

JOHANNA BATH

Artist Statement

I am madly in love with life, the wonder it holds, the blissful moments, even the heartbreak, the hurt, the loss. Because I am so aware that every moment is a singular sensation and won't come back. I am pushing myself to be aware of every second passing, paying attention to even the most insignificant things that add up to be my life.

My motifs (plants, hands and figuratives in general) are mostly based on a mixed source of imagery - own and collected photographs and/or images sourced from the media. The moment they become subject to a painting, they are put into another context and get transformed into a vehicle for my own thoughts. I am not particularly interested in depicting something perfectly; for example, I am not making a painting to show the viewer how a hand or palm tree looks. It is much more about transporting a certain atmosphere. I often feel that as I am making the painting, my consciousness switches off entirely. All of my energy and thoughts that circle around themes such as transience, the present / the past, memories, etc., become part of the painting and the object gets charged with that.

To emphasise the melancholic feel of my work even more, I am drawn towards a washed-out colour palette. Whilst I would consider my pieces to be colourful, they are still muted and look faded, as in a photograph that has been stained by light. This also refers to the idea of "loss of the present". As I move forward in time and further away from a moment, I have difficulties recalling it entirely. Forms blur, colours lose their punch, and time washes over my memory.

When trying to recall a special occasion, or any occasion really in my mind, I am able to remember, but never entirely. The entire experience never comes back. I am constantly on the edge of my brain, trying to focus on it, trying to get a sharp image, but I can't. What I remember mostly is a feeling and, with it, if I am lucky, a small detail: the way his hands folded in front of me, how a mouth looked before a kiss, how the branches of a tree shaded me from the sun when taking a walk. Another aspect I focus on is to emphasise aspects of life that seem to be mundane and are often overlooked. The random arrangement of branches, the mere appearance of plants that stun me with their colouring, sunlight that shines through leaves, the fold of the fabric. Sometimes, I think I am choosing to paint something not only to emphasise the beauty that surrounds us and make it visible to the viewer but also to embed the world's beauty into my own memory by taking the time to paint it.

Even though my work is about loss and has a melancholic feel to it, it is important to me to make work that holds a positive energy. That does not drown in sadness as certain times are over and gone, but that turns towards life and always focuses on the beauty that comes with evanescence. My work should also evoke a longing for the next moment that potentially has the power to become my next favourite memory - a moment I want to revisit and cherish forever.