13 QUESTIONS FROM ORGAN: Perdita Sinclair’s paintings are alive with appeal, with deceptively soft ice creamy colour, there’s an undertone though…

seanworrall / January 17, 2022

Perdita Sinclair is a painter based in Brighton, Southern England, she has taken part in a number of the more recent Cultivate on-line exhibitions, including Saturation, she currently has a solo exhibition on at Brighton’s Phoenix Art Space that runs until 20th February 2022. Perdita’s paintings are alive with appeal, with deceptively soft ice creamy colour, there’s an undertone though, a bite that can be read in a number of ways.

Thirteen Questions From Organ. The idea is simple, an ongoing series of thirteen questions sent out to people who’s creativity we’re rather admiring and enjoying at the moment – artists, musicians, film makers, cake testers and who knows who? The first twelve questions are generic, the thirteenth isn’t.

1: WHO ARE YOU AND WHAT DO YOU DO?

My name is Perdita Sinclair and I am an artist working primarily with painting but also with, sculpture, installation and video.

2: WHERE ARE YOU TODAY? WHERE ARE YOU MOST DAYS?

I live and work in Brighton and like living here but I really miss going further afield and particularly doing residences. Plodding round the same routes in Brighton for the last two years has made me pay more attention to my familiar environment, however, and I think this has lead to more of it seeping into my work.

Installing at Phoenix Art Space

3: WHO OR WHAT IS EXCITING YOU RIGHT NOW?

Seeing any real life exhibitions is exciting to me right now, whether they are my bag or not. Likewise seeing and talking to other artists in real life I find really invigorating.

4: WHY DO YOU MAKE ART?

It makes sense to me to make art. It also makes sense of me making art. It is something that I have never finished doing and that I need to do as often as I can.

5: HOW DO YOU WORK?

My work has a kind of chassis to it which all the other element form around. These base structures come together in my mind and are worked up in my sketch book along with any other thoughts, inspirations and feelings that come up. Sometimes there is a story in my head ready formed about a piece as I start it, sometimes it is like seeing something in my peripheral vision and I am trying to make it clearer.

In the studio I work in oils and make drawings and play around with 3D objects. If I have a film or sculpture in my head the planning stages are quite technical as I have to figure out what support structure, I need to make the work, like specialist venue, expertise and materials.

6: TELL US ABOUT THE ART YOU MOST IDENTIFY WITH?

I find it hard to distinguish between art that I really like and art that I identify with, I find Katie Patterson’s work really exciting, her concepts and end works are so mind-expandingly beautiful. I really love Raqib Shaw’s work in all its intricacy, bringing together ancient Indian culture with the modern eye. This list could grow a lot but I don’t think either of these artists obviously relate to my practice. Think that some of the thinking behind Jayne Hayes, Kirsten Dierup, Chippy Coates and Suzanne O’Haire’s work might be along some of the same lines as mine. I certainly get very excited and inspired by seeing these artist’s work.

7: WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT YOUR OWN WORK?

Blimey this is tricky question and I am not sure how to answer it. I love the process of making it and I love the completion of it. A lot of different things excite and intrigue me and I try and make sense of these in my work, ‘like’ is not always the right word though.

8: WHAT DO YOU DISLIKE ABOUT YOUR OWN WORK?

I think that the last question is very like this one. I sometimes get very despondent about my work; when I screw up a painting or get a rejection for something that I had set my heart on. The solution to this is the same as when I am really enjoying my work, just keep do it.

9: WHAT HAS BEEN THE HAPPIEST MOMENT OF YOUR LIFE SO FAR?

Key people in my life and being able to spend time making art makes me happy.

10: WHAT MAKES YOU ANGRY?

The current government has made me so angry that it has almost made me numb. It can be hard not to feel paralysed by it.

11: WHICH SUPERPOWER WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO HAVE AND WHY?

My 10-year-old daughter asks me this question a lot. We have long debate about how the power of healing would be awesome but might backfire and make your life hell. I don’t like heights so I think flying might be out. I think I would like to be Wanda in Marvel, where she is mega powerful but doesn’t know the limitations of it but nevertheless needs to learn to harness the rareness of it.

12: WHAT COULDN’T YOU DO WITHOUT?

My kids

13: WHAT IS IT ABOUT ICE CREAM?

Ha ha ha………. shall we add toothpaste, marshmallows, sea buoys, signs, scientific data, alternative realities etc….. I don’t have a succinct answer for this, these things just encapsulate elements of what I want to express. If we are talking about ice cream, I love ice cream colours, they are often sickly sweet and artificial but endlessly appealing and can be subversive if owned in the right way as these colours often represent a kind of stereotype about being female, soft and not serious. Put some hair on an ice cream and you have instantly turned something appealing into something disgusting. Ice cream is also exists in a state of flux between solid and liquid and is malleable so it can represent a moment in time or be shaped like an ancient mountain.

And finally, any future shows or events coming up that you wish us to tell people about?

Me and Anna McNay are guest curators at The Koppel Project with an exhibition called Things Will Continue to Change that opens on the 10th March. A six-week exhibition of eight artists, across various mediums, with school engagement, looking at the inevitable nature of change, and how this has been accelerated because of the pandemic. To emphasise the nature of change, there will be a rehang at the halfway point, replacing each work with another similar one, by the same artist, of the same dimensions. Return visitors will question whether something has changed and, if so, what. Our exhibition will be both online and offline and therefore accessible to all. Artist list: Matthew Burrows, Carol Roberton, Suzanne O’Haire, Libby Heaney, Alison Goodyear, Judith Burrows, Clare Chapman and Perdita Sinclair

Meanwhile A Woman’s Place is Everywhere happens at The Cello Factory, London, 8-14th March 2022 – A show curated by Boo Swindler and infinity Bunce, a fund raiser for the End Violence Against Women coalition, Women’s Aid, Sistah Space and Southall Black Sisters.

Meanwhile Perdita’s solo show Small Towns goes on at Brighton’s Phoenix Art Space, 10 – 14 Waterloo Place, Brighton BN2 9NB until February 20th 2022. Wednesday until Sunday, 11am until 5pm or by appointment.

Links – www.perditasinclair.com / Instagram

https://organthing.com/