

HELEN SINCLAIR



RACHEL DEACON



Sewing Project, 71 x 91cm, Oil on Linen

# Paintings by Rachel Deacon Sculptures by Helen Sinclair

19th June - 7th July 2021

CATTO GALLERY

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# Rachel Deacon Q & A

## **At what age did you decide you wanted to be an artist?**

I think I was around 4 or 5 years old, I was always drawing on anything I could find, blank pages at the beginning of books and in between the patterns on our 70's wallpaper! I won my first painting prize aged 5.

## **What inspired you to want to be an artist?**

I was mostly inspired by my peers and older children who were good at painting and drawing. My mother was a teacher and when I'd sit in her classroom at the end of the school day, I'd look at the older children's work on the walls. Now I find inspiration through visiting exhibitions.

## **Who are your favourite artists and influences?**

I love other artists who demonstrate story telling in their work, Paula Rego is a particular favourite, as is Laura Knight who was an exceptional draftsman. She pushed the boundaries at the time with her diverse and engaging subjects, I especially admire her circus and theatre pieces.

## **Where did you study and did you enjoy the experience?**

I studied for two years at Epsom school of Art and then three at Chelsea School of Art. I loved it, particularly in the first two years when I couldn't believe I could make art all day every day forever!

## **Where do you get inspiration from?**

I am inspired by the written word and get many of the concepts for my paintings through poetry and short stories. I don't illustrate the text, more I use it as a starting point for sketches that then evolve into the finished composition. Sometimes I can actually see the final image as a 'film still' in my mind on the initial reading of the poem.

## **Do you have a favourite work of art?**

Yes, Laura Knight's *The Ballet Girl and the Dressmaker* (1930). I love the compelling composition, the painting

of the fabric and the wistful and slightly bored expression on the dancer's face. The palette is exquisite too.

## **Do you listen to music/radio/books in the studio while working?**

I usually listen to audio books. I spend a large portion of the day at my easel and it is such a luxury to be read to while I'm there.

## **Do you work methodically each day or in fits and starts?**

I pretty much work a 9-5, occasionally a few hours at the weekend. I'm very consistent, when I'm out in my studio, I stay there. I've never had trouble with artist's block, and as I work on two or three pieces at a time, there is always something on the go that suits the mood I am in.

## **Do you sketch before beginning a painting?**

I make very exact sketches of the final work before I start on a painting. I try to perfect the composition in a sketchpad before scaling it up onto the canvas.

## **How do you name the paintings?**

As I often find inspiration for my work from narratives, especially poetry, there is usually a phrase or word within the text which comes to mind when naming the pieces.

## **Is it hard to let go of works?**

Not really, I'm delighted that someone else finds enjoyment in my paintings, enough to have a piece of it in their home. I like the fact the work's onward journey is often unknown to me and that the collector will have their own interpretation of the meaning and sentiment in the piece.

## **What is your proudest career moment (so far)?**

I love putting together a large collection of work, seeing it come together over the months and I always feel proud when I see it framed and hanging in the gallery, so I suppose I would say this is.



Free Water, 102 x 76cm, Oil on Linen

# Helen Sinclair Q & A

## **At what age did you decide you wanted to be an artist?**

My mother was artistic and understood the importance of creativity. She always encouraged drawing/painting. So drawing and making things began earlier than I can remember, an instinctive mode of expression for me and not something I ever had to think about. But I hadn't ever thought of it as a potential career route. I had planned to be a nurse until a moment of epiphany (I was eighteen) when I met by chance a friend who was doing a foundation course and suddenly it seemed an obvious and possible path.

## **What inspired you to want to be an artist?**

Probably doing 'A' level art and developing an understanding that there were ordinary, perfectly respectable people, adults, who took Art seriously and considered it a legitimate and real way to spend their lives.

## **Who are your favourite artists and influences?**

Donatello, Rodin, Giacometti, Wilhelm Lehmbruck, Antony Caro, Picasso, Matisse, Modigliani all influenced how I work. Many years ago, I made a series of sculptures directly from paintings by Picasso, Matisse and Modigliani. It was their painting that I found interesting and inspirational but someone else recognised that the painters I intentionally worked from were all sculptors as well so perhaps there is some hidden sculptor's 'language' even in their painting.

## **Where did you study and did you enjoy the experience?**

Dyfed School of Art (Carmarthen - foundation course, 1972 - 73) and Wimbledon School of Art (1973 - 76). Loved every minute. Being steeped in sculpture, day in day out, and being surrounded by people with a like-minded focus, was life-changing for me and my idea of heaven.

## **Where do you get inspiration from?**

Difficult to know. Other people have pointed out to me influences in finished works that I wasn't aware of while I was working (and yet I know they're right). And influences are almost always hybrid. Often the thing that inspires one piece of work is the last piece.

## **Do you have a favourite work of art?**

Possibly Donatello's Mary Magdalene in the Baptistery in Florence.

## **Do you listen to music/radio/books in the studio while working?**

Radio 4 mostly.

## **Do you work methodically each day or in fits and starts?**

It's not always methodical but I do try to work every day. Not always at the same time of day or for the same length of time (and sometimes I don't actually 'work'; I might just sit and cogitate what is around me in the workshop) but it is important to me to spend some time in my workshop every day. I also try to establish an understanding, when I leave the workshop at the end of the day, what I will do first when I come in the next day. A friend of mine, who took up sculpture as a hobby when she retired, said she struggled to start things and often didn't know how/what to start. She said that she didn't know how I do it. My answer was very banal: I can do it because I do it every day. Like most things in life, it is a habit thing.

## **Do you sketch before beginning a sculpture?**

Hardly ever. I enjoy drawing/painting for its own sake but it is almost like a recreation for me. I rarely draw in preparation for making a sculpture. I might 'sketch' ideas in clay or wax or bits of wood but it has to be in three dimensions to be helpful in the development of a larger sculpture. Drawing in two dimensions is a different language and can be difficult (for me) to translate. Something on paper, for instance, doesn't get me where I want to go.

## **How do you name the sculptures?**

Some are obvious and the title emerges easily as I work, as I develop a relationship with the piece and an understanding of its personality. Very occasionally, I have the title before I start work on the sculpture and I know what I want the piece to be. Often, though, I have to live with the piece for a while after making it and have to really 'work' at finding a title that expresses the essence of the piece. If a sculpture is a commission

... even if it is an edition (where the person who commissioned it has the first cast but allows me to make an edition to make it affordable) I will invite the person who commissioned it to title it.

## **Is it hard to let go of works?**

Very occasionally, I'm reluctant to let a unique piece go but a lot of my pieces are editions so I always think I will keep one of the edition - but inevitably, when I've got only one cast left, someone will be very keen to buy it and I'll let it go.

## **What is your proudest career moment (so far)?**

Exhibiting at the Catto Gallery, of course!



On Top of the Game,  
36.5(h) x 25(w) x 65(d) cm, Bronze Unique



As Long As, 100(h) x 77(w) x 19(d) cm,  
Bronze only Edition 9





Surreptitious Token, 122 x 153cm, Oil on Linen



Boat Days, 51 x 61cm, Oil on Gesso Panel



Masquerade, 62 x 51cm, Oil on Gesso Panel



Chelsea Morning, 187(h) x 87(w) x 26(d) cm  
Bronze only Edition 9





A Time and Place 1,  
62(h) x 68(w) x 11(d) cm, Bronze Unique



Wild Fire, 76 x 102cm, Oil on Linen





Pilgrimage,  
122(h) x 45(w) x 26(d) cm, Bronze only Edition 9







Brothers (A) 35.5(h) x 16.5(w) x 14(d) cm,  
Stone Resin Edition 18, Bronze Edition 9





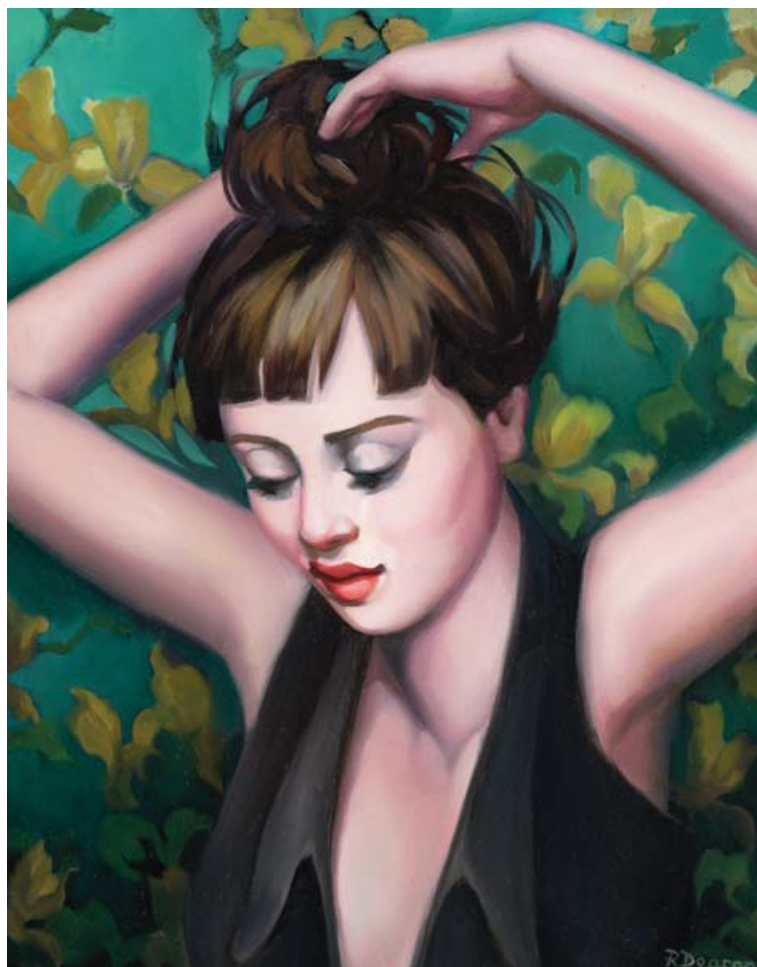
Girl in Yellow Dress, 41 x 51cm, Oil on Linen



Study in red, 28 x 36cm, Oil on Gesso Panel



Lotus Flower, 76 x 76cm, Oil on Linen



The Girl with the Messy Hair,  
36 x 28cm, Oil on Gesso Panel





To the Show (Reverse)





Thomas and his Family,  
63(h) x 52(w) x 23(d) cm Stone Resin, Edition of 12



Daydreaming, 70 x 60cm, Oil on Linen



Beautiful Fools, 102 x 76cm, Oil on Linen





The Danger of Tedium,  
76 x 61cm, Oil on Linen



For as Long as,  
33(h) x 28(w) x 20(d) cm, Bronze only Edition 9





Captured by Spells, 41 x 50cm, Oil on Linen



Trinkets, 50 x 60cm, Oil on Gesso Panel





Leading Back to This,  
70 x 100cm, Oil on Gesso Panel



A Time and Place B (2),  
76(h) x 62(w) x 14(d) cm, Bronze Unique



Leap Day, 51 x 41cm, Oil on Gesso Panel





Wolf Skin, 28 x 36cm, Oil on Gesso Panel



The Fairest,  
30cm diameter, Oil on Plywood Panel



Before the Rabbit Hole,  
30cm diameter, Oil on Plywood Panel



Bear Claws and Porridge,  
30cm diameter, Oil on Plywood Panel





Like a Girl, 76 x 102cm, Oil on Linen

Back Cover: Four plus Teddy, 24(h) x 23(w) x 10(d) cm. Bronze Edition of 9 (left image), The Best Days, 46 x 61cm, Oil on Linen (right image)



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Opening times: 10am - 5.30pm Mon - Sat  
12pm - 5pm Sunday • and by appointment

Exhibition dates: 19th June – 7th July 2021