

Text by Nick Bodimeade

There is a well-trodden distance of twenty-four feet between the contemplative vantage point of my armchair and the mucky physicality of the painting wall. Back and forth all day long with an occasional detour to the laptop, where a similar to and fro, zooming in and zooming out, takes place, the crisp, photographic source material dissolving into the base units of grid and pixel before returning again to recognisable imagery.

On the rectangular, woven grid of the canvas, individually distinct marks colonise the space, like holiday makers settling on the beach. Personal space, social convention, sun and tide have their painterly equivalents as I try to create a work where complexity and unity coexist. My past practice as an abstract painter and my new-found interest in illusion and representation vie with each other for dominance as I search for a point where the work flips productively back and forth between material and image, disruption and cohesion, thought and feeling. The endless walking back and forth tests the painting's reading at different viewing distances, and how it, like its subject, engages as both image and physical entity.

The beach still fascinates me as a subject. We have all sat on the beach conscious of both looking and being the subject of others looking. And felt ourselves in a peculiar timeless space where we were just people in a landscape, doing what people do in a stripped-down elemental way. Like some kind of controlled experiment, where all you need to know about what it is to be human is there and visible.

I try in my painting to meet the viewer halfway, choosing subjects we have a hard-wired interest in. Clearly we all have an interest in individuals and groups, in food, shelter, land and space, but also the hunter-gatherer's interest in the pleasures and rewards of pattern recognition, and the power and advantage provided by high ground (they maybe Fresians but our response to them is not so far removed from that played out on the cave walls at Lascaux). In this exhibition I have sought to appropriate the visceral, intuitive responses we make to the subjects (herds, human and animal) and claim them for the paintings, employing the same visual triggers, but through paint, trying to make work that requires no information external to its relationship to the viewer, simple work where all you need to understand it is there and visible.