

The
British
ART
prize
2022

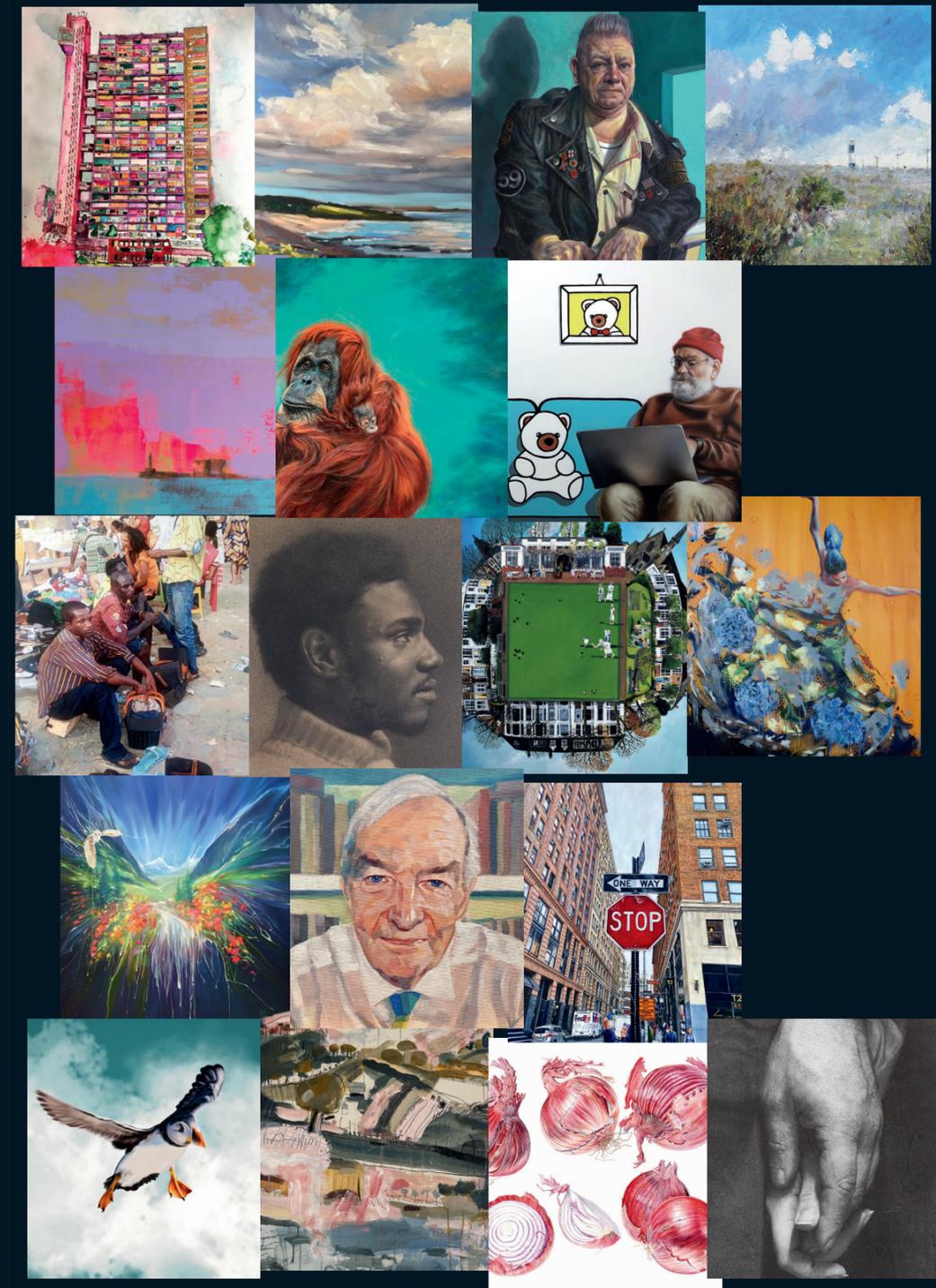
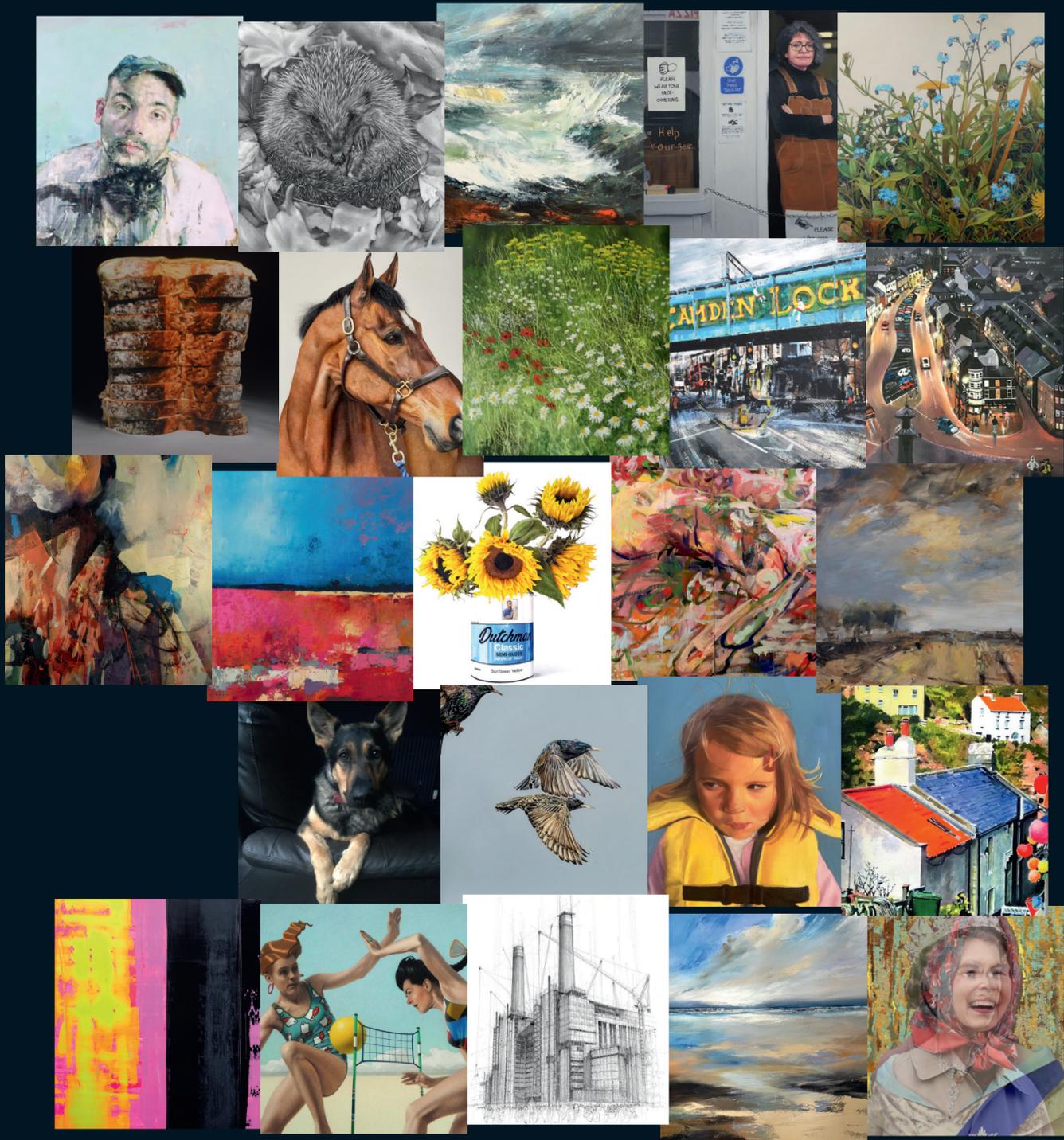
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THE WINNERS

This year, our major national art competition was a huge success and thousands

of entries were whittled down to 50 paintings. Here are the winning artists – in their own words



Our annual British Art Prize, in association with edding, was designed to provide artists of all ages and abilities with a platform to gain valuable exposure and recognition for their work. A prize fund worth over £15,000 attracted the entries by the thousands and quality paintings and drawings poured in from the UK and beyond. An esteemed judging panel made up of Scottish artist Bruce McLean, professional artist, tutor and *Artists & Illustrators* columnist Jake Spicer, *The One Show's* Artist in Residence, Adebanje Alade, the Managing Director of edding, Andy Gutteridge and Niki Browes, the editor of this magazine, had the impossible task of narrowing the entries down to a longlist of 150 before choosing the shortlist of 50. Of the process, Jake said, "It's been a privilege – and a challenge – to select pieces of work from such an exciting selection of accomplished paintings and drawings. I looked for work that spoke to me on an emotional level, which appealed to my personal tastes and that would have caught my eye if I were to pass them on any gallery wall. Work that showed technical competence in the handling of the medium and the eloquence of the visual language articulated by the artist and finally, a message and sense of personal vision in the work." ▶

You'll be able to see the artworks up close at the gallery@oxo from 22nd to 27th November (11am-6pm) but for now at least, let us introduce you to the winners, those who were highly commended and the finalists. Congratulations to everyone who got through.

FIRST PRIZE

Gary Armer

As Steve Jobs famously said, “You can’t connect the dots looking forward; you can only connect them looking backwards. So you have to trust that the dots will somehow connect in your future.”

While I appreciate lots of art genres such as pop art and surrealism, I’ve always found myself drawn to representational art. It was the subject that I excelled in at school but it was at college where I fell in love with oil painting. It was here I won awards for painting and graphic design and went on to study design at university. My fascination with branding led me to a career in marketing working with a creative agency but all the while I was painting alongside.

I carved out a career as a portrait artist painting commissions inspired by the excellent contemporary painters seen in the Mall Galleries and BP Portrait Awards such as Mitch Griffiths, Mark Roscoe and Jonathan Yeo. Committed to lifelong learning and always striving to improve as an artist, I completed workshops at the London Atelier of Representational Art and Northern Realist in Manchester to help improve my ability to paint from life.

To help practice sight size portraiture, I painted friends and family from life in my studio and one of these portraits went on to be selected for the National Open Art Exhibition in 2017 and was voted in the top 10 of the World Art Vote. This piece then took on a life of its own as it was next selected for the Football is Art Exhibition at the National Football Museum in Manchester (2019) where the work was exhibited alongside the likes of Picasso,



Banksy, Lowry, Hockney and Nash.

At this time, I also experimented with *en plein air* painting. I invested in a pochade box and set off painting scenes of rural Lancashire where I live. Enjoying this so much I completed more *en plein air* paintings on a trip to Switzerland which led to a commissioned townscape of Nyon and subsequent print sales.

Meanwhile, I continued to paint portraits and while I loved the thrill of painting a sitter from life, I recognised that my strength lay in the academic approach to

painting portraits and I went on to specialise in realist commissions, particularly enjoying the finery of military uniforms.

Despite all this experimentation with traditional portraiture, still life and *en plein air* landscape painting, I’ve always had a burning desire to develop a unique body of work and distinct style which could establish me as a contemporary gallery artist.

Coronavirus and lockdown hit and social distancing meant I couldn’t meet with portrait clients. Now was the time to put

the vision onto canvas. *Life Finds a Way* may have taken over 200 hours but I was hooked. I stopped taking on portrait commissions and since then I’ve painted more artworks in this series which I refer to as *Organised Chaos*. Why organised chaos? Because that’s what they are. I carefully collate the subject matter and usually spend a day arranging the objects into a mass. At first glance, they look like chaos but there is an incredible amount of order involved. I think the works reflect a lot of modern life, echoing themes of

consumption, abundance, order and chaos.

In May 2022 I finally started to share these works with the world and have been delighted with the feedback I’ve received and not least with this win, which I’m incredibly proud of. After working on these paintings for hundreds of hours, it’s massive for me to achieve such recognition, not just as reassurance in the appeal of the works but also as I look to build momentum at this stage of my art career. I can’t wait to see my work exhibited in London and seeing the incredible quality of the other

shortlisted artworks makes me feel even more honoured.

I may be biased but you have to recognise that The British Art Prize represents a fantastic opportunity to potentially raise your profile if you are selected as a winner or are shortlisted. The exhibition in London, the People’s Choice Award and coverage in the magazines are all fantastic. If you are fortunate enough to be selected as a winner then the prizes are the icing on the cake.

garyarmer.co.uk ▶

Firefly, oil
on canvas,
185x155cm



SECOND PRIZE

Chloe
Cox

I've been an artist for as long as I can remember. Though, for a long time, I never had the courage to call myself one. After all, at what point in your creative career are you considered an artist? I think it's a concept a lot of creatives struggle with. Recently, I've come to terms with the fact that it probably isn't a gold stamp for talent, training or yearly earnings, but more of a lifestyle. I've been painting and drawing since I could hold a pencil. I mean – how else are you supposed to spend your six-week summer holidays?

A lot of the time, my paintings start with a photograph that catches my eye. Often something that plays with light or captures someone's skin in hyper detail. *Firefly* began with a photo that did both. And I must credit both Yeside Williams (the model) and Melissa Cofie (the photographer) for the reference photo, because I came across it on my friend Yeside's Instagram feed, and just had to paint it. It's hard not to

notice the way the street lights play across her face and then reflect and refract on her glasses. I adored the blurring around her coat, bringing her face into focus, like when you're on a train that's just started moving and you lock eyes with someone on the platform. And I loved the night-time, bus-stop backdrop, placing this moment in a particularly youthful, carefree setting. That's how the title *Firefly* was born. It's an ode to the fiery glint in the glasses, the sense of belonging to the night – the way a lot of people feel in their teens and early twenties (I'm 25).

Being included in this magazine and the opportunity to have *Firefly* exhibited in London was a huge appeal of entering my work. I can't wait to meet other artists like myself. The brilliant prizes were also very attractive. I still can't believe I've won one. imartcee.com

THIRD PRIZE

Ann
James
Massey

As I am ageing, I want to incorporate in my work tributes to all the important factors in my life, including family, animals and spiritual support. The annual service of the Blessing of the Animals in my church – The American Cathedral in Paris – supplied the perfect inspiration for the integration of these influences. Despite the realistic illusion, this painting is not a rendition of what I have seen. Created entirely freehand with no mechanical means, it is drawn from decades of my own source material. It took a year to decide on and create the composition and was then eight years in the making.

Often in my work, I'll have a child in red in the main body of the piece, but here it would have stopped the eye. Note too that the altarpiece is not in the centre – I think it is boring to divide any painting in half – but slightly to the right. The scale of the Cathedral is larger in relation to the participants on purpose; as well as is the flattening of the perspective in order to create a more pleasing composition.

This painting is atypical in that I normally only have one to three living characters in my work, but here you can find 28 participants, including only one that is looking directly at the viewer. Can you spot who?

I'm excited and pleased that the appreciation of my subject matter, and the hard work involved, have found the favour of the judges to the point that my painting received one of the top awards.

annjamesmassey.com ▶

*The Blessing of the
Animals*, oil on
mahaogany
board, 43x58cm



THE
edding
ACRYLIC PRIZE
WINNER

Kirsten Todd

This painting is one in a series of paintings entitled *The Divine Feminine*, highlighting the strong spirit and strength women possess and the fight to make their voices heard. They celebrate strong women, showing within them the inner strength of a warrior; not harsh or cruel but with strength, compassion and humility.

This piece, called *Perception* is asking you to question, step back out of the matrix, take off the blinkers and see things from a different perspective. The abstract background is built up in layers, using acrylic and spray paint, oil pastels and paint pens. I always start off creating an abstract and then create the

portrait over the top, building up in layers again, still using intuitive marks and colour choice, creating the features, and leaving large areas of the background visible thus creating a connection with the portrait. The face now seems part of the background and vice versa seemingly emerging from within it, highlighting their connection and our connectedness to all that is.

I am absolutely over the moon with my win. It was a huge and totally unexpected surprise in my inbox. Being part of the winning entries is a great opportunity to add a feather to your cap, boost your career and exhibit in London, the art centre of Britain.
artatvixen.co.uk ▶



Perception, acrylic and spray paint, 101x202cm

HIGHLY COMMENDED



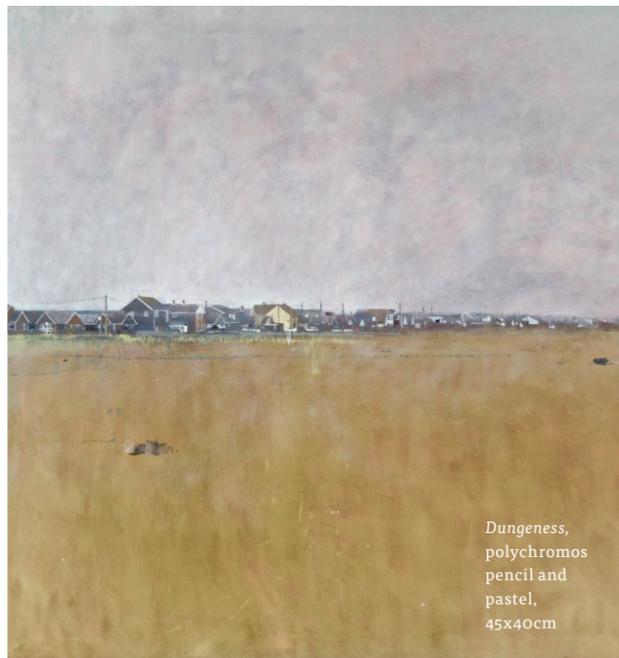
Café Scene with
Four Figures,
acrylic,
84x66cm

Roger Aslin ▲

My work, as a modern-day *flâneur*, takes me into the city where I take images on a camera or phone, later to be refined and honed digitally in the studio before commencing painting on paper, board or canvas. The intense colour of the finished piece is achieved by painting multiple layers; the image also changing and refining during this process with elements added or subtracted to obtain the final image.

This piece *Café Scene with Four Figures* is based on a photograph taken during a trip overseas. The image was then manipulated on the computer before being transferred onto paper for the start of the painting process. I was drawn to this scene because of the light, colour and placement of the figures in the overall composition.

rogeraslin.com



Dungeness,
polychromos
pencil and
pastel,
45x40cm

Andrew Torr

Dungeness was conceived after a visit earlier this year. I wanted to heighten the difference between this busy, knotty line and the swathes of open space by being as economical as I could with the big paint fields above and below the horizon. I've visited Dungeness dozens of times over the years, but I've consciously resisted making paintings of the beach because there are so many hackneyed versions of it on the walls of gift shops in Rye. But I'm really pleased with this painting. It won't be the last time I use the area as a subject for painting.

andrewtorr.com



Ready To Go,
acrylic,
76x102cm

Kwong Tim Lee ▲

I was born and grew up in Hong Kong. It's my home where all my family, friends and memories are and which are deeply relevant and integral to my identity. To reciprocate the love, care and support that this community has provided for me, I like to preserve the vital legacy of Hong Kong through my paintings. *Ready to Go* features the iconic Star Ferry, Hong Kong's historic ferry company which has served both sides of Victoria Harbour since 1898, carrying passengers between Hong Kong Island and Kowloon. It's a fine example of how I like to spread Hong Kong's positive energy.

jacksonlee-art.com



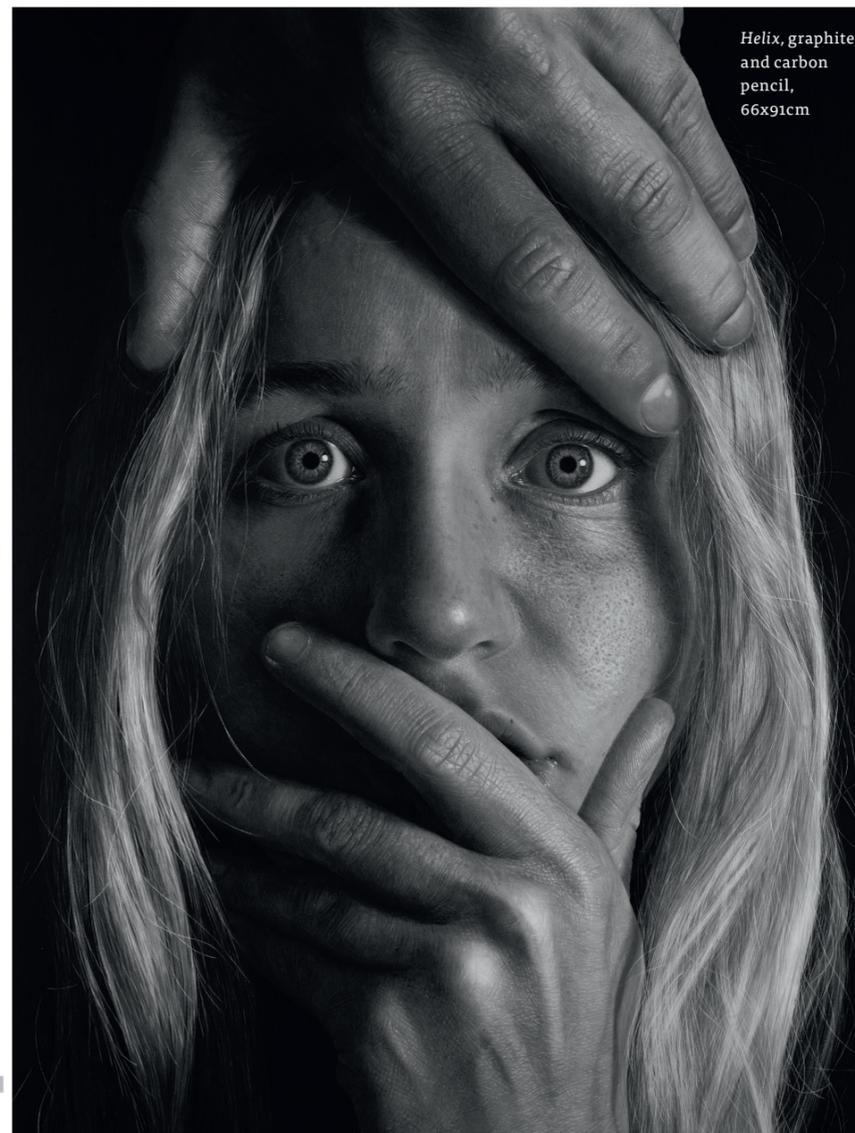
Fantasy,
acrylic,
100x150cm

Natasha Barnes ▲

My work is a fluid moment in time; it is energy passed from my being to my brush. *Fantasy* is a reflection of the Lotus Pond. The dark mud and shimmering light on the water are reflective of how we never know what lies beneath the surface of anything in life. Yet out of this darkness comes a beautiful bloom in the brightest, cleanest of Pinks, teaching us that beautiful things can come from dark places. Beauty can flourish in adversity.

The painting composition is both linear and organic, and portrays the dark and light values using layers of medium and acrylic washed over the canvas before the pinks and finally, the light bright white is added. The first stroke is always the most important. First impressions matter and we can make or break a painting in the first 30 seconds.

natashabarnes.com



Helix, graphite
and carbon
pencil,
66x91cm

Emma Towers Evans

My work is portrait-centric, often with a view to conveying a theme that is fundamental to the human experience, exploring topics many of us can relate to. This piece was themed around anxiety, something that, today, is more prevalent around the world than ever before.

With *Helix*, I wanted to create a drawing that really conveyed the sensations of stress; the twisting of the stomach and mind. The helix shape twists and turns throughout the composition of the drawing, from both the overall shape of the composition to the subtle curls in the hair and reflections in the anxious eyes.

eteporraits.com □

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