

Artist interview with Kate Dolan

Your First memory of painting?

My first memory of painting was making a papier-maché robin with pipe cleaner feet in year 3 of primary school (I was probably 5 or 6 years old). We covered a balloon popped it and then I painted a big red chest, glued on some googly eyes and attached the feet. I also remember it was shiny so we must have also covered it in PVA glue! I found the process fascinating and I think it's when I realised that I love making things.

How did you decide to become a painter?

I had a full-time career before. I was working in advertising in a really stressful job and I thought...this is completely shit. What on earth am I doing? I used to have out of body experiences where I would look down on myself in meetings talking such rubbish so I thought there has to be more to life. Honestly, I'd pushed my passion aside for so many years so when I picked up a paintbrush again in 2016, I felt truly liberated and thought this is it, I've found what I want to do with my life.

Did an artist particularly inspire you?

The painting that inspired me to give up the career I had built was 'Door to the River' by Willem DeKooning. I stood in front of it at the Whitney when I was on a work trip in New York and it moved me. It was an unexplainable feeling. I could stare at that painting for the rest of my life. The Abstract Expressionism exhibition at the RA, London in 2016 was another key exhibition for me and my path to becoming an artist. I had a few hours before catching a flight so I rushed to the exhibition as the doors opened and had many rooms to myself. It was a beautiful, emotional moment.

Do you need to understand to love a painting?

No. Some pieces of work you just have a deep connection to. There is nothing to explain it. I've started to build my own personal collection of art, I decided when I have a good show or sell a few pieces I invest in an emerging artist. We all have to support each other and it's so much fun buying art.

Is there a work for which you said to yourself this is exactly what I wanted to do?

Haha. Not many as a lot of my work is organic and there isn't a set plan. But there is one that springs to mind. The painting [Blue](#).

I was sat on my 'dog bed' in my studio and I had an overwhelming feeling to paint something Blue. I didn't have a canvas stretched, so I painted over an old large nude figure I had lying around my studio. It came out exactly as I intended in a matter of hours. It's so great when that happens. So rare, but so satisfying

The famous work which you don't like?

I've been thinking of this for ages and I'm really struggling. I have an appreciation for all art, even if I wouldn't put it on my wall as I understand process, so I have respect that it must have taken the artist many years to arrive at that piece and they have their reasons for making it. I will keep thinking and you can update this post when I have found one! Boring non-controversial answer I know but there isn't one which springs to mind so I figure I shouldn't make one up to add a bit of drama ;-)

What is essential for your creation?

Space. I'm answering these questions as I'm in covid-19 lockdown and it's really brought this to the forefront of my mind. I am incredibly lucky to have my own art studio and space to make big pieces and a big mess. My current 'studio' is the space where my dining table was in my kitchen and it stresses me out on a daily basis.

What is your relationship to recognition?

I really appreciate when other artists I respect like my work but I paint for myself and if people like it or even buy it then that is a bonus.

If tomorrow you could no longer be a painter, what would you do?

I have a list:

Textile designer

Fashion designer

Prosthetic make-up artist

Lighting engineer

Interior designer

Professional mood-board maker ;-)
I love making mood-boards so much. It's a problem.

Your artistic dream?

It's a big one. I would like to have an exhibition at the White Cube Bermondsey in London. I love that gallery so much, it's my favourite. What a space! I recognise it might be a push but a girl can dream right?

I'd also love to have a house by the sea with my own huge art studio over-looking the ocean with lots of glass and light.

Failing that I would just love to have the space to make really huge pieces, I'm starting now making works that are over 180cm and I really enjoy it. So much freedom so that's my more achievable dream!