

My work tackles ideas of anxiety and depression while disarming the viewer with humour, surrealism, fashion, and general silliness.

The wide eyes of my figures stare out into our complex world and take it in with looks of bewilderment.

They mostly-femme-presenting figures I paint are noseless for a few reasons. It imbues them with a sense of breathlessness. There is a sense of gasping for air—like the moment of a panic attack when you can't quite fill your lungs with enough to keep going—while their mouths hang open trying to breathe. But at the same time, the eyes and lips are often overgrown, shifted out of place to compensate for the missing nose, and the effect is downright silly. The lips can look beak-like or fish-like with no nose and philtrum (the divot between your nose and lips) breaking up the forms of the face. These simple details give me the opportunity to play with the tension between panic and humour in each painting, pushing or pulling back the emotional turmoil or the silliness. By bulging out the eyes, or reeling in the scale of the lips, I can control a narrative of horror or humour.

My work is very much in the tradition of George Condo's Artificial Realism. The worlds I create have a reality about them, poses that often reference the long tradition of portraiture, but are fully contrived.

I often make my paintings in the style of imagined fashion editorials that parrot capitalism's need to manufacture desire. I will include fake luxury items that, when put together, would cost more than the painting itself. I occasionally dress my sitters up in brands that I couldn't myself afford.

Much of my work delves into identity, and how it is constructed with various elements and choices and armours: clothing, accessories, locations, hairstyles, possessions, and poses. In our ever more brand-centric world—where every individual is suddenly encouraged to become a brand themselves—there is increasing pressure to curate our identity for external scrutiny. The gig economy means that this curation is no longer a frivolous side effect of social media, but is often the basis of our very survival. The carefully constructed identities of my sitters are a story they want to tell about themselves to you, and yet, as you can see on their faces, there is so much more below the surface that they just can't contain.

Their faces show that moment just as they can't keep their cool for one more second, just as all their effort to appear lovely and polished have suddenly failed, and their real feelings shine through. The moment is wild, absurd, raw, ridiculous panic. Their settings are often serene but their expressions reveal complex emotional states, bubbling over that they cannot conceal no matter how hard they try, no matter how they wish their pain could be private.

My own history with panic attacks is long and lurid. But I have no desire to delve into my continuing battle with misery and fear without a little laughter. I couldn't survive without laughter, it's a necessary tool to soften pain and make it bearable, which is true for all the pains and fears of existence. And I feel the same about my paintings. I want to soften the darker subject matter

that I'm exploring by working with gentle colours, silly expressions, elements of slapstick absurdity, soft landscapes, and other tools that create tension between the light and the dark, the serious and the nonsensical.

My mutant paintings are about fractured identity, breaking down. The shadow self. Having to deconstruct oneself before you can have a sense of what's really going on internally. So far viewers have had visceral responses and fascinations with them, so I am excited to finish the two that I've started and explore these ideas more deeply.

I started pursuing art as a career when it became evident that my anxiety and neurodiversity was too intense to hold any sort of other career, so it only made sense to explore these topics through my art.

I've always been interested in the figure, portraiture and narrative. Storytelling, identity, and humanity. A sense of belonging. I have struggled with my own sense of identity and belonging. I have struggled with feeling like I belong in the world. As a kid, I was an outsider even (especially) within my own family. I was constantly being told that the weird way I was didn't belong, that I needed to change the core of who I was in order to fit in. And so I lost my own sense of identity, I let it fly away like a helium balloon into the sky. And as I try to piece it back together, I'm realizing that it's not easy, perhaps not even possible, to ever repair it.

Capitalism means that we construct our identities largely through the consumer items that we purchase.

I think I want to explore a sense of belonging. An idea of figures trying to insert themselves in a collective mythology, using Gucci and such to give themselves a societal value. Armouring themselves against the pains of existence, trying to buy themselves social worth, trying to style their way to a sense of fitting in.

My process is still very similar to when I used to paint realism: glazed layers building up skin. Some paintings are flatter than others. I will use references (occasionally multiple references) for some portraits, but not all, usually from beauty editorials, and always mutated beyond recognition and typically with a different eye colour and hair style so the reference could likely never be connected by a viewer.

I include enough information that the viewer has enough hints to figure out what sort of person the imaginary sitter is. They can extrapolate whatever story they wish, it's out of my hands and up to their imagination.

I paint the brink. The edge. The cusp of a meltdown, but not in the meltdown. Like being at the top of a rollercoaster. It's the *anticipation* of a panic attack, not the panic attack.

An impending internal catastrophe

This gives the paintings a movement, a tension, even when the sitters are still - it's an internal movement, a psychological movement, not a bodily one that I'm trying to instill.

I play with flatness and depth, realism and invention, painterly conventions and new methods, traditional techniques and my own idiosyncratic process.

I didn't go to a good art school, and wasn't actually taught how to properly paint at all. None of my art professors actually knew how to paint, so none of them could teach me. I sort of invented my own style of painting. So it's sort of wrong and slow. But I can't seem to break myself of it. And I really can't seem to consider a painting finished until it has this softened surface quality that I love.

Capitalism, and its attempt to manufacture desire within us through the beautiful and dramatic portrayals of feminine impossibility of digitally-enhanced fashion editorials.

The poses, patterns and textures of fashion editorials—the lanky, awkward poses and serene windswept landscapes—collaged together with my own creations. I use real brands like Disney and Gucci, but impose my own warped designs on them. All this is Frankenstein'ed together partially before I begin painting, and partially during the process, making changes throughout.

In a way they're all self portraits, all excavations into some internal territory, while also reflections of external contemplations/observations. They're removed from me, named and given their own lives and characteristics, given lives of their own.

Contemporary mythologies of female identity, sexuality, joy, and worth. While trying to find my own place in a society that tends to shun my neurodivergent existence, and more recently my experience with a rare and painful and isolating illness, I use my imagined sitters and the identities I construct for them to manufacture lovable neuroses that simultaneously attract and repel the viewer. I play with this tension differently in each painting.

I play with proportions and body shapes, whether it's idealizations, fantastical transgressions, or complete extra-human mutations.

We scroll past so much beauty, so many beautiful images, so many consumer items every day marketed beautifully towards us every day, and as a result have a build up of jealousy and longing that we don't even realize we're feeling. We internalize so much jealousy and longing. The human brain naturally compares, we can't help it. We can't help what our fragmented over-image-saturated world is doing to us. Everyone feels frayed, stretched, exhausted, pulled in too many directions. Burnt out. I am trying to capture these feelings. Trying so hard to be beautiful, and yet still feeling so damn tired, so damn anxious, so damn torn apart inside. Surrounded by so much material beauty, and yet destroyed by a world that is burning and a mind that is imploding.

World of fantasy mixed with the familiar language of internet tropes, high culture, hallmarks of consumerism, retail marketing

Part of my work is subverting the beautiful fashion editorials, recreating them with twisted and panicked models. And part is capturing the feeling of those internalizing so many of the editorials. Using the same soft dreamy colours of Instagram, or the hazy rolling landscapes in magazines, or lush fashions of a high-end spread, and candid pose of pinterest post. The same languages we absorb semi-consciously online every day.

My audience is primarily women, as is my subject matter. Femme-presenting.

The common thread in all my imagined sitters is that no matter how wretched they feel on the inside, they're still trying. They're persevering. In some way they're faking it and putting on a brave face, but in another way, they're also

The intersection of physical pain and psychological pain: having a physical illness that often affects people who have psychological trauma. The isolation of pain, both mental and physical, how they both shrink your world and possible experiences and isolate you. Largely a reason behind having a single sitter in each painting.

But also I have a single sitter because that creates a narrative around them. It turns the painting into a specific biography of that individual, almost a love letter to them.

Generalized anxiety disorder and agoraphobia tell you that there are enormous dangers in situations where you are totally safe. And my sitters are typically in situations where they are completely safe, even though they are experiencing immense panic. These mental illnesses

shut down your ability for human connections, for comfort, for joy, inner peace, serenity. They are immensely disruptive. And yet, because so many have experienced these emotions, by exploring these themes in my art, my paintings allow a moment for viewers to create connections with each other through collective experiences. The isolation of intense panic disorders is combated by the connective possibilities of shared experience, as well as the softening possible in laughing at the absurdity of suffering so much at the hands of our own ridiculous brains.