, somebody is paying for that, and it's the person who is doing your nails.

But do you therefore assume that all the nail bars are caught up in that?

No, no. I think that like any industry, there is a huge range of practices.

It's guite problematic for you, as you have their permission to go in there to take these photographs. If you specifically framed the paintings as political commentary...

That would be difficult. I'm almost certain that none of the places I worked with had any of those working practices. One gets a sense of a place and the atmosphere in all the salons I worked with was convivial among the staff, owners and customers. There was something quite particular about these all female environments.

What nationality were the people working in these places?

It was a total mix among the staff and owners of women from the UK, Europe and East Asia. One of the nail bars was owned by a British girl; I think the people working for her were maybe Eastern European. Another was owned by a Vietnamese girl, and she had a mixture of Chinese, Vietnamese, Romanian, some Portuguese, I think.

We're so accustomed to seeing people from all over the world working in the UK. Any hotel that you go to is likely to have Eastern Europeans serving you, so you don't necessarily question these things. You don't assume that everyone is being exploited.

And many people aren't. I think it's very difficult to tell.

When you decided to make those paintings to show in Korea, did you discuss with the gallery that you were specifically addressing that subject? Was that of particular interest to them?

I said, 'This is the show that I want to make.'

So it wasn't like a commission, but it turned out that it struck a chord there. You must have known that.

I had it in my head as an idea for a show. And when they offered me an exhibition, I thought it would work there, and luckily they were receptive.

You had already shown the bathhouse paintings there. Those were set in Hungarian bath houses, but there is a bath-house culture in Korea, too, as there is in Japan. So that also would have seemed familiar territory to them.

Yes. I think both the bathhouses and nail bars had more potential social and cultural relevance in Korea than some of my other subjects, like the Palm Springs work for example. The nail bar trend doesn't come from Korea specifically, but there is a huge beauty industry over there which is big business. So it seemed like a good fit in a general sense.

May I turn now from these issues of content to more formal questions that pertain to all your paintings? How do you decide, for example, about the appropriate size for each painting, given that the dimensions vary enormously from the same collection of photographic source material?

It's a mixture of what feels like the right size, but I also always make a model of the gallery and think about how a group of paintings will work together. Often I start out by cutting out little rectangles that I think look like the right size in the scale model, and then thinking if that looks like the right size, what kind of composition would work for that?

Apart from Thanks for Noticing, from the Sunset series, I can't think of another painting of yours where there is a figure that is larger than life size.

I never want them to be just about the figure. It's the whole scenario.

When the paintings are really big, it's the setting that dictates the size, isn't it?

Yes, it's the scale of the setting that's more important, and the figure just has to fit into that. So the figures are often quite different scales within that. It's often the thing that is in the foreground, or that you are looking around, that is larger.

Narrative has been a taboo for many artists since the early 20th century. In Francis Bacon's view, it was about the worse insult you could hurl at another artist. If a painter was dealing with the human figure, it had to be just the fact of their physical presence. And that's true even for an artist who looks ostensibly very traditional, like Lucian Freud. You don't get a sense of before or after, only the fact of that person being there in front of him. Narrative is particularly associated in this country with Victorian painting, which is still very popular but which within the art world would be regarded as old-fashioned and as territory that a

serious, cutting-edge artist would not usually enter. Because your paintings often have a cinematic feel, it seems to bring narrative more into that realm than from the realm of painting. Maybe that has given you a freedom. I don't know why narrative shouldn't be allowed. In the 1960s, if you study the art criticism of that period, you find the same tired phrases all over the place about 'respecting the integrity and flatness of the picture plane' and all that. You weren't even supposed to make illusions of space, you weren't meant to express three-dimensionality.

I wouldn't have done very well in the '60s!

A lot of the work made then was deliberately very flat. It seems now so limiting that artists could have thought at any time that something that had always served painting so well, which was to represent three-dimensionality on the two-dimensional surface, was no longer acceptable. That seems crazy now.

I think narrative painting, or at least figuration in some form, is trendy again at the moment, but describing three-dimensional space still isn't really part of that resurgence in figuration.

You think this is still a critically problematic issue?

Much less than it used to be. But, for example, you and I were talking about Rose Wylie's recent success. Obviously that's figuration, but it doesn't have any relation to trying to create illusionistic space in painting. I think there are a lot of contemporary painters who are using the language of figuration, but without the language of illusion.

Would you even call your paintings narrative?

I don't know. No, because in a way I don't think any of my paintings tell a story that is immediately identifiable or definitive.

You're really only getting a fragment, a moment, without knowing what might have happened before or will happen later. The Sunset exhibition, though it features the same person in all the paintings, perhaps doesn't even allow you to construct a narrative by linking all the paintings together. I don't suppose that that is what you are trying to do.

No. I don't even know what the narrative is. I might have little ideas about how this person might behave, but not what the story is.

You were telling me earlier that somebody you spoke to in Los Angeles said, 'I know exactly that type of person, where they would shop and what they would do.' You have a sense of what that person's life might be like, but the paintings aren't telling a particular story or disclosing a sequence of events or having a moral to them. Not in the way that Victorian paintings would have been explicitly conceived with themes such as the 'fallen woman', or the soldier going off to war, conveying messages that the audience would have immediately understood on seeing them.

There was a pulling at the heart strings, a sentimentality behind a lot of those paintings. Yours are much more understated and unexplained. There are glimpses you might have into another person's life without knowing the circumstances.

There's not a meaning or a message that I'm trying to communicate in them that is predetermined.

You're not even celebrating or criticising a particular way of life. It's just there, and either you're seduced by it or you regard it as something alien. It doesn't feel as if you are ever passing judgment on the people who appear in the paintings.

I want them to be open, for people to bring their own narratives to them. They will decide what they think about who and what they are looking at, and the story they decide upon says as much about the viewer and who they are as the subject itself.

How has your method evolved in recent years? The Sunset paintings are closer to a particular kind of reality that most people will never experience, or that they might experience only briefly when they go on holiday.

The Sunset paintings are more about a constructed, self-managed reality. They are partly inspired by television. I like reality TV, that sort of docu-soap format, like Real Housewives of Beverly Hills. They are real people, but the interactions that they have on screen are staged and they are hyper-aware of how they will be edited then viewed by an audience. So I wanted there to be a sense of the 'stage managed' about the setting and the life on show there. I wanted the woman in these paintings to seem like she is aware of who she is in the world, and aware of our gaze, so what we see is less of the fleeting, unaware moments. In the painting called *Fishing* I wanted it to feel that she is guite aware of herself floating in that pool and possibly being looked at. I always liked that John Berger quote from his book Ways of Seeing, based on his 1972 television series, about how women continually watch themselves being looked at.²

The woman is meeting the viewer's gaze, very consciously so.

Yes. The pool boy is fishing things out of the pool; the dog is having a look behind the wall, looking for something; and she is possibly fishing for compliments!

There is a narcissistic element to the Sunset paintings.

The title for Thanks for Noticing was inspired by something Suzan, the model, said when we were leaving the Beverly Hills Hotel after having breakfast. As we were walking out, a man at the front door said something like, 'Oh, you ladies are looking beautiful today.' And she said. 'Thanks for noticina!' I was so impressed by this because it was such an un-British response. I liked her confidence.



In that painting she is shown in a walk-in mirrored wardrobe. It's a wonderful excuse for representing a single figure four times, and a powerful way of conveying the person's self-regard: not just that she is admiring herself in the mirror, but that it's multiplying her own image. Do you know much about the life of this model, Suzan, apart from the fact that she was Miss Colorado in 1977, or have you tried not to find out?

Oh, she's a very interesting character, and nothing really like the woman I've cast her as in the paintings. She doesn't live the same glamorous life the paintings portray but runs a home for sober living in Riverside, California, and spends much of her time and money travelling the world. So this isn't her at all. She is very much plaving a role, which she understood, and approached with a lot of fun, frequently getting in to character! But there are shades of her in it. When I was getting together clothes and props for the photoshoot I sent her photos of some clothes I had in mind to check she didn't have anything I could use before I went shopping, and her response was 'Are you kidding? That's my whole wardrobe!' And she brought her whole wardrobe with her!

That was better, as she would feel more at ease and natural in her own clothes.

There are elements of her in it. It's not like I fully directed every action to the point of asking her to take a particular pose. The instruction is more to enact a scenario. So there is a bit of her personality in the interpretation of those instructions.

This is interesting because we're looking at a woman who is past the age that many would assume to be sexually desirable, even though she may have experienced that kind of unwanted attention when she was a young beauty queen.

That's the downside to having been very beautiful in one's youth, and the limitations of being valued for your appearance. It must make it harder to deal with the inevitable ageing process and losing that possibility of being desired. Like all women, she is caught in a societal expectation that she should continue to look young, and she works very hard to do it, going to the gym five times a week.

Looking at these paintings for the first time, I can't see them innocently just as pictures of an attractive woman reaching a certain age, enjoying the fruits of her success or whatever got her to that standard of living. As a spectator you don't even know if she is living like that through her own achievements, or because she married a rich man and divorced him. All that is unexplained, but it allows viewers to impose their own story on it, one that you are not explaining and probably shouldn't explain. It is more engaging emotionally if people come with their own response.

Yes, she could be lots of different people. But one thing for definite is that she is aware of her attractiveness, and the pressure to maintain this.

She is fighting against time, still working out, dressing up, making an effort to hold on to her youthful beauty - so that applies whatever her particular situation might be. But it's also possible to enjoy the paintings as a very seductive spectacle, and for the way they are painted. Another artist, being given exactly the same source images, would not create the same paintings. The lusciousness of the paint, and the way it is manipulated, is a great part of their appeal. And the feeling of the light being true convinces you that you are actually in that situation. If these same pictures were painted very graphically or very flat...

It wouldn't be as interesting, would it? They rely on that tactility of the paint to make you feel that you know what it's like to be there.

The paint is always very sensuous, so it's almost doing what flesh might do: a feeling of skin even in the objects. Does that sound weird?

No, no. I was giving a little talk at an amateur art club a few weeks ago, and one of the audience members came up to me afterwards and said, 'If you take all these photos, why don't you just show the photos instead of painting from them?' I was trying to explain about working with paint and it not just being this uniform surface; how it gave me a chance to think about what something felt like when I was painting it. Even though when you look at my paintings there is an 'over-allness' to them often, with most parts of the painting in the same language, for me in making them there is still quite a difference in the way I make a mark depending on what it is I'm painting. Thinking, for example, about the metal chairs in *Training* being cold to the touch and how to get that shiny hardness.

Do you get asked often why there are almost no men in your paintings?

Yes.

Is it mostly men who ask that question?

No. Everybody asks, I think.

Did you make that specific rule for yourself, or did it just seem natural?

It sort of seemed natural, because that was all I really wanted to draw when I was a kid: women. I was quite fascinated by women and the way they looked, and I liked drawing them. I suppose then when I went to art school and I started making paintings in this vein, of figures in interiors, I was relying on friends who modelled for me, or taking pictures of myself. I did paint a couple of men along the way, but mostly it just seemed that it was my female friends who were available and who instinctively I was more interested in painting. Later on, I think I took a more analytical look at what I was doing and what paintings it was that I liked looking at, as well. So many of them were 19th century French paintings of women. But

always the ones I liked the most were the ones painted by men. So I suppose it was creating another level of interest for me in terms of what it could mean for me to paint women.

Was it also a question of reclaiming for yourself the right to interpret those subjects that had traditionally been painted by men, and to express that from the inside, from your own experience? The male perspective on the female body, on female appearance, on domesticity had dominated for so long; everything about the way women were depicted had been wrapped up in a masculine outlook.

Or a distanced perspective from the experience of those subjects. I don't know if I would go so far as to say 'reclaiming' the subject. But there is a definitely my personal female perspective in all of them, though I don't paint myself; I relate to the position of the women. When I was making the nail-bar paintings, I went to get my nails done a few times. I know what it's like to sit there and have this slightly awkward interaction with the person doing your nails. It's quite an intimate transaction but it often takes place without much conversation. It's important – even though my paintings often look voyeuristic or distanced from their subjects – that I have a relationship to or can empathise with the experience of the person that I'm painting, or the environment they're in.

Gilbert & George for years were criticised, even vilified, for representing only men in their work. They were always put on the defensive about it, but they claimed that even though they were either showing themselves or other men, they were representing all of humanity through that. Because they were seen as a couple, there was often a degree of homophobic response to their work. Some people might come at your work from another angle and see it as an enclosed female world without the presence of men.

I don't think that's how I think of them. I think of the base subject matter of all the work as being more concerned with how you encounter the world and the human environments around you. As a woman, the way I express that is always through my own eyes. It makes more sense for me, expressing my experience of the world, to represent that by painting women. I can only speak from my perspective.

I remember talking to an abstract painter who I won't name about Paula Rego, and he said, 'Oh, yeah, she's that artist who paints women.' I thought that was such a reductive way of looking at her work.

And that's not even true. She paints men, too.

That's true. But often the protagonists are female, and for similar reasons to you: that she is working from her own experience and outlook. But I was quite shocked by that dismissive, reductive reading.

I'm sure my work gets spoken about like that, as well. But I find it interesting that men respond to it as much as women, and often in the same way.

And in a non-sexual way. There are a lot of gay men who collect and like your work. That's very intriguing to me, because I do, too. I've spoken to male collectors who, for example, like Hockney's work but would not want to own a male nude by him, because they think this might reflect on their own sexuality, even though they wouldn't say that. I have no problem at all about having a painting that depicts a woman, whether naked or clothed. I don't think that necessarily reflects a sexual outlook. But perhaps that's partly because in the history of art there is such a long tradition of depicting women.

It's such accepted subject matter in its ubiquity in the history of Western Art.

It's seen as art. Whereas a naked male figure, apart from within the very strict academic conventions of the life class, is seen as more sexually...

Provocative in a way, yes. I think that's right. If women are such an accepted and in many ways 'anodyne' subject in art which can be a conduit for all manner of meaning, then potentially images of women are the ideal subject to speak about all of human experience.

To represent women, but not through the lens of sexual desire, is actually quite rare, I suppose. So that should give you not only permission, but a freedom, because you're outside that history as well. You are not contributing to that exploitation of the female body as there for the entertainment or pleasure of men. Allen Jones's furniture sculptures of the late 1960s, in which women are represented in the guise of a chair, a table and a hatstand, were hated by feminists and repeatedly attacked. He was always quite surprised, because he didn't see them in that way. But if they had been made by a woman, they would have been interpreted very differently.

Oh, yeah, they would have been celebrated as a critique of that male objectifying gaze. I've always liked what Lucy Lippard wrote about this in 1976: 'It is a subtle abyss that separates men's use of women for sexual titillation from women's use of women to expose that insult.'³

In the end, the art has to stand up for itself. If you see that painting and you don't know who it is by, will you immediately notice or assume that it is painted by a woman? Or are these paintings genderless?

I don't know. What do you think?

I think with some individual paintings, you wouldn't necessarily know. When you examine a whole body of work, then maybe you





notice something running through it which is about that position you have taken of representing women as aspects of yourself or your own experience. Up to my own adulthood there were so few women artists who were able to make a career, so it's all still quite new. When you think of an earlier example of a successful female artist, such as the American Impressionist Mary Cassatt, what comes to mind are her paintings of motherhood. That was tapping into the expectations of what a woman's role was. When I think about which artists working now I really admire, a lot of them are women. Rachel Whiteread, for example. What does this have to do with the fact that she's a woman? You can read into her use of domestic spaces, or interpret her sculpture through that, if you want, but we all live in those spaces, so it's not a specifically female domain. Suddenly women have the possibility of making a career as an artist, when that had been closed off to them for so long. So maybe it's still too soon to even understand what has been happening, or how to interpret an artist's work through that question of gender. What's rather sad is it probably means that for many centuries 50 percent of the possibilities were untapped, because female artists weren't allowed to have a voice. They weren't allowed to have those careers.

In spite of his devotion to painting, R. B. Kitaj remarked that the great 20th century art form was actually the cinema. Would you agree with his assessment that the cinema, if it hasn't taken over from painting, has at least taken on a position in most people's lives that has surpassed that of painting?

I think that probably is true. I suppose what painting, or any art, still has is that it doesn't have to tell you a story. I suppose experimental cinema doesn't do that, but by and large most people's experience of the cinema is that it does have a narrative arc.

Even video art imposes its time on you.

There is a durational element to the moving image.

With painting, you bring as much time as you want to it. You can look at it for a minute or for hours, or you can live with it for years and keep going back to it. It's a very different relationship that you have with a painting from what you have to a moving image. And also the physicality of painting is something that the cinema is never going to replace.

Somebody has made that painting, that object you're standing in front of, and I think that immediacy of expression counts for something when you are standing in front of it. You are aware that the person who made it also stood in front of it for a long time. constructing that image. I can't imagine a world without cinema, but I don't think it has replaced the possibility of painting.

Are there particular cinematographers or directors who have affected your vision as a painter?

Probably I'm often more visually inspired by films that I've seen than I might be by other contemporary art. There are some classic film-makers like Alfred Hitchcock and David Lynch that aesthetically might be quite obvious for me to like, but one of my favourite films of recent years – and actually I like all of this director's work – was Paolo Sorrentino's The Great Beauty [2013]. It is set in Rome. It's visually stunning. Every scene is like a painting.

Has it directly affected anything you've done? Or is it just a film vou really like?

I think it's something that... I couldn't say, 'These paintings are about that' or that a particular painting was directly inspired by that. but there have been elements, probably of the cinematography, that affected me. I remember watching the film Drive, with Ryan Gosling, that came out five or six years ago. ⁴ That film is very colourspecific, coloured lighting is used a lot in it. It's quite stylised in the cinematography, and I think things like that have fed into the way I think about and construct colour in the paintings.

Presumably it won't be that conscious a process. You won't be looking at particular frames...

No.

It's just the whole experience of seeing the film.

Yes, and thinking about the way something has been constructed to make you feel a certain way about that scene. How they have used a particular colour. I think a lot of the cinematography I admire relates to the devices used in paintings. There was a Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema exhibition recently at Leighton House. A lot of the paintings are High Victorian dross. But at the end of the show there was a film reel showing his paintings next to 20th century films, many of them very early films in which they were clearly using painting references to work out how to construct scenes. Even *Gladiator* has a couple of scenes that are almost lifted out of those paintings. It was great seeing those compositional devices at work; I think there is a lot of back and forward influence between painting and cinema.

Even Edward Hopper, who I know is a painter that you like and who people often think about in relation to your work, has a cinematic aspect to his work, too. I think it's natural that a painter working in the last century would take notice of that visual evidence and what that can bring, especially since you are using photography as a source. You are already in that arena.

Yeah. The places and the people that I paint have to exist, though I am bringing them together to my own design. It's a bit like setting up something that could be filmed.

I suppose we have also, through the cinema, got used to seeing the world from unexpected vantage points. A lot of the best cinematography is a little jarring, placing you in a situation you

wouldn't normally encounter.

An inhuman kind of eye on things, yes.

We understand the triggers, for example when a scene is filmed through undergrowth. You know something sinister is going on, because the person looking from that position is somewhere they shouldn't be. That occurs in some of your paintings, too, this feeling of an unpermitted voyeurism.

That's a signal of something untoward...

You've always struck me as a painter who is unusually attentive. for someone of your generation, to art history. You clearly look at a lot of historical paintings and respond to their painterly concerns, in particular, and to the solutions they present for depicting the visible world. So many artists just look at the work of their peers out of an anxiety to be of their time. I think a lot is lost by not looking at earlier art and learning from it. If you look at a great painting from 300 years ago, it's still now; it's still a great painting. I wondered where your interest in art history came from and what your particular enthusiasms are. I know what some of them are.

I think my initial interest came from being taken to galleries when I was a child, and maybe looking at some of the things that my mum showed me in books. It depended on what was in those galleries that we were going to see. I remember I had postcards of Thomas Gainsborough portraits of society ladies, and I loved their frothy dresses. I also remember looking at Scottish colourists' paintings.

One of the things that struck me is that your enthusiasms are not very fashionable ones.

No! [Laughs.]

You are often looking at things that nobody is writing about or putting into exhibitions. The Scottish colourists have a market, but that work is regarded as guite tame and conservative taste. But you are obviously responding to the painterly aspects of a lot of that work, looking at them in a way that will teach you or enrich...

I think I was looking at those paintings and thinking, 'Oh, I like that juicy bit of painting, how do I do that?' My favourite paintings are probably by Édouard Manet and other 19th century French painters, and there is definitely a relationship between that kind of painting and the Scottish tradition of painting, even going back to art made before then, like Sir Henry Raeburn. There is a fluidity in paint handling which I always enjoyed looking at, even when I didn't know what I was looking at. I think that is what has been a common factor in all the historical paintings that I enjoy. I most enjoy those 19th century painters because they capture what it is I hope to emulate in my own work... What I like so much about their paintings is that so often they were about a moment, they are looking at the world around them. But they are primarily about painting, as well.

Those 19th century painters were also embedded in earlier art. Manet was looking at Diego Velásquez and Francisco Goya. It wasn't seen as a problem then. It didn't make you less modern to be looking at something that had been made 200 years earlier. When artists now look at earlier work, it is often done in a verv self-conscious, knowing, way as pastiche or as postmodernist quotation. You seem to look at earlier painters almost as your contemporaries. You look at their work and see you see possibilities for what you would like to do in your own paintings.

When I am thinking, 'What scenes do I want to set up?', I'm looking through a Hopper book or a Manet book and looking at how their compositions have been set up, and thinking, 'Oh, I like the way those bars are cutting up that image,' or something like that, then thinking about how I can create the same effect. It's not like repeating or quoting them directly, but maybe just thinking, 'That worked for them, I'll try it.'

A lot of the daring compositional solutions in that period of French painting, which I love as well, came from Japanese woodcuts. Some of the strategies that you use, like glimpsing a scene through something else, eventually come from Japanese 19th century woodblock prints. Those may not be in your mind at all, but it's all part of the history that you are tapping into. I think that's a great strength of your work. You're not afraid to use those things, you don't think they are going to suck you back into a conservative way of working. There is a radicality to a lot of that work, including the Japanese woodblock prints. You wonder, 'How did they think of representing that scene from this peripheral perspective?' That the main action is happening off there, and you have some big object in the foreground partly obscuring the view. I still find it so exciting to see some of those kinds of reversals happening.

Yes, they were really doing something very different - a new perspective on the way we create images of the world.

I would have thought that you can learn from the whole of art history. But to do so, and not be swamped by it and not make work that looks as though it was made a hundred years ago, that's quite tricky. I think you can never escape your time. Even if you tried to make a Victorian painting, it would look like now. Nevertheless I can understand why a lot of artists avoid looking at earlier art, because they are afraid that it's going to make their work look old-fashioned.

I'm always surprised whenever I do any teaching in art schools that the art historical element of their course just seems to be about 20th century art, and they don't know much about anything older. If I ask them if they're familiar with a particular artist or a very famous painting, a very obvious reference, they often don't know what I'm talking about. I think maybe when art students are looking for a reference, they want to find something that looks like what they are trying to make, rather than taking a more indirect route. You can look

at something made 400 years ago. It doesn't mean that you'll make something that looks like it was made 400 years ago, but maybe there's something you can take away from it.

When I was in Florence recently. I was looking at the Portinari altarpiece by Hugo van der Goes. In the foreground there is a beautifully realised still life that is so physically present, and so immediate, that you feel like you are looking at that object now, even though the painting is over 500 years old. I find that thrilling. Time just slips away when one sees a work of that age that still conveys the immediacy of looking. A lot of art gets mired in its formulas. I don't particularly respond to Baroque painting, much of which is very theatrical and rhetorical. But particular kinds of work don't seem to age. It surprises me, particularly with painters, that they wouldn't want to be looking at that earlier art, and still learning from it.

Every new series has a slow, elaborate and measured genesis, beginning with the choice of theme, followed by the scouting for a location and the selection of models, the storyboarding of the images you intend to shoot, then the photographic sessions and finally the collaging together of the photographic images from which you make first the oil sketches and finally the paintings on canvas. What is particularly striking about your methods is that the preparatory stages can take months, yet when you have all the material ready in front of you the speed of execution can be extraordinarily quick, sometimes just a few days for a large canvas. So you suddenly cross over from intricate planning to spontaneity. Is there a kind of release from the tension of all that patient gathering together of images that has you spring into action with such intensity and speed? Or is it more that you paint with greatest confidence when you just launch yourself into it, once you are ready, and that you already know how you can translate the image into paint? Are you very conscious of that?

By the time I'm making the big paintings, I'm definitely ready to put in to paint what's in my head and in the photographs.

How do you determine the canvas size? Do you work out what size the figure should be and scale it up from that, or is it the architecture that decides it?

I think more the architecture. I have a rough idea and then I do these big charcoal drawings, just quick working drawings, which end up in the bin afterwards. I'll cover the wall with paper and then I just start drawing the composition at the size that feels right, whatever feels comfortable.

When you look at an oil sketch in relation to the finished painting on canvas, one can see that you had the template there very clearly, but that you are not subservient to it. The paint does something different in the large works, and that's where the painterliness really manifests itself and pays off. It doesn't feel as though they've been designed; it feels as though they've come out

of the process of making them.

I think that's right, though as you say the template is already there, so they are designed to a certain degree. By the time I've decided I want to make a big painting I'm pretty sure that it might be interesting compositionally, because I've done lots of drawings and other studies of it. But then I don't feel like I have to stick with that. The change to large scale often throws up problems I hadn't considered in the sketches, both compositionally and materially. So I'm happy to change things as I'm working.

How much are you still relying on the evidence of the photographs when you are making the final painting? Do you also have a very strong visual memory that is allowing you to reconnect with the visual experience that prompted the painting?

I think it's both. I do have a strong visual memory and the photo shoots often loom large in my memory for something that didn't take very long. In the case of the *Sunset* paintings I spent a day and a night with this woman at the house. I can remember every detail of it.

Is the process of taking the photographs also part of this? That it's not just that you have the photographs as evidence, but that you remember the whole occasion during which you took them?

The photographs are triggers. I remember guite vividly what that light was like in the painting Sunset. I was bloody lucky to get that, because the night before we had gone to the house, and it was a cloudy night with no sunset at all.

Do you go through a period of months when you might not actually be handling paint at all?

Often it will go in cycles. I might paint very intensely for three months to make a show, and then there might be at least a month and a half when I am spending all my time planning another series. At the moment I just finished that last painting, and I may not paint again now for a couple of months. I've got to do the research for the next project, set up the photo-shoot, get the photographs.

By the time you're ready to paint again, are you really hungry to get back to the studio?

Yes, definitely. When I finished the last painting for the Sunset exhibition, I was really enjoying it, but I knew that I needed some time off before going back into the studio again.

Do you ever worry about having a break from painting, that when you get back into the studio you might have lost your confidence? Or do you know that you have enough experience that you will be able to get straight back into it?

It might take me a couple of days. Often the first thing that I make

won't be very good. But because I do the oil sketches first. I might make a few dud oil sketches, so by the time I've started working on the big paintings for a series I'm actually guite warmed up, I suppose.

I was thinking of the oil sketches as part of the preliminary period. But when you sit down to make the oil sketches, is it immediately before getting to work on the big paintings? Or do you sometimes make all the sketches, take a break and then the canvases follow?

It depends on how much time I've got! Ideally I do all the sketches, decide on the sizes of things and then begin.

So all the sketches are done before you start on the canvases?

It doesn't always work out that way. Sometimes I'll do a few sketches, go and make a big one, then do some more sketches.

And what's the uptake, in terms of the percentage of sketches that actually make it into paintings?

Between 50 and 70 percent, probably. With the Kettle's Yard show, I think I've got at least double the amount of sketches than bigger paintings. The LA show is probably less, and some of the other shows over the last couple of years maybe, I'd say, about twice the amount of sketches as canvases.

If you don't use the sketches right away, you're not going to go back to them, because that series is finished and you're on to something else.

It tends not to have been like that, although that's been more just because of how my schedule has been programmed. There's so much material from the recent shoot in Los Angeles that I'd love to carry on working with, but I won't be able to immediately. I'm working on another solo show now, for Grimm in New York, and it's a different subject. So I might revisit some of that material at my leisure.

One of the things that is very striking, when you compare the sketch to the painting, is how fully formed that picture is already in the sketch. They don't change dramatically.

Not really, no. Only if I've miscalculated something!

But at the same time, you don't feel you are just executing on a larger scale a picture that you've already made on paper.

No. When I'm starting the big painting, I'm looking at the oil sketch loads, and the oil sketch may have something that I really want to capture in the big painting. And then about halfway through making the big painting I realise that the big painting has loads of stuff that the sketch can never have. Something switches over, and suddenly it is the most interesting thing, or to me anyway.

If you were just scaling up, it would be a tiresome exercise to do the big painting, if it was all there in the sketch. So there has to be a lot left to discover in the making of the larger work.

Definitely. What might be just a few little blobs in the oil sketch has to be rethought, even though it might still be just a few blobs!

You're reinventing it, on a much larger scale.

Yes. In some cases I make two sketches towards the same painting because I'm struggling to get it right. Then I'll be working on the large painting and suddenly I realise I'm not having a problem with that area any more. I don't know if that's just a question of working on a much larger scale. The scope of what you can do on the bigger one is different, and so is the way of working with it. The brushmarks are completely different.

How would you compare working on paper as opposed to canvas, for example in terms of the luminosity? For the canvases, you still begin with an acrylic ground.

On the oil sketches it's usually just one flat colour to begin with, underneath the whole thing. That's in acrylic, but just a thin layer mixed with gesso as a pastel colour. I will use the same colour underneath the big one, but then I might use a coloured underpainting as well.

So you're mapping out the actual composition.

Yes, which doesn't happen in the sketches.

Do you photograph them at different stages, to document them?

I do. *Fishing*, for example, has a bright turquoise under-painting.

So what is the acrylic doing for you that you wouldn't get if you just painted in oil from the beginning?

It's helping me work out the structure of it, so that when I get on to the oil painting part I can just slosh the paint around without worrying about getting the angle of a wall right, for example. So I make all the mistakes in the bit that's easy to correct, the acrylic first layer. The underpainting also helps me build richer colour relationships, particularly in dark areas, where I use it almost like an accelerated and simplified glazing method. For example when I made Sunset I started with a magenta and bright orange underpainting, then used dark green oils over this to create the illusion of depth in the vegetation at sunset.

Does any of that end up showing through the top layer, or is it all covered?

Some of it does.

Is the entire surface first covered in acrylic paint?

There is a pale colour first, and then the more coloured underpainting, but that might only be in parts.

So you're never starting with a blank canvas when you ready to use the oils.

That's right. It makes it a lot easier.

Less daunting, maybe. You have to think ahead. You have to know from the very beginning what is going to go on top.

Some areas, though, like the surface of some of the swimming pools, have no underpainting. They rely on the transparency of a single thin layer of oil paint to create the luminosity of sunlight filtering through water. I really enjoy the play between opacity and transparency when describing different surfaces in paint. I know what I want to achieve when I start and it's hugely satisfying if it works.

In Sunset I did all the vegetation in one go. But it ends up having much greater depth to it, because it has all this colour underneath it.

When you say 'in one go', do you mean all of that in a single day?

Oh, yeah. I did the sky and the trees in one day, and I could do that because it was already so richly coloured underneath. I didn't need that much paint to create the sensation of thick dark foliage.

And you're not leaving much to chance, either, because you know that whatever you create on top, there is still that structure underneath

Which I can rely on. Because it's oil paint, you can just wipe it off if you need to and you've still got the drawing underneath.

Where did you get the idea for working like that?

From Alan Fitzpatrick [of A P Fitzpatrick Fine Art Materials in London], who makes my canvases. A few years ago he came to my studio to see how I was working, and he asked if I had ever thought about making an acrylic under-painting. He was probably trying to sell me some more of his products! He told me that the way I was making my paintings, I could get some of the richness that you see in glazing techniques but with a shortcut to it. So I could still keep this wet-on-wet, one-layer, painting, but having all the benefits of something that looked like it had been built up more. It completely changed my paintings, I think.

How long ago was that?

Before I met you [in 2012]. I think I had only just started working like that in that year, and I had only just begun working out how to do it. I was asking Alan, 'How much of the painting do I need to do in acrylic?'

And he said, 'That's your problem! You've got to work that out!'

That was a very useful piece of advice.

Yes, it was. It suddenly made the colours zing in a way that they never had before, when they were just thin layers of oil.

But I can see that it also enabled you to plan precisely and still be very free to be spontaneous.

So they don't look rigid, but there is actually a very rigid structure underneath it.

Don't give away all of your trade secrets!

It seems to me that though you have a very efficient system for generating the imagery for your paintings, you have been careful not to get trapped into a formula. You have tended to avoid working from found images, a very good decision in my view as it guarantees the freshness, originality and element of surprise in your paintings, but very occasionally you have been prompted to make use of something that already existed -e.g. in the case of at least one or two paintings that reference François Ozon's film The Swimming Pool, released in 2003 and described as 'an erotic thriller', starring Charlotte Rampling and Ludivine Sagnier. There is often a slight, intangible air of menace and uneasy voyeurism in your paintings that that film also tapped into. Was it these aspects that attracted you, or simply particular shots that you found irresistible?

At the time I made the paintings relating to Swimming Pool I felt that my work was becoming a little too reliant on this process of finding a location and photographing models there and how this had limited my subject matter to always depicting women in domestic spaces. IV

As part of trying to open out my references and subject matter I was watching a lot more films and *Swimming Pool* really struck a chord both aesthetically and narratively. I think the main appeal was the way Ozon used the interplay between the two female protagonists and the space of the house and gardens so that the swimming pool itself becomes a metaphor for the psychological tension at play. The voyeuristic viewpoints, two prime examples of which I painted, showed the women watching each other. In the night scene which depicts figures in the pool, we are in Charlotte Rampling's position on her balcony looking down at the young woman and a man, while in the day scene the opposite occurs: we are in the younger woman's position looking down at Charlotte Rampling walking round the pool. The swimming pool is a constant in this psychological female narrative. Looking at this film opened up the idea of using narrative as a structure on which to base the scenes. This is now a much more prevalent part of my process and often my starting point for developing a series. I'm thinking specifically about the show set in Palm Springs, The Racquet Club and Sunset.



IV. Caroline Walker, Nocturnal Scene from a Swimming Pool, 2015

On those rare occasions where you work from a source such as a film still, do you think of these paintings as distinct from those which, much more frequently, are based on your own photographs?

I think the reason I returned to generating my own imagery rather than pursuing working from film stills is about feeling a connection to the image and my control or ownership over it. I like creating my own narrative and knowing that it's no one else's vision of the world. The problem with taking a film still is that I'm using the director's or the cinematographer's imagery, not my own. Also, I think my work manages to avoid being enslaved to the photography it's based on because I've had the experience of being there in that place with those people. The paintings are therefore a mixture of document, memory and imagination. I've come to realise that it's very important for me that there's an experience at the heart of the work. The experience is often one of anxiety on my part, so it looms large in my memory when I'm back in the studio!

Where does the fascination with water come from? It is evident not just in the swimming pools featured in many of your paintings, but also in the Turkish bath series you made after your visits

to Budapest. Is it primarily the endlessly challenging pictorial problem of depicting a substance as lacking in concrete form as water, as it has been for Hockney? Is it the pleasure of manipulating paint, itself a fluid material, as a material equivalent for the subject depicted? Is it a question of flowing water as a metaphor for the medium through which you express yourself as an artist? Or is there even an emotional or psychological element to your frequent returns, as if you were somehow spellbound by water?

I'm not sure where my obsession with water has come from as I'm certainly not a very good swimmer! I think it is the sheer pleasure of moving paint around to describe something constantly moving. Although paintings are static I always want to create a sense of something moving, whether that's a palm tree blowing in the breeze, the gentle rippling of water in a pool, or the suggestion of a person about to leave or enter the scene. My favourite paintings to look at always play on illusion and that's something I'm perpetually interested in, in both my subjects (thinking about beauty in particular) and the very medium of painting itself. Water has this mysterious quality which seems to lend itself to narrative and illusion. ^{v, vi}



V. Caroline Walker, Plunge Pool, 2015



VI. Caroline Walker, Approach, 2015

I've asked you in the past what colours you've used to paint, for instance, an arm in a particular work, and you were quickly able to identify the specific mix by their precise names. That's how painters would have been taught for hundreds of years through to the late 19th century, but I don't suppose there are many painters of your generation, or even older, who would have that kind of knowledge, to be able to predict what particular hues in combination would yield a specific result and to do so with such subtlety. Were you taught how to use paint like this at Glasgow School of Art or at the Royal College of Art? I'd be amazed if any art students anywhere were able now to receive that kind of instruction

I was never taught to use paint in the way that I do, but a few things from art school have stuck. We had life painting classes where we were only allowed to use six colours to make everything and no black! I still don't own a tube of black paint and I think that impulse to mix complex colours from a limited palette has stuck, though I change what that palette is with every painting. I was frequently told that I was too skilled at painting –which was meant as a criticism!– and that I had to learn to let that go. I don't know if I've ever achieved that. If you know you can make something to a certain level of skill, it's very difficult to resist it! I try to get round that by painting fast, so that I maintain an immediacy to the mark-making and don't get too bogged down in details. But it's definitely a battle against a natural impulse to make things look 'finished'.

I think ultimately, though, that it's through trial and error that I've found out how to mix colour in a way that is interesting and effective for me. Being quite singularly obsessed with painting has meant I've focused all my attentions on developing a kind of subconscious recipe book of colour mixes. I work very intuitively when I paint and often have to write a list of the colours I used when I've made an oil sketch, so that I can try and replicate the same colours on a large scale.

You seem to have an enviable facility, making paintings that are pictorially, spatially and psychologically complex with an apparent effortlessness. The paint tends to be applied in thin layers that maintain the translucency of the surfaces depicted and the soft tactility of human flesh. This is something that very great painters like Velásquez are rightly celebrated for. I think it's the single factor, among many admirable qualities, that I find most seductive about your work. Facility can be a curse, of course, if it descends into slickness or showing off, but your great strength lies in the economy of means by which an image, when viewed intently, dissolves into a few quick but unerring brushstrokes. Quite apart from all the psychological, social and intellectual intricacies of your subject matter, and beyond even the pictorial appeal of your compositions, for me ultimately it is the paint itself that keeps drawing me back and holding me in its spell.

Notes

- 1. Sarah Maslin Nir, The Price of Nice Nails, The New York Times, New York, 7 May 2015.
- 2. John Berger, Ways of Seeing, Penguin, London, 1972, pp 46-47.

'A woman must continually watch herself. She is almost continually accompanied by her own image of herself. Whilst she is walking across a room or whilst she is weeping at the death of her father, she can scarcely avoid envisaging herself walking or weeping. From earliest childhood she has been taught and persuaded to survey herself continually. And so she comes to consider the surveyor and the surveyed within her as the two constituent yet always distinct elements of her identity as a woman. She has to survey everything she is and everything she does because how she appears to men is of crucial importance for what is normally thought of as the success of her life. Her own sense of being in herself is supplanted by a sense of being appreciated as herself by another. [...] One might simplify this by saying: men act and women appear. Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at. This determines not only most relations between men and women but also the relation of women to themselves. The surveyor of woman in herself is male: the surveyed female. Thus she turns herself into an object -and most particularly an object of vision: a sight.'

- 3. Lucy R. Lippard, From the center: feminist essays on women's art, E.P. Dutton, New York, 1976.
- 4 This film, described as a 'neo-Noir thriller', by the Danish film-maker Nicholas Winding Refn, was released in 2011.

Images

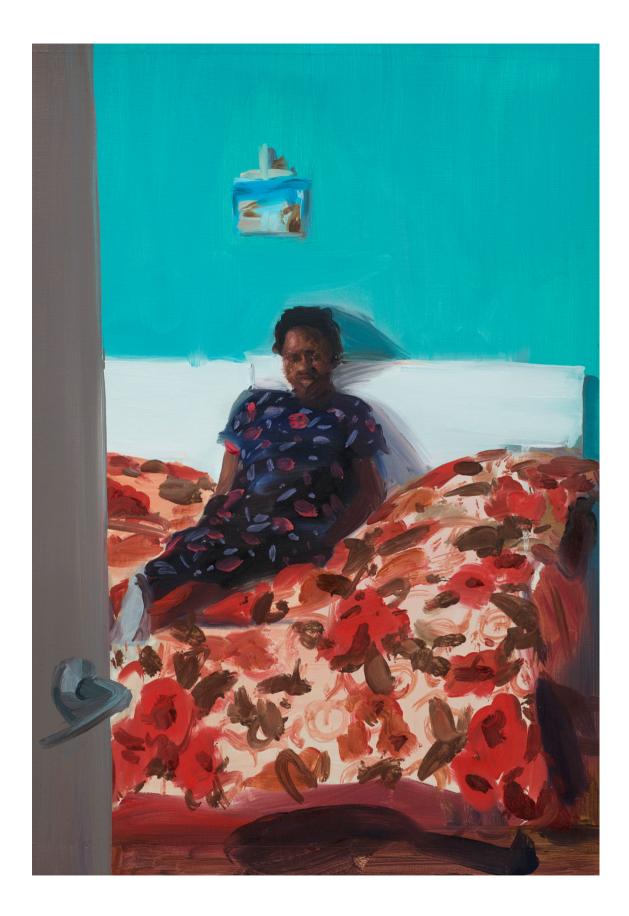
- I Caroline Walker, Illuminations, 2012, oil on linen, 240 x 305 cm | 94^{1/2} x 120^{1/8} in, courtesy of The Franks-Suss collection.
- II Caroline Walker, detail of Desert Modern, 2016, oil on linen, 230 x 325 cm | $90^{1/2}$ x 128 in, courtesy of The Franks-Suss collection.
- III Joy at her house in Hackney London. Photo by Caroline Walker.
- IV Caroline Walker, Nocturnal Scene from a Swimming Pool, 2015, oil on linen, 165 x 240 cm | 65 x 94^{1/2} in, courtesy of Sara Amos, Ibiza.
- V Caroline Walker, *Plunge Pool*, 2015, oil on linen, 85 x 70 cm | $33^{1/2}$ x 27^{1/2} in, courtesy of the Ekard collection.
- VI Caroline Walker, Approach, 2015, oil on board, 40 x 36 cm | $15^{3/4}$ x $14^{1/8}$ in, courtesy of Private Collection, South Korea.

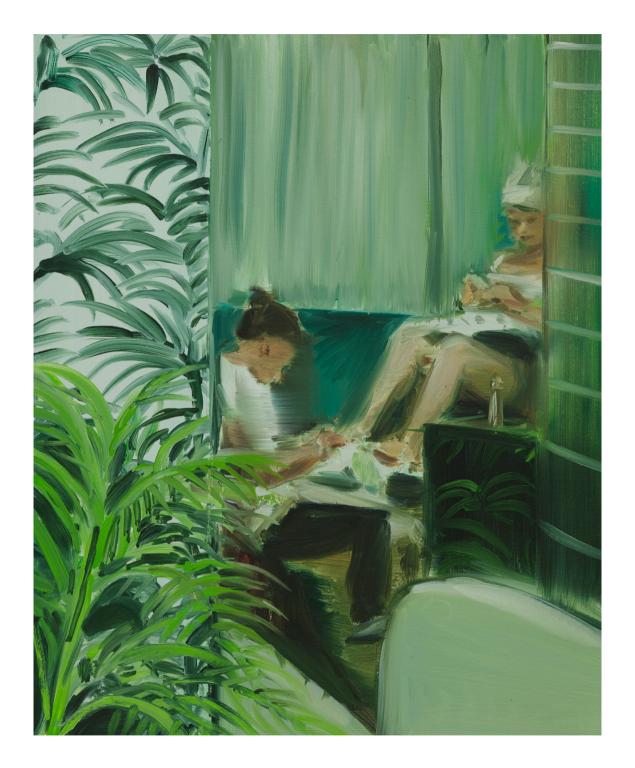
Oil on paper

'The oil sketches are both an essential part of the process in making the large scale paintings, and works in their own right. After the research stage I can often have hundreds of photographs to work with and making oil sketches is the first step in editing and translating that imagery in to the language of paint and working out what might scale up well. I work quickly and very instinctively on these, making subconscious decisions about colour palette, atmosphere and composition, often omitting things from the original reference material without realising. These sketches then become the main reference for working on the big paintings, often with a list of the colours I used to help me recreate the same sense of atmosphere and freshness of mark making.

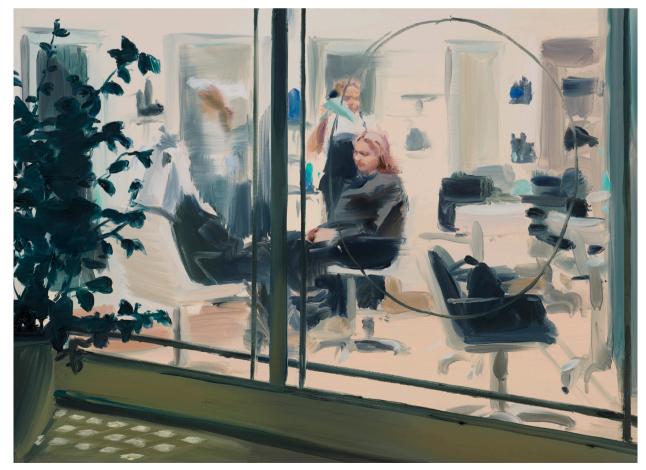
Not all of the oil sketches end up becoming studies for large paintings. Sometimes it feels like the subject has been explored enough in the work on paper and there's a quality of immediacy in these works which make them quite distinct from the scope of the large paintings, or more precise works on board.'

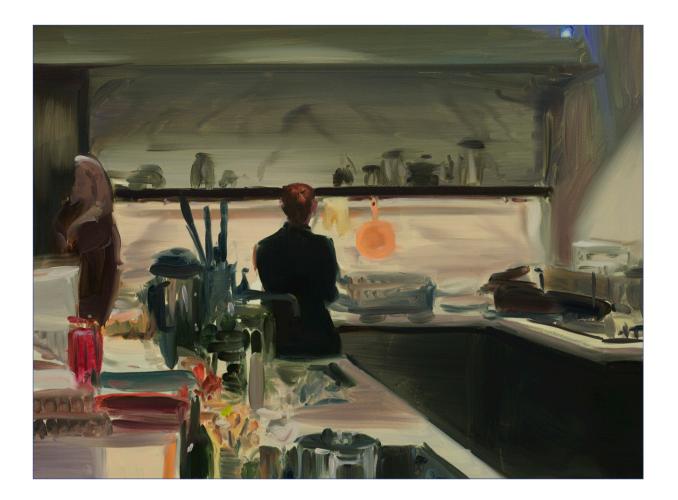
-Caroline Walker

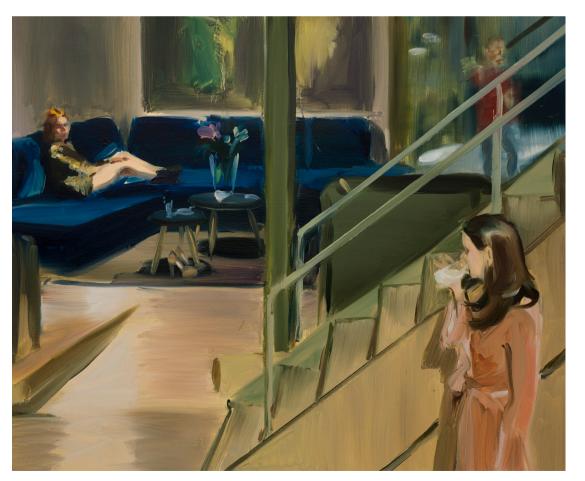


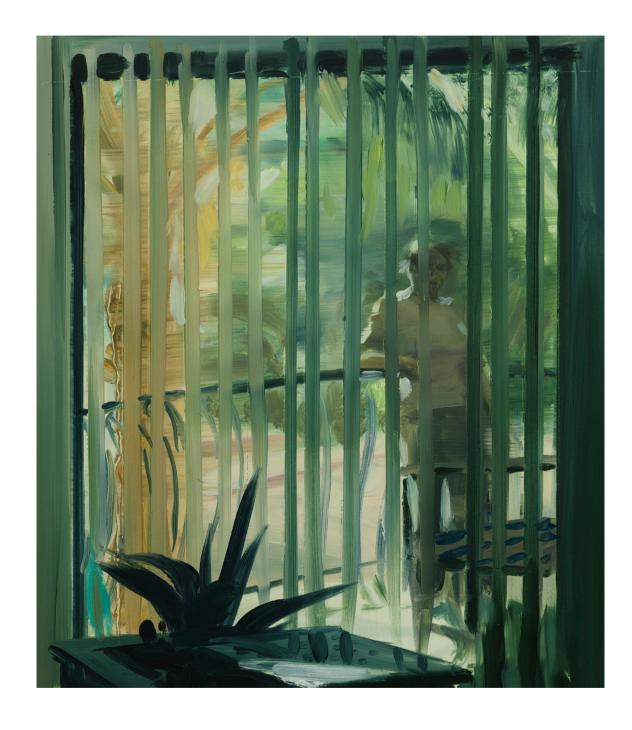














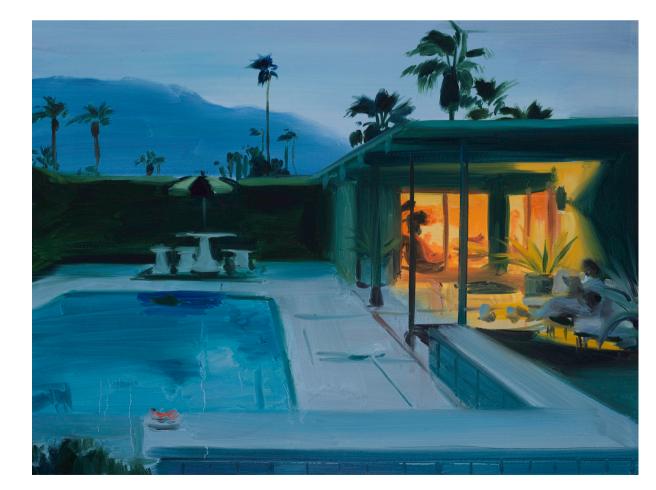






















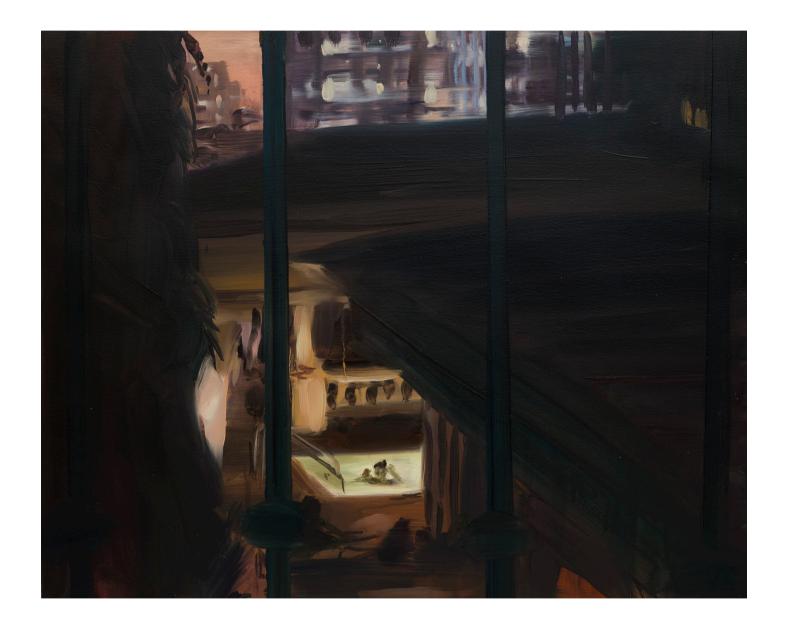
















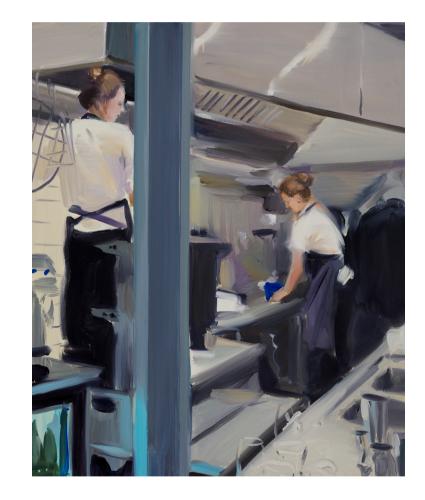








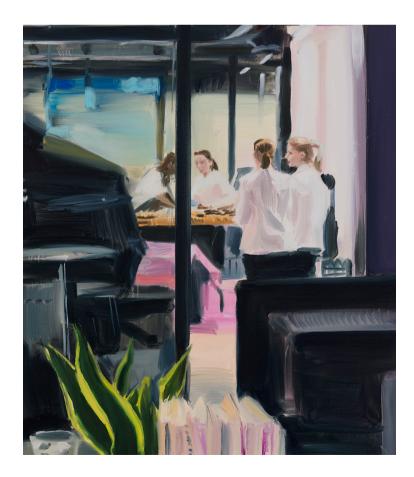


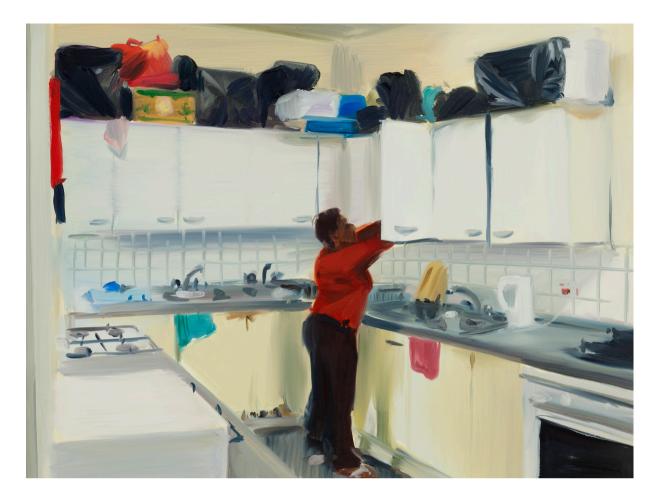




























Caroline Walker photographed by Peter Mallet in her studio in London, June 2018.

Born 1982 in Dunfermline (UK) Lives and works in London (UK)

Education

2004 BA (Hons) Fine Art: Painting, Glasgov

Awards

- 2010 Shortlisted for Threadneedle Painting
 2009 Valerie Beston Young Artist Award, R Neville Burston Award, Royal College Tom Bendhem Drawing Prize, Royal C
 2008 Jerwood Contemporary Painters Dew
- NADFAS Bursary for study at Royal (2007 Dewar Arts Award

Selected Solo Exhibitions

- 2018 service, GRIMM, New York (US) Actions, Part 2: Home, Kettle's Yard, Sunset, Anat Ebgi, Los Angeles (US)
- 2017 Painted Ladies, Space K, Gwacheon (Night Scenes, ProjectB Gallery, Milan
- 2016 The Racquet Club, GRIMM, Amsterda
- 2015 Bathhouse, Space K, Seoul (KR)
- 2014 Set Piece, ProjectB Gallery, Milan (IT) Bathhouse, Budapest Arts Factory (re Initiations: Lithographs, Enitharmon E
- 2013 In Every Dream Home, Pitzhanger Ma London (UK) Glass to the Wall, ProjectB Gallery, M
- 2011 Vantage Point, Ana Cristea Gallery, N
- 2010 Anonymous Was A Woman, Ivan Gall The Valerie Beston Artist Trust Prizew Art, London (UK)

Selected Group Exhibitions

	2018	Actions. The image of the world can be different, Kettle's Yard, Cambridge (UK)
w School of Art (UK)	2017	Women Artists: A Conversation, Fine Art Society, London (UK) Disruptive Imagination: Making Windows Where There Were Once Walls, Gallery of Fine Arts, Ostrava (CZ) CURRENTS (with Nick Goss and Neil Raitt), curated by Tamar Arnon and Eli Zagury, Lin & Lin Gallery, Taipei (TW)
g Prize	2016	ProjectB 10, ProjectB Gallery, Milan (IT) VBAT 10th Anniversary Exhibition, Marlborough Fine Art, London (UK) A Question of Perspective, curated by Jane Neal, GRIMM,
0		Amsterdam (NL)
Royal College of Art	2015	
e of Art College of Art war Arts Award	2015	The Nude in the XX XXI Century, Sotheby's S 2, London (UK) The London Open 2015, Whitechapel Gallery, London (UK) Reality: Modern and Contemporary British Painting, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool (UK)
College of Art		
	2014	Reality: Modern and Contemporary British Painting, Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, Norwich (UK) This Side of Paradise, Sotheby's S 2, London (UK) Painting and Sculpture from Milan Galleries, curated by Francesco Poli, Milan Triennale, Milan (IT)
	2013	<i>Nightfall: New Tendencies in Figurative Painting</i> , Rudolfinum, Prague (CZ)
Cambridge (UK)	2012	Roots to Shoots: Ten Years of the Dewar Arts Awards, Royal Botanic Gardens, Edinburgh (UK) Part of a Collection: OUTSET/RCA Acquisitions 2009-2011, Royal
(KR) n (IT)		College of Art, London (UK) Nightfall: New Tendencies in Figurative Painting, MODEM,
lam (NL)		Debrecen (HU) C <i>reative Lond</i> on, Space K Gwacheon, Seoul, and Gwangju, South Korea (KR)
r) residency), Budapest (HU) Editions, London (UK)	2011	Some Domestic Incidents: New Painting from Britain, MAC, Birmingham (UK) Expanded Painting: Some Domestic Incidents, Prague Biennale 5, Prague (CZ)
lanor House and Gallery,	2010	Love is an Ocular Sickness, Intermedia, CCA, Glasgow (UK) SV10, Studio Voltaire, London (UK)
1ilan (IT)		
New York (US)	2008	Interior: Looking Through the Art, Parco Culturale Le Serre, Turin (IT) Jerwood Contemporary Painters, Jerwood Space, London (UK)
llery, Bucharest (RO) winner, Marlborough Fine		Germinazioni, Palazzo della Penna, Perugia (IT)
	2006	John Moores 24, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool (UK)

Index

Picture Window















P. 25 Waiting 2018 Oil on linen 98 x 68 cm | 38 % x 26 % in

Private Collection

P. 27 Service 2018 Oil on linen 180 x 140 cm | 70 ½ x 55 ½ in

Jens and Katharina Hofmann Collection

P. 31 Reservations 2018 Oil on board 43 x 35 cm | 16 ½ x 13 ½ in

Private Collection, Amsterdam

P. 32-33 / P. 34-35 (detail) Filing 2018 Oil on linen 195 x 270 cm | 76 ¾ x 106 ¼ in

Private Collection

P. 36-37 **Forecasting** 2018 Oil on linen 200 x 255 cm | 78 ½ x 100 ½ in

P. 39 First Batch 2018 Oil on board 52 x 42 cm | 20 ½ x 16 ½ in

Berger Family Collection

P. 40-41

Preening 2018 Oil on linen 200 x 280 cm | 78 ¾ x 110 ¼ in















P. 42-43

Cut and Finish 2018 Oil on linen 180 x 240 cm | 70 % x 94 ½ in

The Ekard Collection

P. 45 **Perfumier** 2018 Oil on board 52 x 42 cm | 20 ½ x 16 ½ in

Zagury Collection, London

P. 48-49 / P. 50 (detail) Pattern Cutting 2018 Oil on linen 165 x 240 cm | 65 x 95 ½ in

Eliot Keele and Allison Rigsbee, Private Collection, New York

P. 51 **Tailored** 2018 Oil on board 43 x 35 cm | 16 % x 13 % in

Mr. Sean Goldsmith and Dr. Alison Ward

P. 52-53 Stock Take 2018 Oil on linen 190 x 275 cm | 75 x 108 ¼ in

Private Collection, London

P. 55 Acquisitions 2018 Oil on board 45 x 55 cm | 17 % x 21 % in

Abby and Bruce Mendelsohn, New York

P. 65 / P. 67 (detail) **Tarh, 11.45am, Southall** 2017 Oil on linen 167 x 110 cm | 65 % x 43 % in



P. 68-69 / P. 74-75 (detail) Tarh, 10.3ºam, Southall 2017 Oil on linen 174 x 200 cm | 68 1/2 x 78 3/4 in



P. 73 Consilia, 4.30pm, East London 2017 Oil on board 55 x 45 cm | 21 % x 17 ¾ in



P. 76-77 Tarh, 11.30am, Southall 2017 Oil on linen 180 x 240 cm | 70 ⁷/₈ x 94 ¹/₂ in





Joy, 11am, Hackney 2017 Oil on board 43 x 35 cm | 16 % x 13 % in



P. 82-83 Noor, 3.30pm, Leyton 2017 Oil on linen 200 x 280 cm | 78 ³/₄ x 110 ¹/₄ in



P. 87 Noor, 4pm, Leyton 2017 Oil on linen 75 x 60 cm | 29 ½ x 23 % in

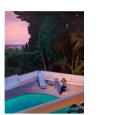


P. 89 Joy, 11.30am, Hackney 2017 Oil on linen 148 x 100 cm | 58 ¼ x 39 ¾ in



P. 92-93 Abi, Midday, Brixton 2017 Oil on linen 177 x 240 cm | 69 ¾ x 94 ½ in

















P. 95 Abi, 11.45am, Brixton 2018 Oil on linen 70 x 85 cm | 27 1/2 x 33 1/2 in

P. 101 Sunset 2017 Oil on linen 270 x 210 cm |106 ¼ x 82 5% in

Robin Cottle and Ron Radziner, Los Angeles

P. 102-103 Desayuno 2017 Oil on linen 190 x 230 cm | 74 ¾ x 90 ½ in

Private Collection, Los Angeles

P. 107 Fishing 2017 Oil on linen 250 x 200 cm | 98 ¾ x 78 ¾ in

Edwin Oostmeijer Collection

P. 108-109 / P. 110 (detail) Tinseltown 2017 Oil on linen 180 x 240 cm | 70 ½ x 94 ½ in

Private Collection, Los Angeles

P. 111 Juliet 2017 Oil on board 43 x 35 cm | 16 7/8 x 13 3/4 in

Andrea and Manuela Billè, Singapore

P. 112-113 Training 2017 Oil on linen 170 x 225 cm | 66 ⅔ x 88 % in

Uzi Pinchasi Collection, Shanghai

P. 115 Thanks for Noticing 2017 Oil on linen 210 x 160 cm | 82 % x 63

Private Collection, London









P. 132-133

2017 Oil on linen

Catered 2017 Oil on linen

Rear Windows 2017 Oil on board

Lena Evstafieva









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P. 137

Oil on linen 125 x 100 cm | 49 ¼ x 39 ¾ in

P. 121

2017

P. 125

2017

P. 126-127

2017

2017

Resort

Tamar Segalis Collection, London

Swimming Lessons, The Student

Oil on board 43 x 35 cm | 16 ¾ x 13 ¾ in

Allegra Galimberti Collection, Italy

Swimming Lessons, The Teacher

Oil on linen 120 x 175 cm | 47 ¼ x 68 ¾ in

Private Collection, Italy

P. 129 / Cover (detail) Apparition

Oil on board 43 x 35 cm | 16 ¾ x 13 ¾ in

Presented by the Contemporary Art Society to Mercer Art Gallery, Harrogate, 2017

Birthday Party

200 x 270 cm | 78 ³/₄ x 106 ¹/₄ in

Robert Runták Collection

P. 134-135 / P. 136 (detail)

150 x 203 cm | 59 1/8 x 79 7/8 in

Uzi Pinchasi Collection, Shanghai

45 x 55 cm | 17 ¾ x 21 % in

210 x 270 cm | 82 5% x 106 ¼ in

Private Collection, Italy

















P. 142 Late Opening 2017 Oil on board 55 x 48 cm | 21 ½ x 18 ½ in

Dommering Collection, The Netherlands

P. 143 Housewarming 2017 Oil on board 52 x 42 cm | 20 ½ x 16 ½ in

Private Collection

P. 145

Cleaned 2017 Oil on board 42 x 50 cm | 16 ½ x 19¾ in

Private Collection, Hong Kong

P. 146 Cabin II 2017 Oil on board 45 x 55 cm | 17 ¾ x 21 5/8 in

Peil-Samel Collection

P. 147 Cabin I 2017 Oil on board 45 x 55 cm | 17 ¾ x 21 5% in

Mary and Marcel Barone

P. 148-149 Grooming I 2017 Oil on linen 170 x 235 cm | 66 3/8 x 92 1/2 in

Private Collection

P. 151 Grooming II 2017 Oil on board 55 x 45 cm | 21 % x 17 ¾ in

Private Collection

P. 161 / P. 168 (detail) Nails and Brows 2016 Oil on linen 218 x 160 cm | 85 % x 63 in

Kolon Group Collection



P. 162-163 Pampered Manis 2016 Oil on linen 190 x 240 cm | 74 ¾ x 94 ½ in

Kolon Group Collection

P. 167 Lacquered Up 2016 Oil on linen 162 x 139 cm | 63 ¾ x 54 ¾ in

Kolon Group Collection



P. 169 Gallery Gal 2016 Oil on board 55 x 45 cm | 21 ½ x 17 ¾ in



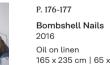
P. 173 Birds of Paradise 2016 Oil on board 55 x 45 cm | 21 ½ x 17 ¾ in

Kolon Group Collection



P. 175 Turquoise and Caicos 2016 Oil on board 50 x 40 cm | 19 ¾ x 15 ¾ in





P. 180-181 Pampered Pedis 2016 Oil on linen 145 x 200 cm | 57 ½ x 78 ¾ in









P. 174 Treatment Chair 2016 Oil on board 50 x 40 cm | 19 ¾ x 15 ¾ in

Kolon Group Collection





165 x 235 cm | 65 x 92 ½ in



Kolon Group Collection



Jordana Reuben Yechiel

P. 185 Morning, Beauty Box 2017 Oil on linen 205 x 160 cm | 80 ¾ x 63 in

Private Collection, London

P. 186-187 / P. 188 (detail) Beauty Box 2016 Oil on linen 180 x 240 cm | 70 ½ x 94 ½ in

Kolon Group Collection

P. 189 Passport to Happiness 2016 Oil on linen 105 x 82 cm | 41 % x 32 ¼ in

Kolon Group Collection

P. 191 Runway Ready 2016 Oil on board 52 x 42 cm | 20 ½ x 16 ½ in

Kolon Group Collection

P. 197 Freeway 2016 Oil on linen 175 x 120 cm | 68 % x 47 ¼ in

Private Collection, Taipei

Folly 2016 Oil on linen

Private Collection, Taipei

P. 200 Smoker 2016 Oil on board 55 x 45 cm | 21 5% x 17 3/4 in

Private Collection, Taipei









Nightmoves 2016 Oil on board 52 x 42 cm | 20 ½ x 16 ½ in

P. 206-207

P. 208-209

Lagoon

P. 210-211

Hot Tub

2017

P. 217

Maid

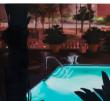
2016

2016

2016

P. 205











P. 198-199 200 x 280 cm | 78 ¾ x 110 ¼ in















P. 201 Chess 2016 Oil on linen

P. 202-203 Pool Views 2016 Oil on linen

P. 204 Pool Side 2017 Oil on board

180 x 155 cm | 70 ½ x 61 ½ in

Private Collection, Israel

155 x 210 cm | 61 ½ x 82 ½ in

The Franks Family Collection, London

43 x 35 cm | 16 ½ x 13 ¼ in

Marina Anghileri, Italy

Picture Window

Oil on linen 170 x 250 cm | 66 % x 98 % in

Zagury Collection, London

Oil on linen 165 x 205 cm | 65 x 80 ¾ in

Private Collection, Taipei

Oil on linen 200 x 250 cm | 78 ¾ x 98 ¾ in

Private Collection

Oil on linen 210 x 150 cm | 82 % x 59 % in

Edwin Oostmeijer Collection

















P. 218-219 Cabana 2016 Oil on linen 185 x 275 cm | 68 ½ x 112 ¼ in

De Ying Foundation

P. 221 Early Evening 2016

Oil on board 44 x 40 cm | 17 3/8 x 15 3/4 in

Private Collection

P. 222-223 / P. 220 (detail) Sunshine Court 2016 Oil on linen 170 x 250 cm | 66 ¾ x 98 ¾ in

ING Collectie

P. 227 The Racquet Club 2016 Oil on linen 110 x 85 cm | 43 ¼ x 33 ½ in

Collection AkzoNobel Art Foundation

P. 228-229 Afters 2016 Oil on linen 180 x 270 cm | 70 % x 106 ¼ in

The Brook Collection

P. 230 Landscaping 2015 Oil on linen 85 x 70 cm | 33 ½ x 27 ½ in

Private Collection, Mexico City

P. 231 Pool Closing 2016 Oil on board 37 x 30 cm | 14 5⁄8 x 11 ¾ in

Edwin Oostmeijer Collection

P. 232-233 The Bungalow 2016 Oil on linen 155 x 210 cm | 61 ¼ x 82 ½ in

The Franks Family Collection, London



P. 236-237---The Architecture of Leisure 2016 Oil on linen 165 x 215 cm | 65 x 84 % in



P. 238 Sundowners 2016 Oil on linen

The Ekard Collection

Private Collection, Rotterdam

200 x 160 cm | 78 ¾ x 63



P. 239 Pool Boy 2016 Oil on board 44 x 40 cm | 17 ¾ x 15 ¾ in

The Franks Family Collection, London



P. 240-241 Desert Modern 2016 Oil on linen 230 x 325 cm | 90 ½ x 128 in

The Franks Family Collection, London



Private Collection P. 244

P. 243

2015

Oil on linen

Indoor Outdoor

200 x 160 cm | 78 ¾ x 63 in





Mr. Sean Goldsmith and Dr. Alison Ward



P. 245 / P. 246 (detail) Beauty Queens I 2016 Oil on board 55 x 45 cm | 21 ½ x 17 ¾ in

Jordana Reuben Yechiel



P. 247 Lounge 2016 Oil on board 42 x 52 cm | 16 ½ x 20 ½ in

The Franks Family Collection, London





P. 272 Palmeral Pedicure 2016

P. 271

2017

P. 273

2017





2018

P. 274

2017

P. 274

2017

P. 275

2016

P. 276

2016

P. 273













Joy, Hackney I

Oil on paper 42 x 29 cm | 16 ½ x 11 % in

Collection of the Artist

Oil on paper 38 x 28 cm | 15 x 11 1/8 in

Collection of the Artist

Anywhere, Anytime, Everytime Study

Oil on paper 46 x 61 cm | 18 ½ x 24 ½ in

Caroline Schmidt, New York

Study for Cut and Finish

Oil on paper 45 x 62 cm | 17 ¾ x 24 ¾ in

Study for Catered

Oil on paper 39 x 53 cm | 15 ¾ x 20 ¼ in

Study for Structure

Oil on paper 46.7 x 57 cm | 18 ³/₄ x 22 ¹/₂ in

Robert Runták Collection

Study for Chess

Oil on paper 36 x 31 cm | 14 ½ x 12 ¼ in

Private Collection, Taipei

Study for Maid II

Oil on paper 54 x 46 cm | 21 ¼ x 18 ¼ in

Henk en Margot Brandsen

















P. 277 Study for Refreshments 2018 Oil on paper 48 x 63 cm | 18 ¾ x 24 ¼ in

Courtesy of Angelish Kumar, New York

P. 277

Study for Pattern Cutting 2018 Oil on paper 44 x 63 cm | 17 % x 24 % in

Private Collection

P. 278 Study for Beauty Box 2016 Oil on paper 45 x 60.5 cm | 17 3/4 x 23 7/8 in

Jens and Katharina Hofmann Collection

P. 279 Study for The Architecture of Leisure 2016 Oil on paper 43 x 54 cm | 12 ¼ x 21 ¼ in

The Ekard Collection

P. 279 Study for Desert Modern 2016 Oil on paper 46.5 x 63 cm | 18 ¼ x 24 ¾ in

Biemond-Nassiri Collection

P. 280 Study for Filing 2018 Oil on paper 46 x 64 cm | 18 ½ x 25 ¼ in

Private Collection, New York

P. 280 Night Light 2016 Oil on paper 41 x 60 cm | 16 ½ x 23 ½ in

Alison Benson

P. 281 Evening at Beauty Box Study III 2016 Oil on paper 64 x 47 cm | 25 1/4 x 18 1/2 in

Collection of the Artist



P. 282 Study for Forecasting 2018 Oil on paper 48 x 61 cm | 18 ½ x 24 ½ in

Keiron Birch, Amsterdam

P. 283



Banoffee 2017 Oil on paper 38.7 x 51.7 cm | 15 ¼ x 20 ¼ in

Collection of the Artist



P. 283 Study for Not Going Out I 2017 Oil on paper 47 x 39.5 cm | 18 ½ x 15 ½ in



Study for Night In 2017 Oil on paper 50 x 45 cm | 19 ¾ x 17 ¾ in

Matt and Shannon Downe, Chicago, IL

P. 284 Study for Cashing Up 2018 Oil on paper 47 x 62 cm | 18 ½ x 24 ¾ in

P. 284

Sandra Gentile and Suchi Lee, New York





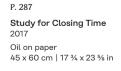




Private Collection, Italy

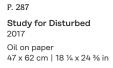
P. 286 Study for Hot Tub 2016 Oil on paper 44 x 56 cm | 17 % x 22 in

Private Collection, Amsterdam



Private Collection, Italy





Collection of the Artist

P. 288 Snowscape 2017 Oil on paper 45 x 60 cm | 17 ³/₄ x 23 ⁵/₈ in

Jens and Katharina Hofmann Collection

P. 288 Study for Night Watch 2018 Oil on paper 40.5 x 51 cm | 16 x 20 ½ in

Private Collection, Amsterdam / New York

P. 289 Study for Birthday Party II 2017 Oil on paper 60 x 43.5 cm | 23 % x 17 % in

Bakker-Brandsen Collection

P. 290 Study for Housekeeping I 2018 Oil on paper 47 x 58.1 cm | 18 ½ x 22 ½ in

Study for Service I 2018 Oil on paper 55 x 46 cm | 22 x 18 ½ in

Claire Dewar, Dallas, TX

Study for Service II 2018 Oil on paper 51.5 x 41.5 cm | 20 ¼ x 16 ¾ in

Study for Nails and Brows 2016

Zagury Collection, London









Abi, Brixton I 2017 Oil on paper 38 x 30 cm | 15 x 11 ¾ in

P. 295

2017

P. 296

2017

P. 296

P. 294







P. 296

2018



Robert and Susan Higgins

P. 290-291

P. 291

Zagury Collection, London

P. 292 Oil on paper 46 x 34 cm | 18 1/8 x 13 3/8 in

1

Prerecorded Study

P. 293

2017

P. 293

2018

P. 294

2017

Oil on paper 46.5 x 62 cm 18 ¼ x 24 ¾ in

Private Collection, Idaho



P. 297 Study for Review 2018 Oil on paper 41 x 31 cm | 16 1/8 x 12 1/4 in

King Tong, New York

Study for Waiting

Oil on paper 56.5 x 49.5 cm | 22 ¼ x 19 ½ in

Mary and Marcel Barone

Tarh, Southall III

Oil on paper 45 x 60 cm | 17 ¾ x 23 % in

Tarh, Southall II

Oil on paper 43.5 x 50 cm | 17 ¼ x 19 ¾ in

Tarh, Southall I

Oil on paper 41.5 x 28 cm | 16 ¾ x 11 ¼ in

Joy, Hackney II 2017

Oil on paper 44 x 31 cm | 17 % x 12 ¼ in

Study for Housekeeping II

Oil on paper 47 x 62.9 cm | 18 ½ x 24 ¾ in

Xuening Zhang Collection

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P. 28-29 service 2018

GRIMM New York (US) Photography by Cooper Dodds

P. 38-39 service 2018

GRIMM New York (US) Photography by Cooper Dodds

P. 46-47 service 2018

GRIMM New York (US) Photography by Cooper Dodds



Kettle's Yard, Cambridge (UK) Photography by Stephen White

P. 84-85 Home 2018

P. 90-91

Home

Kettle's Yard, Cambridge (UK) Photography by Stephen White



2018

Kettle's Yard, Cambridge (UK) Photography by Stephen White

P. 104-105 Sunset 2018

Anat Ebgi, Los Angeles (US) Photography by Michael Underwood

P. 122-123 Night Scenes 2017

ProjectB Gallery, Milan (IT) Photography by Agostino Osio











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Colophon

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Picture Window

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Caroline Walker Picture Window

Celebrated for her striking, sometimes playful yet often challenging paintings of contemporary women in diverse environments and architectural settings, Caroline Walker explores myriad social, cultural, economic, racial and political factors in her practice that affect women's lives today. Her works take us from the luxurious hotels of Los Angeles and Palm Springs to the temporary social housing of female asylum seekers arriving in Europe, from the nail bars, restaurant kitchens and offices of London to the private pools and nighttime parties of the European elite. Walker deftly broaches both everyday and more provocative subjects ranging from the pay gap to migrant workforces, the beauty industry to domestic roles, gender stereotypes to ageism. Featuring a significant essay and an in-depth interview with the artist by art historian Marco Livingstone, along with texts by Andrew Nairne, Dr. Rina Arya, and Dr. Lauren Elkin, 'Picture Window' is the most comprehensive publication to date on the work of London-based Scottish artist Caroline Walker (b. 1982, Dunfermline).

With her critical approach and through her painterly virtuosity, Walker is rapidly becoming established as one of the leading British painters of her generation.

