

Hannah Bays Statement

Within my paintings I explore psychological terrain associated with the sacred, the profane, and the transformational. I highlight the symbolic connotations of everyday objects, giving them an existential charge, whilst gesturing outward toward philosophical, social, and global themes. The symbolic forms that I paint echo the ritualistic potency of objects used in spiritual or religious ceremonies, vessels that hold our deepest desires, memories, and fears.

I personify everyday objects and animals, informed by ideas of panpsychism and an interconnected universe. I describe this way of seeing as 'Double Vision': the simultaneous experience of recognising an object as an external 'thing' while also perceiving its imaginative or 'lived' life. This way of seeing is informed by panpsychist ideas that consciousness is distributed throughout the natural world.

These ideas are based on the premise that reality is fundamentally relational, an active encounter between consciousness and the world. I believe art cultivates empathy, and painting creates a situation in which we might temporarily experience the world from another position. I want to explore further a visual language that centres around the idea of the 'coincidence of opposites', the idea that apparently contradictory states can coexist and form a more complete whole. My visual language therefore moves between humour and unease, irreverence and tenderness, angst and serenity. Notions of opposition are embedded in my choice of imagery, in the distinction between the works, and within the painting techniques themselves. I am currently bringing together different mediums (monoprint, drawing and painting) in collaged works that enhance this sense of vital opposition. I want to further explore the material mutability of paint, in opposition to the disembodied, dematerialised screen world we find ourselves ever seduced by.

Holding oppositional elements together becomes a way of thinking about acceptance and the transformative power of painting. This is something I have a radical belief in, not *in spite of* the way the world is changing, but *because of it*. Painting offers a space in which the visible and invisible, multiple perspectives, and the ordinary and the numinous can coexist. Through this practice of Double Vision, I seek to make paintings that cultivate empathy, sustain reflection, and imagine new ways of inhabiting our shared world, at a time when I think it matters most.