

STANDING GROUND



GRANT FOSTER, Service (front), 2023. Acrylic, oil, pastel and pencil on canvas. 180 x 108cm



STANDING GROUND

RETHINKING THE PAINTED BRITISH LANDSCAPE

Curated by Raksha Patel and Trevor Burgess



ARTISTS

Madi Acharya-Baskerville

Said Adrus and Bhajan Hunjan

Frank Bowling

Trevor Burgess

Jai Chuhan

Jasmir Creed

Kimathi Donkor

Grant Foster

Bruno Grad

Azraa Motala

Raksha Patel

Like all painting, the painting of places is illusionistic. The painted landscape is a space that has been fabricated out of this liquid medium creating a narrative of a country that is impressive and proud. Historically the English rural idyll was shown as a safe, green, and fertile space. We see images of the painted land dotted with stately homes, great oak trees that offer shelter from the elements, and nurturing picturesque villages confirming a vision of comfort. The infinite panoramas stretching to the horizon invite ideas of possibilities and hope, which are longed for and desired.

Standing Ground is an exhibition of twelve British artists who use paint to depict the landscapes that belong to them. Their works show the localities that they have encountered, making tangible on the canvas their lived experience. Collectively, their work offers an intersectional and intergenerational conversation spanning six decades of life in post-war Britain through examining what it means to paint the place that we live in today.

This exhibition developed out of a research group *British Asian Visual Art Post Cool Britannia* for British Art Network. The group arose out of conversations on anti-racism at Camberwell College of Art, University of the Arts London following the murder of George Floyd in 2020. Through artist-led events, the group drew upon conversations on the relative invisibility and the position of British South-Asian artists in the art-world and within UK art collections.

In *Standing Ground*, we wanted to extend the view of inclusivity and explore the commonality of experience with artists of different British diasporas, and none, asking questions about how their work is seen according to their region, race, gender, and class.

Through this exhibition we wish to acknowledge with gratitude the resistance and the perseverance of Black British, British South and East-Asian artists in the 1980s who worked together in hosting exhibitions that vocalised their positionalities and established their place within the British art-world.

Standing Ground brings together artists who as individuals celebrate land, water, and sky. They put paint on the canvas and sometimes expand from a singular surface, questioning the traditions of this medium. Their work comes from a variety of perspectives that speak to us of their relationship with differing environments - rural, urban, and political - through which they reflect upon their identities and histories as part of the cultural landscape of Britain today. These ideas stem from my studio practice and thinking where images derived from South-Asian working-class localities layer and mesh together with quintessentially English objects and landscape, giving insight to spaces that are less seen.

This exhibition would not have been possible without the support of the exhibiting artists, supportive colleagues and allies who contributed to the thinking behind it. Whilst the conversations about post-colonialism, race and inclusion have sometimes been challenging, we have found them to be necessary in questioning what it means to be British and how this is portrayed within today's painted landscape.

RAKSHA PATEL

A thing is not seen because it is visible – on the contrary it is visible because it is seen. Paintings invite the viewer to take time and look, and in so doing they can bring visibility to things that have been passed by unseen. In this way paintings can evoke recollections of experiences the viewer recognises, and reveal them by making them visible.

Standing Ground has evolved over a year of collaboration, dialogue, and discussion, at a time when there has been a growing willingness within the academic and art world to surface, reflect on, and question Britain's colonial history. Exhibitions are currently making visible an understanding of British identity and colonial history. Simultaneously, irresponsible politicians and elements of the media have continued to stoke division and amplify racist narratives of fear and difference. It has become necessary to stand our ground in asserting the common bonds that bind together the communities and neighbourhoods we live in and belong to.

In thinking about landscape painting, we have had in mind this political and social landscape. What do landscape paintings show and say? As curators, who are also artist practitioners, we wanted to foreground the voices of artists. We were curious to reveal how different artists in Britain today bring their varied histories, cultural heritage and lived experience of this complex contemporary context into paintings that engage with a tradition of depicting the landscape. We are grateful for the texts the artists have supplied for this catalogue and also for the generous insights into their work they have given in studio conversations and visits.

As painters and curators we are both interested specifically in how painting as a medium is being used to engage with this contemporary landscape. In my street-level paintings of cities I set out to make visible aspects of my experience of everyday life in local neighbourhoods that rarely appeared in paintings: how people go about the ordinary business of living together in the socially shared space of the street. My inverted colour paintings were an experiment to see whether colour, the intrinsic material of painting, might be mobilised to oppose and challenge those who seek to foment division and conflict.

We make no claims that this is a representative exhibition. Like any selection of work, it is a partial view. However, we wanted to stretch some boundaries, overturn some expectations, and extend the idea of landscape beyond the depiction of specific sites and locations, with the hope and intention that the resulting exhibition may be accessible, current, and relevant to communities and audiences that may not usually go to galleries and museums.

TREVOR BURGESS

STANDING GROUND IN THE BRITISH LANDSCAPE

DR KATE NICHOLS

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR IN ART HISTORY UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

What does it mean to paint the landscape of Britain in today's political landscape? Neither 'the British landscape', nor 'today's political landscape' are fixed entities, but common threads emerge (and at times unravel) in the paintings brought together in 'Standing Ground'.

The majority of works on display were painted between 2020-24, during and in the aftermath of – including between those with access to green space and those without – became ever more exaggerated; and in the context of the Black Lives Matter protests in 2020, which reinvigorated discussion of the ongoing impact of slavery and empire on British culture. Flooding, heatwaves, polluted rivers have all drawn further attention to the environmental desecration and climate catastrophe facing the planet (but disproportionately impacting the global south). Questions of landscape and belonging figure crucially in all of these developments. How might artists 'Stand Ground' in these contexts?

'Standing Ground' also shows a selection of works from the 1980s and 1990s by Said Adrus and Bhajan Hunjan and Frank Bowling. The exhibition enables viewers to put these earlier works into dialogue with more recent painting and reminds us that a concern with landscape is not a new development for artists.

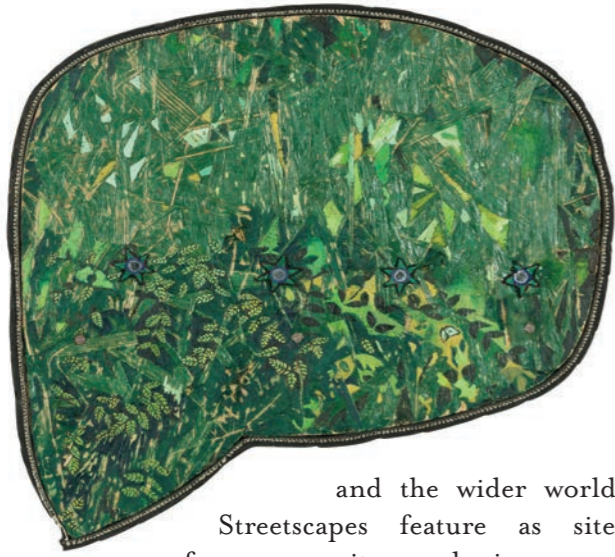
Landscape painting is a particularly freighted artistic genre, deeply connected to ideas of national identity. This is especially the case in Britain, where landscape painting is often regarded as the most significant historical national artistic achievement, and the landscapes of Gainsborough, Constable and Turner sometimes seen as synonymous with British art altogether. Landscape painting is thus fundamental to narratives of British cultural identity,

making it all the more stimulating as a point of engagement for contemporary artists, a thrill that Bowling clearly engaged with, writing in 1983 that 'it's exciting and challenging to work in London, Turner's town, and the pressures of the weight of British tradition are exhilarating'.¹ His engagement with Turner's colour palette, and Gainsborough's physical handling of paint is manifest in the dazzling *Great Thames III*.

The landscapes presented in 'Standing Ground' dramatically expand the British landscape painting tradition, in terms of subject matter, use of paint, and medium. People are usually marginal in the British landscape tradition, with rural labourers presented as tiny decorative props. Raksha Patel, Kimathi Donkor, Grant Foster, Jasmir Creed and Jai Chuhan reconceptualise the landscape in relation to the human body, and centralise people of colour, who previously only appeared as marginal figures in paintings of colonised landscapes, rather than in visions of the British Isles. There are no 'untouched' or wild landscapes, purportedly free of human intervention. Azraa Motala's vision of Honister Pass draped in bridal dupattas is the only painting here to engage with a rural landscape, the rich reds and golden embroideries of fabrics keenly inserting human presence into the environment. Urban parks and gardens feature in works by Patel, Donkor, Creed, and Foster, while Chuhan's landscapes are viewed from a domestic interior. The River Thames – likewise both 'natural' and part of the urban landscape – appears in works by Bowling, while Trevor Burgess, Madi Acharya-Baskerville and Donkor examine the coast, the boundary between land and sea, island



Above: Frank Bowling with swans on the bank of the River Thames



Left: MADI ACHARYA-BASKERVILLE, *Overlooked Beauty*, 2019. Mixed media on found wood, found rubber edging. 46 x 45 x 3.5cm

and the wider world. Streetscapes feature as sites of community cohesion and presence in Creed and Bruno Grad's work, and of protest (Burgess), as well as places of alienation and isolation in Creed's monochrome train station works, animated by an insistent border of livid plants, nature refusing to be cramped in the most urban of settings. Rather than topographical representations marking out land ownership, many of these images do not represent specific, or even real places. Foster in particular works within the landscape tradition by working out of it: refusing to depict specific times and places.

Landscape painting spills off the wall-mounted canvas and onto the re-purposed surfaces of objects that Acharya-Baskerville finds in coastlines and woodlands. Foster's double-sided canvasses, at a height to encompass viewers, seek to create an embodied immersion in landscapes. Adrus and Hunjan's *Trespassing* relocates the landscape to the floor, offering viewers a birds-eye perspective on a fractured Union Jack, raising further questions about the foundational relationship between landscape painting and ideas of British cultural identity, and engaging with long-standing artistic debates over the relationship between painting and sculpture. Burgess' inverse colour paintings show the topographical landscape destabilised in relation to shifting political landscapes: painted the day after the Brexit vote in 2016, the quintessential British coastal white cliff landscape becomes unfamiliar: exclusive, not welcoming. The material properties of paint itself – slippery and not always controllable, taking on its own forms on the canvas – echo humans' failed attempts to

subdue the natural world.

Art historians have long emphasised the ideological functions of British landscape painting.² Many eighteenth and nineteenth century landscape paintings were commissioned by landowners, their artists attempting to conceal labour, rural poverty, political upheavals and radicalism in the countryside. Some of the paintings in 'Standing Ground' seek to operate in reverse, directly – but with nuance and care – drawing attention to issues of social injustice in the landscape, both through their subject matter and painterly language. Patel's *Landowner* identifies the colonial origins of the wealth of many landowners, and queries who exactly 'owns' land: who is the landowner that the title refers to? Motala's *Honister Pass* establishes her presence and perspectives – as she puts it – 'as a British South-Asian Muslim woman within a space that has historically felt isolating to people of colour', while the very title of Adrus and Hunjan's *Trespassing* raises related questions about belonging and ownership. Donkor's blissful visions of togetherness represent Black families enjoying both the rural landscapes often seen as hostile to people of colour, or present urban parklands as places for unbounded delight in the natural world.³ These paintings' celebrations of Black joy is no less political than his history paintings confronting police brutality. Patel, Motala and Donkor draw in different ways on the European picturesque landscape tradition to reframe and question its power.

That is not to say that the work of artists must necessarily be politically engaged, or that minoritised artists should be pigeonholed as only making work about their identities, a question Bowling has explored at length.⁴ Jai Chuhan

similarly prefers to situate her work in artistic dialogue with School of London and expressionist painters, and understands landscape as more of a psychological process, a desire for solace, as much as an actual place, keeping her protagonists separated from nature by glass windows.

Others take migration and diaspora as their subject matter. Acharya-Baskerville's fragmented worlds series thrum with a sense of loss that accompanies migration – the found surfaces upon which she paints themselves containing innumerable pasts – while also commenting on migration in relation to climate change. In a series of layered, allusive paintings, Foster evokes memories of his Trinidadian mother in the UK. Grad's 'Diaspora Shopfronts' series centres Jewish businesses in London, Manchester, and Leeds, at turns overlooked and hyper-visible in the urban landscape. The sense of loss and nostalgia so characteristic of landscape painting is palpable in these lovingly detailed drawings, some of which document businesses now closed.

The act of 'Standing Ground' is multifaceted, implying resistance, survival, rootedness, self-assuredness, peacefulness after turbulence, the occupation of space. The paintings shown here are likewise plural: they shift kaleidoscopically across the figurative, narrative, abstract, and formalist; they are political, personal and introspective, historically engaged, joyful and celebratory, mournful and dislocated, and community focussed. We might reflect on our own position as art viewers too: standing ground, or even 'lingering', to quote Creed's enigmatically titled, gloriously layered work, rewards us with an ever-changing vision of an ever-changing British landscape.

¹ Cited in Mel Gooding, *Frank Bowling* (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2021), pp.108-10. ² For an overview, see Tim Barringer, 'Landscape Then and Now', *British Art Studies*, Issue 10, <https://doi.org/10.17658/issn.2058-5462/issue-10/tbarringer>. ³ For further discussion, see Lisa Anderson, *Soulsapes* (London: Dulwich Picture Gallery, 2024). ⁴ Frank Bowling, 'Formalist Art and the Black Experience' (1988), in Alice Correia (ed), *What is Black Art?* (London: Penguin, 2022), pp.251-7.



Above: RAKSHA PATEL, *Red Flag*, 2018. Oil on canvas. 20 x 25cm



Above: TREVOR BURGESS, *Handshake*, 2020. Oil on board. 36 x 25.5cm Private collection.

MADI ACHARYA-BASKERVILLE

My work begins with walking in the landscape. Materials, such as driftwood, my surface for painting, are collected from the coast as well as discarded rubber which is used to frame some of the paintings. My work is focused on environmental pollution as I am constantly trying to re-use what already exists around us rather than starting afresh with new materials.

Found imagery from newspapers, textiles with embroidery and mirror work are incorporated into the paintings reflecting my South Asian heritage in the midst of feeling submerged within British culture. The found surface has its own past, with layers of paint and varied texture hosting different narratives and its level of erosion marking time. Traditional Indian Miniature painting also influences my work, referencing fragmentation and a desire to feel connected with my cultural past in the midst of marginality and exile.

Some of works are developed in response to finding eroded tyres and rubber washed up in abundance along the coastline. These mixed media paintings are framed by found rubber giving them the appearance of a porthole, like being out at sea. The use of eroded rubber tyres also symbolizes a multitude of journeys and glimpses into other worlds.



Left: Look at me now, 2017. Mixed media on found wood, found rubber frame. 31 x 30 x 3.5cm *Right:* The Royal Iris, 2020. Mixed media on found wood. 32 x 34 x 2cm *Opposite:* The Banana Painting, 2020. Oil on found wood. 51 x 46cm

SAID ADRUS AND BHAJAN HUNJAN

TRESPASSING

was originally created for
Black People & The British Flag Exhibition

Using
the format
of the Crosses
and Colours of the Union Jack
becoming the Passage and Pathways for People to Walk
through the Landscape

The Free Flowing
Flux of marbled oil paint Settling
on panels that resemble Geographic maps or Body fluids,
sometimes thick in places and other times exposing grains of wood

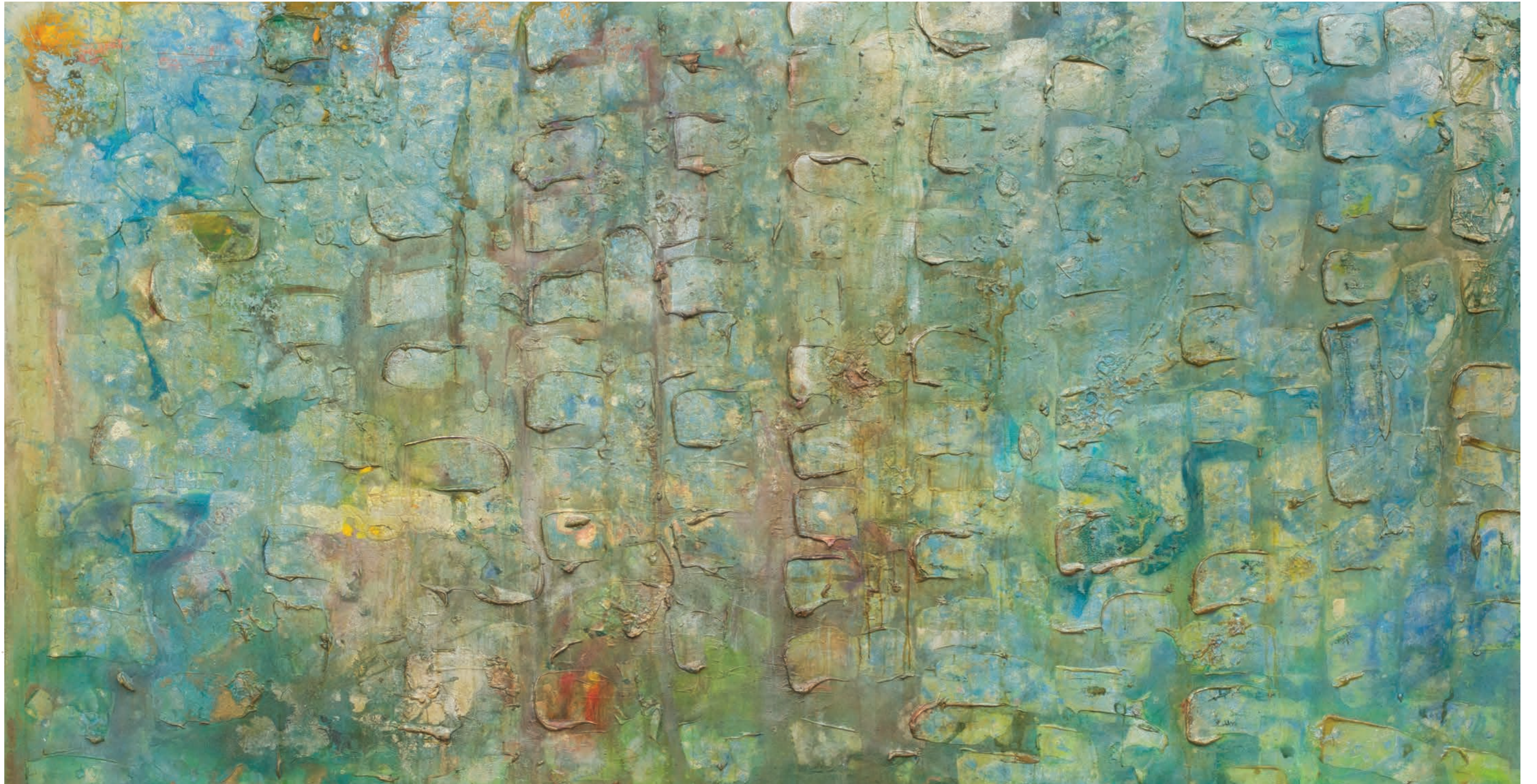
Our motive
And Inspiration
was to examine the British Landscape
And identity thru the Iconic Flag

Spaces
around the Crosses
become the solid wood panels
containing the mixture of the three Colours
Red, Blue and White that settled organically on the wooden panels

Post Brexit
Movement of People, Borders
and Issues of Sovereignty still dominate the Political Agenda

Detail. Trespassing, 1993. Oil paint on wood, 300 x 300 x 50cm





Above: *Great Thames III*, 1989. Acrylic and acrylic gel on canvas with marouflage, 181.5 x 320.5cm

FRANK BOWLING

Frank Bowling's viridescent 1989 painting *Great Thames III* culminated a decade of the artist working with large, vivid and often heavily built-up canvases, whose vegetal, aquatic tones and rich planes nod to landscape painting without ever fully representing it. This

complex style is evident in *Great Thames III*, where layers of bluish green and grey hues wash over an impressionistic surface dominated by paint splatters and lumps of translucent gel.

Made in Bowling's Cable Street studio near the River Thames, the work is part of a

series of four *Great Thames* paintings from 1988–89. The series reflects Bowling's interest in British landscape painting such as Turner and Constable, while also alluding to autobiographical markers: his transatlantic crossings from Guyana to London and New York, each with a river in proximity, the Essequibo, the Thames and the East River. In *Great Thames III*, the horizontal format,

aqueous effects and wedge-shaped applications of clear gel give a sense of paint in constant flow or liquid motion. 'The way the work was laid out', Bowling told Mel Gooding in an interview, 'it seemed like, you know, landscape and water, right?'



Above: Port of Dover (after Kokoschka), 2019. Oil on board. 73.5 x 127cm

TREVOR BURGESS

This view of Birling Gap and the Seven Sisters cliffs on the South coast of England was the first painting I did in inverse colours. I made it the day immediately after the Brexit vote. At its centre is a Union Jack flag, torn, also with its colours inverted.

The painting links elements of my family's history with critical moments of national crisis in a place that has a strong symbolic resonance with English identity - the Seven Sisters, those iconic white cliffs. My father lived here as a child with his mother and sister during the Battle of Britain and through the subsequent bombing, before they evacuated to the North. Members of the family are still in the area. The end terraced house used to belong to artist friends and an artist lived next door too. One by one, the terraced houses have had to be demolished, as the crumbling cliffs of England

are relentlessly eaten away by the sea.

The second picture inverts the colours of a painting of the port of Dover by Oskar Kokoschka. During his extensive travels in the 1920s, Kokoschka visited Britain and made a series of paintings here, including this one of Dover. In the 1930s with economic depression and the rise of fascism, travel was less possible. Kokoschka fled to Britain from Prague in 1938. Kokoschka consistently opposed fascism and came to see himself as a defender of the values of European culture.

My inverse version of Kokoschka's painting was completed during autumn 2019 at the height of the parliamentary crisis over Brexit. The painting expressed my fear and forebodings, by making visible the national reversal of the European values that Kokoschka held dear.



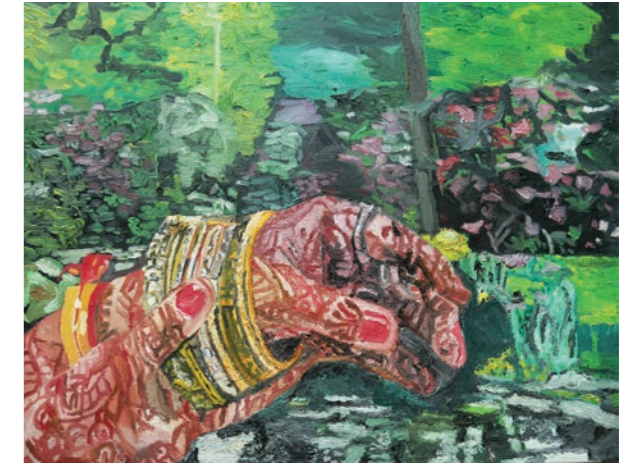
Above: Birling Gap (24 June 2016), 2016. Oil on board. 100 x 122cm



JASMIR CREED

I explore alienation and the transcultural through paintings of people in urban and landscape locations, informed by my identity as a British South Asian artist. My works depict figures alone or in crowds, often including South Asian women showing the city and landscape as rich forest-like environments of the known and the unknown. Journeying through urban and landscape environments, I observe and record crowds in flux in spaces of transit e.g. railway stations or of historical significance e.g. Trafalgar Square, London. Pedestrians move across each other, juxtaposed with different forms of architecture, resonant with cultural and political significance. Sometimes employing monochrome hues, other times more colourful and eclectic palettes, my practice captures the urban and landscape experience of multicultural Britain today. The paintings

contrast psychological presences of people from varied cultural backgrounds and include self-portraits in a relationship with environments which include references to British history e.g. St Pauls Cathedral London.



Above: Morning, 2008. Oil on canvas 120 x 150cm

JAI CHUHAN

Vivid colours in my paintings depict the body and portraiture in room-like spaces, exploring themes of refuge, home and unhome. The poses of the often-lone figure, in a room or in the city, express psychological tensions between agency and subjection in gender relations, concerning the body as politicized territory, focussed or blurrily glimpsed, rethinking notions of voyeurism, eroticism, race and the gaze. A sense of networks of power is implicit in figures operating as protagonists and recipients within social mores where arguably expressions of sexuality by women have a greater sense of transgression. My work has explored natural landscape. Spaces within painterly interiors suggest mirrors, doorways, or window views of nature as an aspiration representing freedom from social restrictions. Through the abstraction of marks and colours, I try to evoke unseen narratives, merging personal history with the transcultural currents of our time. My main influences are the western painting tradition, and how emotions in Indian ragas pervade music, dance, sculpture and painting, migrating and evolving globally. Inspired by my position as an Indian-born British artist, my paintings reflect dynamics of identity and perhaps a female gaze. The art landscape in Britain is now more welcoming for artists of colour to address a wide range of experiences.

Top: Lingering, 2022, Oil on canvas, 60 x 95cm Above: Coronight, 2020. oil on canvas, 130 x 120 cm

KIMATHI DONKOR

Visions, memories and hopes of loving moments enjoyed in pastoral tranquility inspire the imagery of Kimathi Donkor's Idyls painting series.

In scenes that are reminiscent of daytrips and holidays he's undertaken with his wife and children, he paints small family groups idling heroically amidst parkland, meadows, beaches, woods, lakes, and streams. Whether as an evocation of the manicured municipal lawns of the Abbey Wood Playground near the ruins of South East London's Lesnes Abbey, or of Britain's myriad coastal footpaths, for the artist these pictures function as both a jubilant embrace of serene leisure, and as a form of implicit resistance to the pollution, exploitation and oppression pervading our world.

Playfully contending with a range of global conventions, clichés and traditions that include English and Chinese landscape painting, French Impressionism and Ancient Egyptian depictions of the paradise they called 'Sekhet-Aaru', Donkor sidesteps the use of reference photographs, models, or of working 'on location' to make his work. Instead, he prefers his Idyls to emerge through what he calls 'the hazy imprecision of eye and hand', in ways that suggest unreliable resemblances to familiar people and places.



Above: Linger Awhile, 2024. Acrylic on linen. 122 x 91cm



Above: Gemini, 2021-23. Oil and distemper and oil on jute over board. 60 x 80cm

GRANT FOSTER

Looking back, it's a question of assimilation. My grandmother arrived in the UK from Trinidad in the early 60s with two small children, who happened to be my mother and uncle. They were schooled at a Catholic Convent Boarding school in Birmingham.

We never really spoke about politics and religion. I suspect this attitude comes partly from a sense of needing to assimilate. My grandmother's generation just wanted to get stuck in. I think my mother's generation struggled more. They were schooled in an environment where it was hard to assimilate, and of course, children and even teachers can be incredibly cruel.

So, when I think about the question – how do I assimilate myself into the traditions of landscape painting? It's something that I do on my terms, which is to work with

with non-specific times and places. I construct things from seemingly disparate components. Some of the paintings I make are part of an ongoing continuum, where the heights of the paintings have been standardised to retain a relationship to the human body. I want the viewer to have the ability to be able to travel within the painting, over its surface and around to its back. My paintings hold a body within it, much like our experience of the tangible world.

The question of landscape is revealing in itself because of the language used. We don't say "nature" painting – we say "landscape" painting. And yet, it is clear when you frame a landscape view, what we're really seeing is nature. So, for me painting is about nature – human nature, non-biological nature, organic nature, quantum nature – the whole thing.

BRUNO GRAD

The drawings that became the extended series of sixty-or-so works, *Diasporist Shopfronts* began after a trip I took to Canvey Island between Covid lockdowns, during which I was struck by the sight of an Orthodox Jewish family standing outside the 'Island Glow' nail salon. The surprising presence of visibly religious Jews in a typically English urban scene invited a deeper exploration of what it means to be Jewish within the English cultural and built landscape.

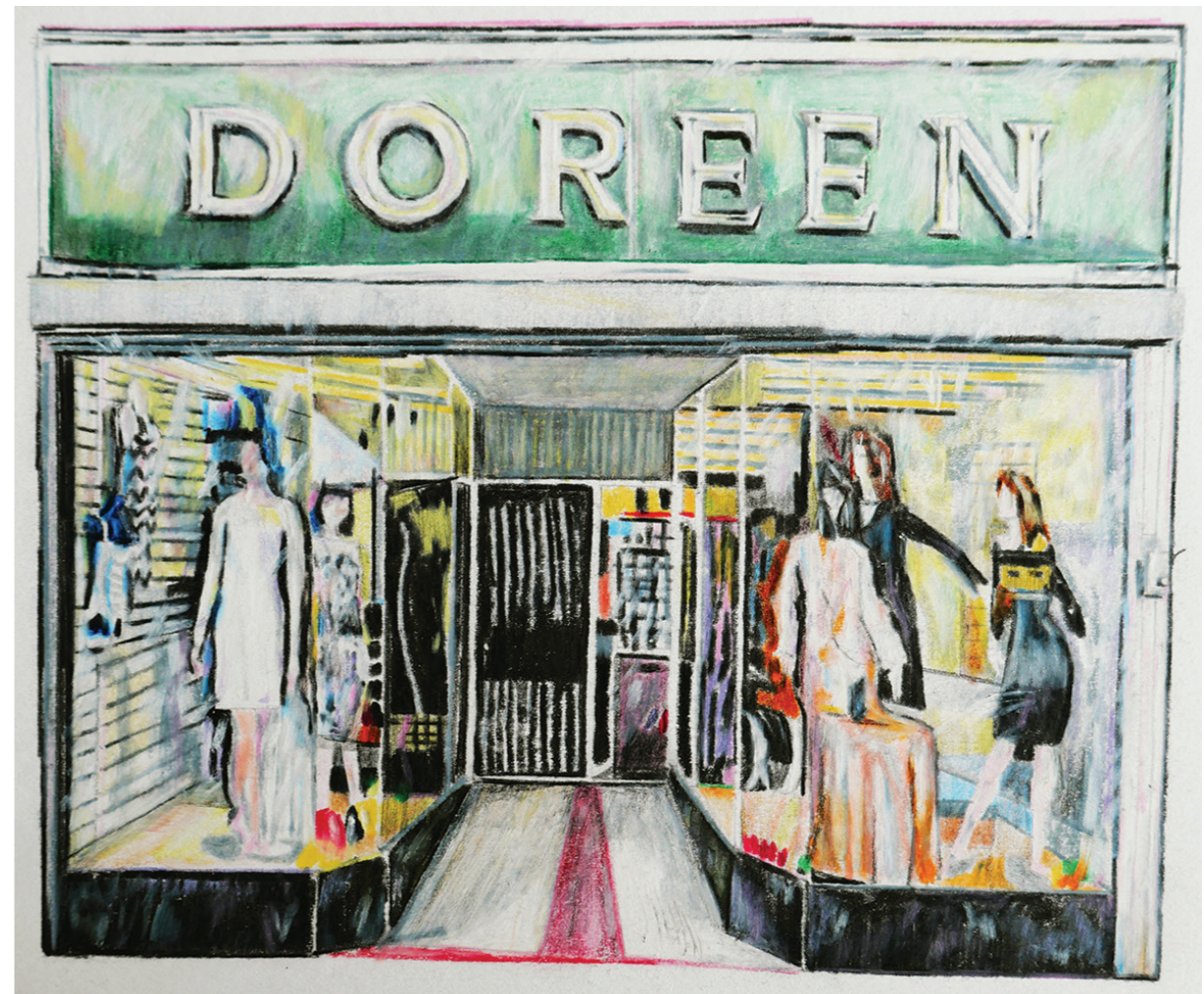
In a very 2020 version of 'plein air' drawing, I would wander around Google Street View, waiting for something to catch my eye. Unable to participate in communal Jewish life, I attribute the key emotional tonality agitating each drawing to my sense of detachment, loss and isolation and the connected longing for union, contact and intimacy.

In the context of landscape painting, the shopfront is something like a garden: a subject cultivated by human hands to draw in the viewer and to excite the eye. Indeed, I describe my series very consciously in the language of landscape painting, but what kind of landscape was available to me during a period of universal confinement?

The drawings, in their small size and use of coloured pencils, recall the challenging circumstances in which they were made: at home, with limited access to materials or studio space during a particular moment in our collective experience. But they also speak to the larger story of the Jewish people in this country -its history, presence, the marks Jewish people make in this land.



Top: Stanley Ley (Middlesex St, Spitalfields), 2023.
Coloured pencil on paper, 51 x 58cm (framed size).
Below: Oneg Shabbos (Wellington St E, Salford), 2023.
Coloured pencil on paper, 51 x 58cm (framed size)
Top right: Gourmet Foods (Harrogate Road, Leeds), 2023.
Coloured pencil on paper, 51 x 58cm (framed size)
Below right: Doreen (Lea Bridge Rd, Leyton), 2020.
Coloured pencil on paper, 51 x 58cm (framed size)





Above: Brit-ish. 2022, photograph

AZRAA MOTALA

A painting of Honister Pass draped in bridal dupattas, explores the intersections between landscape, history, culture, familial duty, movement, and migration.

My connection with Cumbria is intricate, a narrative I've been exploring in my painting. In this quiet corner of the world, we were separated from the conveniences we were accustomed to, with the absence of friends and family, the nearest mosque situated in Lancaster and a scarcity of halal food, our isolation in this quintessential part of England became significant. The pandemic further intensified our seclusion.

Our connection to the landscape became a tapestry woven with memories – a patchwork of sunsets over the hills, picnics by the lakeside, and quiet moments of contemplation beneath the shade of ancient trees.

Amidst the serenity, an uncanny familiarity unfolds, reminiscent of villages that my grandparents once called home in India. The Lake District, despite its geographical distance, becomes a temporal bridge, evoking a semblance of home. The slower pace of life, the rhythm of agrarian traditions, and the warmth of tightly-knit communities weave together creating a narrative transcending both time and geography. The work draws inspiration from the beauty of Cumbria alongside my perspective as a British South-Asian Muslim woman within a space that has historically felt isolating to people of colour.



Above: Honister Pass, 2024. Oil on linen. 180 x 150cm



Above: Landowner, 2023. Oil on canvas. 66 x 76cm. Left: Star-Gazer, 2024. Oil on canvas. 61 x 51cm

RAKSHA PATEL

A golden light mixed with the scent of hazy incense encapsulates the room. The heady warmth of the space transports my mind to a familiar landscape where dust and heat emit comfort, grounding me in a place miles away from this South London yoga studio.

My paintings are fuelled by memories, pieces of the past that are reconstructed using new and archival photographs. The compositions show time-warped localities, fragments of industrial neglect that are coupled with domestic objects - fabric, wallpaper, and bric-a-brac. Collectively these seemingly disparate elements reflect a cultural duality of Englishness and Indianness. The mutability of these (incompatible) pairings attempt to convey a glimpse into identities that are layered, complex and uncategorised.

Being in landscape offers me the chance to remember that we too are a part of nature, be that a field of lavender or a garden abundant with South-Asian vegetables. The land is ours; it is relatively safe despite the awkward glances that question my sense of belonging. I harvest the instances of being othered and use them as fuel to relay conversations about the debris of colonialism on the canvas.

The fluid and non-judgmental nature of paint accommodates the ever-changing character of identity shown within the pictorial spaces depicting twitching saree curtains, a woman reclining within a supposed 17th century rural idyll of Hounslow, or cosmic raindrops that help in fostering resilience, pushing back on cold weather.

MADI ACHARYA-BASKERVILLE (B. WEST BENGAL, INDIA)

Madi Acharya-Baskerville is a London based South Asian artist. She graduated with an MA in Fine Art at University of Wales Institute, Cardiff. Her work is in permanent collections at the Whitworth, Manchester (2022) and the Lightbox, Woking (2024).

She was awarded Developing Your Creative Practice Grant from Arts Council England (2021) and was selected for the 20/20 residency commission, University of the Arts London, Decolonizing Institute (2022). Her solo exhibition 'I Dream a Palace' at the Lightbox, (2024) showcased works created during the 20/20 residency.

She won the First Plinth Public Art Award, Royal Society of Sculptors (2023) and her commission 'The Double Act' was on display at the Royal Society of Sculptors and is currently on show at The Art House, Wakefield. She also had a recent solo exhibition at the Royal Society of Sculptors (2024).

She won The Primary Residency Prize through New Art Exchange Open (2023). Her work also featured in 'Fragments of Our Time', Whitaker Museum as part of British Textile Biennial and 'Stuff of Life/ Life of Stuff' Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, Norwich (2023).

SAID ADRUS (B.1958. KAMPALA, UGANDA)

Said Adrus is a London based international artist with over four decades experience in practice, exhibiting, research, activism and teaching. In the mid 1980s, Said was a co-founder of the Asian Artists Group in Nottingham and has worked with communities and art education across the UK and also Europe. He was involved with art Collective Panchayat and assisted with the exhibition Crossing Black Waters (1992/3), Leicester City Art Gallery and tour.

In 2004 Said Adrus embarked on an extensive research project collectively entitled Lost Pavilion. Lost Pavilion films have been screened at Tate Britain and Southampton Museum & Art Gallery and at various Conferences in the UK and abroad.

Said participated in the seminal exhibition The Place is Here at Nottingham Contemporary in 2017 and was selected to show his work as part of Speech Acts exhibition at Manchester Art Gallery & Museum in 2018.

Recent art projects include Divided Selves (2023), Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry; and Riddle of Bakuli (2019-21) which is part of a larger Retracing Kampala project, screened at University of East London; Visions, Nunnery Bow Arts, London and Living Room, Bern, Switzerland.

FRANK BOWLING (B.1934. BRITISH GUIANA – NOW GUYANA)

Sir Frank Bowling OBE RA arrived in London in 1953, graduating from the Royal College of Art with the silver medal for painting in 1962. By the early 1960s, he was recognised as an original force in London's art scene with a style combining figurative, symbolic and abstract elements. After moving to New York in 1966, Bowling's commitment to modernism meant he was increasingly focused on material, process and colour, so that by 1971 he had abandoned the use of figurative imagery. Bowling became a Royal Academician in 2005 and was awarded the OBE for services to Art in 2008 and a knighthood in the Queen's Birthday Honours in 2020. In 2022, he was awarded the Wolfgang Hahn Prize which honours exceptional contemporary artists. His work is represented in fifty collections worldwide and has been exhibited widely, including the 2017-19 touring exhibition Mappa Mundi, the hugely successful retrospective at Tate Britain in 2019 and the major solo presentation Frank Bowling's Americas at Museum of Fine Arts in Boston 2022, which travelled to San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA) in May 2023.

TREVOR BURGESS (B.1963. HARROGATE, UK)

Trevor Burgess is an artist and curator based in London and Spain, exhibiting internationally including solo exhibitions in UK, Spain and Switzerland. His work has won prizes and awards in Germany, USA and UK.

For over 20 years he has been making paintings derived from his observation of the contemporary multicultural urban landscape. In a century of increased international migration, he has made paintings of life in cities in Europe, Latin America, India and Morocco.

In 2016, he began experimenting with inverting colour in his paintings. Initially, it was a protest response to the Brexit vote in the UK. He developed this way of painting further during the Covid lockdown in a series of "Elegies for Street Life" re-mixing previous paintings of vibrant streets in new inverted colour versions.

He regularly collaborates with other artists in curating exhibitions. These have included the touring exhibitions "In the City" (2014/2018) and "Where We Live" (2021-22).

JAI CHUHAN (B. PUNJAB, INDIA)

London based, Indian-born British artist Jai Chuhan's paintings have been exhibited internationally including in China, USA, Italy, Turkey and in the UK including at: Tate Liverpool; Barbican, London; Bluecoat, Liverpool; Ikon, Birmingham; Tramway, Glasgow; Orchard Gallery, Derry; Watermans Arts Centre, London; Commonwealth Institute, London; Horizon Gallery, London; Pitzhanger, London. Solo exhibitions include at Champ Lacombe, Biarritz, France (2024); Small Paintings, Qrystal Partners, London (2023); Paris Internationale with Champ Lacombe, Paris (2023); Remodel: Painting Studio, Asia Triennial Manchester (2018); Decanting Desire, Liverpool Biennial (2014); Jai Chuhan: Recent Paintings, Victoria Gallery & Museum (2013). Her work currently features in the Hayward Touring exhibition Acts of Creation: On Art and Motherhood, curated by Hettie Judah, tour commencing Arncliffe, Bristol. Her paintings and drawings are in collections including the Tate, Arts Council Collection and Cartwright Hall, Bradford.

JASMIR CREED (B.1990. MANCHESTER, UK)

Jasmir Creed is a PhD candidate at the Slade School of Fine Art, UCL. Solo exhibitions of her work include Utopolis at Warrington Museum and Art Gallery, Warrington, 2023 Dystopolis at Victoria Gallery & Museum, Liverpool, 2018 and Urban Forest at Delta House Studios, London, 2017 with a catalogue which was distributed by Liverpool University Press 2018-2021. Group exhibitions include Asia Triennial Manchester, 2018; Home and Unhome at Sichuan Fine Arts Institute, Chongqing, China, 2020; and Art Contact, Istanbul Art Fair, Turkey 2021, Where is Home? tour including Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester 2022-23, Living in Contrast Art Ankara Contemporary Art Fair 2020. Her paintings are in collections including Victoria Gallery & Museum, Liverpool and Imperial War Museum North. Upcoming group exhibitions include Many Stories at the Midlands Art Centre, January 2027, Indian Perspectives at the Victoria Gallery and Museum, October 2024.

KIMATHI DONKOR (B.1965. BOURNEMOUTH, UK)

Kimathi Donkor's art re-imagines mythic, historical and everyday encounters across Africa and its global Diasporas, principally in painting and drawing.

Exhibitions include *The Time is Always Now* at the National Portrait Gallery (London, 2024), *Soulscapes* at the Dulwich Picture Gallery (London, 2024), *Kimathi Donkor: Black History Painting* at Niru Ratnam Gallery (London, 2024) the 15th Sharjah Biennial (UAE, 2023), *War Inna Babylon* at the ICA, (London 2021), the *Diaspora Pavilion* (57th Venice Biennale, 2017) and the 29th São Paulo Biennial (Brazil, 2010).

Kimathi Donkor is of Ghanaian, Anglo-Jewish and Jamaican family heritage, and spent his childhood in Zambia and the English West Country. He attained his PhD at Chelsea College of Art (2016) and is the Reader in Contemporary Painting and Black Art at UAL.

Works are held in public and private collections including at The British Museum, the Sharjah Art Foundation, the Wolverhampton Art Gallery, the International Slavery Museum, the collection of CCH Pounder and the University of Greenwich. He is represented by Niru Ratnam Gallery in London.

GRANT FOSTER (B.1982. WORTHING, UK)

Grant Foster is a London based artist who completed an MA in Painting at the Royal College of Art in 2012. In 2016 Grant Foster was Fellow in Contemporary Art with The British School at Rome, in 2019 he was Randall Chair at Alfred University, New York and he is currently a mentor on The Turps Banana painting program and founding member of audio/visual recording project in a skull. Foster's selected solo exhibitions include: *Human Made*, Exeter Phoenix Gallery, UK (2024) *Open to You*, Art Lacuna, London (2022); *I'm Not Being Funny*, Lychee One, London (2019); *Trade Gallery*, Nottingham (2018); *Ground, Figure, Sky*, Tintype Gallery, London (2017); *Popular Insignia Galleria Acappella*, Naples (2016), *Salad Days*, Ana Cristea Gallery, New York (2015); *Holy Island*, Chandelier Projects, London (2014).

Recent group exhibitions include: *Dancing About Architecture*, Hypha Studios, London (2024); *10 Years*, Lychee One Gallery, London, (2024); *A Painting Show*, Staffordshire St Gallery, London (2024); *Tell Me Everything You Saw and What You think it Means*, w/ Piers Alsop, Tagli Projects, Cromwell Place, London (2024); *...freshly as if my eye was still growing*, APT Gallery, London (2023); *Gutug*, Asylum, Suffolk, UK (2023).

BRUNO GRAD (B.1987. KENT, UK)

Bruno Grad is an artist and writer based in Margate. He studied English Literature at King's College, University of Cambridge (2009). His work is concerned with Jewish identity and practice: what it means to be a Jewish artist in the contemporary world. Primarily through the media of painting and drawing, it explores the possibility of a distinctively religious artistic endeavour within the idiom of contemporary art. His paintings, imbued with the vitality of a lived tradition, offer a space for connection and reflection, inviting viewers to engage with the rich tapestry of Jewish life and identity.

For Grad, living with the material of a Jewish life, the visual landscape and atmosphere of Judaism is also a way of being within religion. Grad describes his work as a song of return to the divine through the interrogation of materials (oil paint, watercolour and coloured pencils), which have been transformed into symbols, the transmission of symbols into attention, and the elevation of attention towards the unseen reality beyond the object. His most recent exhibition is *People of the Body*, 4 Garden Walk Gallery (2024).

BHAJAN HUNJAN (B.1956. NANYUKI, KENYA)

Bhajan Hunjan trained as painter and printmaker. Alongside her studio practice she works as an Artist Educator and on site specific Public Art commissions, created mostly through community consultation and participation that engage people.

Her work investigates the relation between abstract and representational form, using variety of materials and artistic mediums. She has developed a very individual visual language of free-floating lines, symbolic colours and shapes, repetition and script motifs that draw upon both her heritage and fine art abstraction to encourage viewers to reflect on social, spiritual and emotional environments. Her significant external projects include *Peepul Centre Floorscape* in Leicester, the *Town Square of Slough* and *St Paul's Way Streetscape with Tower Hamlets*, London, amongst others.

Hunjan was nominated for the Max Mara Prize for Women Artists (2022 – 24) with the Whitechapel Gallery and Maramotti foundation. Currently she is exhibiting in 'Women in revolt' – Art and Activism in UK 1970 - 1990 Tate touring exhibition, at the National Galleries Scotland.

AZRAA MOTALA (B.1996. LONDON, UK)

Azraa Motala is a visual artist from Preston. She received her BA from the University of Central Lancashire and MA from the Chelsea College of Arts in 2018 where she was awarded the Hoyland scholarship. She has been working as an artist upon leaving university - creating, lecturing and exhibiting. Azraa has shown work nationally at Tate Britain, the Manchester Museum, Saatchi Gallery, British Textile Biennial, Touchstones Rochdale, and Artichoke Trust and The Gallery (across 3000 locations in the UK). She is currently undertaking a Catalyst Creative Residency in Cumbria, working with local communities and making work informed by her time living there.

Her practice and research explores the lived experiences of British South Asian women, including notions of identity, belonging, culture and heritage within the context of the contemporary Western space. Negotiating the position of insider and outsider in and amongst the familiar and foreign. Through large scale oil paintings, photography, poetry, video and site specific interventions she explores the polarity of the East and West, history, politics, empire and orientalist depictions of women in art.

RAKSHA PATEL (B.1972. LEICESTER, UK)

Raksha Patel studied MFA Painting at The Slade School of Art (1998). She works as an artist, writer, socially engaged practitioner and lecturer.

Selected exhibitions: *Nature Show*, Kadrioru Plaza, Kadrioru Gallery, Estonia (2024) *A Radical Decade*, Rochdale Art Gallery in the 1980s, Touchstones Rochdale (2023) *Trinity Buoy Wharf Drawing Prize* (2023), *Goddesses of Kings Cross*, CSM Museum & Study Collection Gallery (2022) *Home and Unhome*, Sichuan Fine Arts Institute, Chongqing (2020) *Stellatus Re-Visited*, Site Gallery (2019) *The Summer Exhibition*, Royal Academy of Arts (2019 and 2020) *Lives, Loves and Loss*, National Trust, Fenton House, (2016) *The Trouble with Painting Today*, Pump House Gallery (2015), *Forget-Me-Knot*, Pitzhanger Manor Gallery (2013) *Tradition and the Passing Down of Culture*, Pump House Gallery, (2013) *We were Trying to Make Sense*, 1 Shantiroad, Bangalore (2013) *Jerwood Drawing Prize* (2011) *The Mausoleum of Lost Objects*, inIVA, (2008), *Creative Connections*, The Whitechapel Gallery (2005). She is a Senior Lecturer on BA Painting at Camberwell College of Arts (UAL), a mentor for Turps Banana Art School, and a lecturer at Tate Britain and Tate Modern.

SAID ADRUS AND BHAJAN HUNJAN
Trespassing, 1993. Oil paint
on wood, 300 x 300 x 50cm



The curators, Raksha Patel and Trevor Burgess would like to thank all the participating artists for kindly lending their works, contributing texts and their support throughout the process of researching and assembling the exhibition and Dr Kate Nichols for her catalogue introduction, her generosity, advice, and enthusiasm for the project.

We are particularly grateful to the British Art Network for supporting the publication of this catalogue.

Special thanks also to Phil Ashcroft and the team at Thames-Side Studios Gallery, The Thames Festival, The Frank Bowling Studio and Niru Ratnam Gallery, without all of whom this exhibition and catalogue would not have been possible.

Published in 2024 with support from the British Art Network

ISBN 978-1-3999-9302-9

Published on the occasion of the exhibition

Standing Ground

7 – 22 September 2024 at

Thames-Side Studios Gallery

Trinity Wharf, Harrington Way, Warspite Road

Royal Borough of Greenwich, London SE18 5NR

© Raksha Patel and Trevor Burgess 2024

Texts copyright the authors

All images copyright and courtesy of the artists, except:

p. 12 Frank Bowling with swans on the bank of the River Thames. Photograph Tina Tranter.

©Estate of Tina Tranter. Courtesy Frank Bowling Archive.

p. 13 Great Thames III, 1989, Acrylic and acrylic gel on canvas with marouflage, 181.5 x 320.5cm.

Photographed by Charlie Littlewood. © Frank Bowling. All Rights Reserved, DACS 2024.

Courtesy the artist.

p. 20 Amble Awhile (work in progress), 2024. Acrylic on linen. 165 x 200cm. ©Kimathi Donkor.

Courtesy Kimathi Donkor & Niru Ratnam Gallery.

p. 21 Linger Awhile, 2024. Acrylic on linen. 122 x 91cm. ©Kimathi Donkor.

Courtesy Kimathi Donkor & Niru Ratnam Gallery.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without the prior permission of the copyright holders and the publisher.

This publication has been made possible with support from the British Art Network (BAN).

BAN is a Subject Specialist Network supported by the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art and Tate, with additional public funding provided by the National Lottery through Arts Council England.

Designed by Emily Waller

Printed by Taylor Brothers

Cover: JASMIR CREED, *Naturopen*, 2017. Oil on canvas, 90 x 120cm

BRITISH ART
subject specialist
NETWORK

PAUL MELLON CENTRE
for Studies in British Art

Yale



Supported using public funding by
ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND



GRANT FOSTER, *Service (reverse)*, 2023. Distemper, oil stick, pencil and found ornamental snail on unprimed canvas and wood. 180 x 108cm



ISBN 978-1-3999-9302-9



9 781399 993029 >