

## **Artist Statement**

Walls and their connotations to boundaries and space inform my painting practice. Reading Fernando Pessoa's poem, *I'm scanning things I can't see* and Virginia Wolf's short story *A Mark on the Wall* developed my interests in walls conceptually: a wall may obscure/block space but that doesn't stop space - or even imagining space- that exists beyond it.

Pessoa poignantly illustrates this notion throughout his poem stating, 'all's on the other side'. Both pieces of writing allude to the artificiality of walls acting as physical boundaries and this is what I examine in my work.

My work relates the physical nature of walls to painterly concerns of representing flatness, perspective, and permanence, influenced by colour field paintings. Therefore, large shapes and flat bright expanses of colour dominate large scale oil paintings. Oil paintings and assemblage works, aim to convey a sense of suspense, depicting moments before something climatic; akin to "there (being) no terror in the bang, only in the anticipation of it," as Hitchcock says. Performative notions of the fourth wall relate to the treatment of the illusory picture plane: paintings push a stage set aesthetic where the edges of each painting -like what happens behind walls- contain an anticipated form of action.

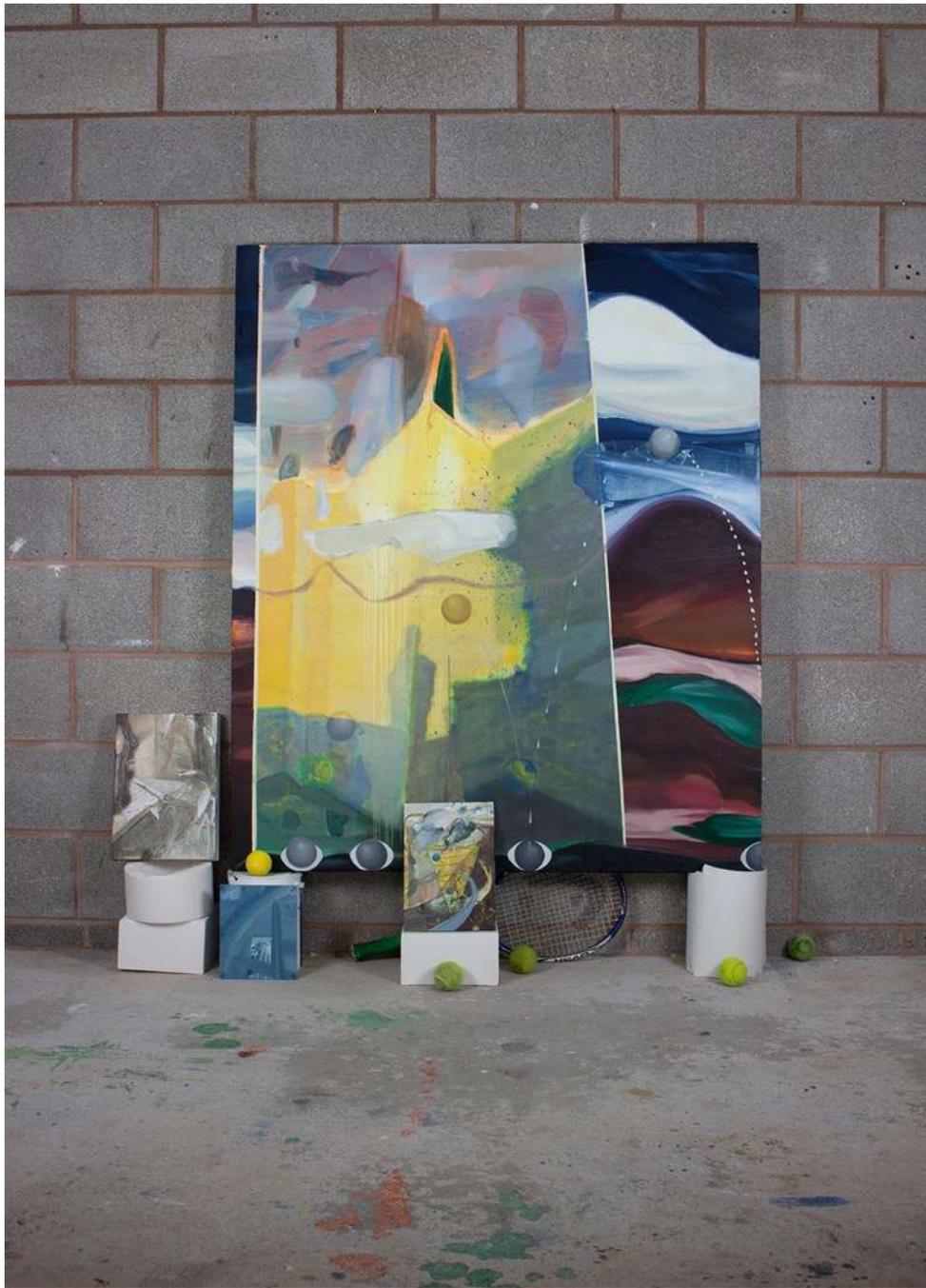
This stage set aesthetic in my paintings mainly refers to landscapes, seascapes, and theatrical settings. Clouds, smoke, shadow forms and darkness are repeating motifs that investigate the intangible within such settings, suggesting notions of trace and time. These settings are often fictitious, derived through intuitive drawings and collaging techniques that use my own photography of the Devonshire and Edinburgh landscapes (both rural and urban types) that I encounter, literary references and old postcards. In this sense, I'm interested in how we experience, idealise and construct places in our minds and how to translate these notions through painting. In turn, this also relates to the socio-political landscapes of today that we shape which I respond to within certain paintings, questioning things from identity to football culture.

I reinterpret predetermined collage and drawing based reference material varyingly when making the paintings, thinking about how to make the eye scan over the painting surface at different speeds. This relates to when David Lynch in an interview comments on looking at a duck: the eye follows the duck's beak, then eye and then feathers at different paces due to their textural qualities. I'm interested in pushing ways to interrupt the painting surface instead to achieve such effects. Be it through broad paint smears, the use of fractured and dashed line or through physical means of interruption developed in my assemblage type paintings where anything from earbuds and collaged material can be found embedded into the surface. I feel these interruptive visual measures activate a latent presence in my paintings, analogous to how stage sets operate. Smaller scale works often dictate less layering and congruence to predetermined reference material. Larger scale works stick to predetermined reference material more stringently (like a blueprint), allowing for greater opportunities to layer/manipulate paint.

I am a recent BA Painting graduate of Edinburgh College of Art (2018-2021) based between Edinburgh and Devon. I have been longlisted for the John Moore's Painting prize 2020 and more recently I have been awarded an RSA John Kinross scholarship 2021, intending to use this research opportunity to broaden my interests in walls by retracing Florence's ancient fortifications. My work has been exhibited as part of Edinburgh College of Art's Graduate Showcase, 2021, Art and the Playfair Library, 2020 (<https://www.art-playfair-library.is.ed.ac.uk/tobias-francis/>) and published amongst international artists in Defaced Zine Issue #3: Red Zone, 2020- with more upcoming Exhibitions to be a part of soon.

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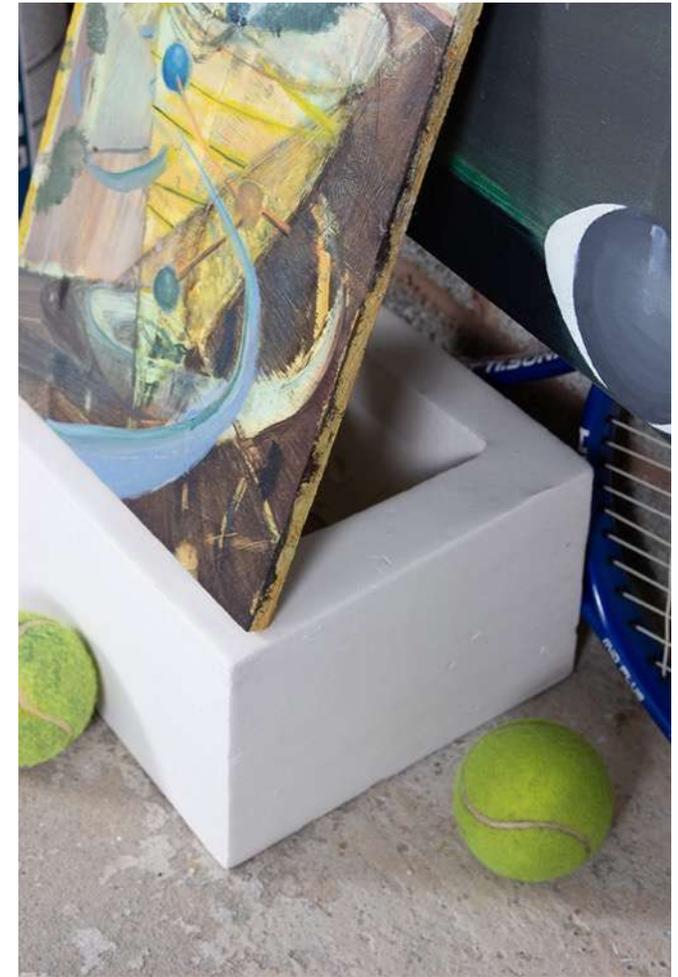
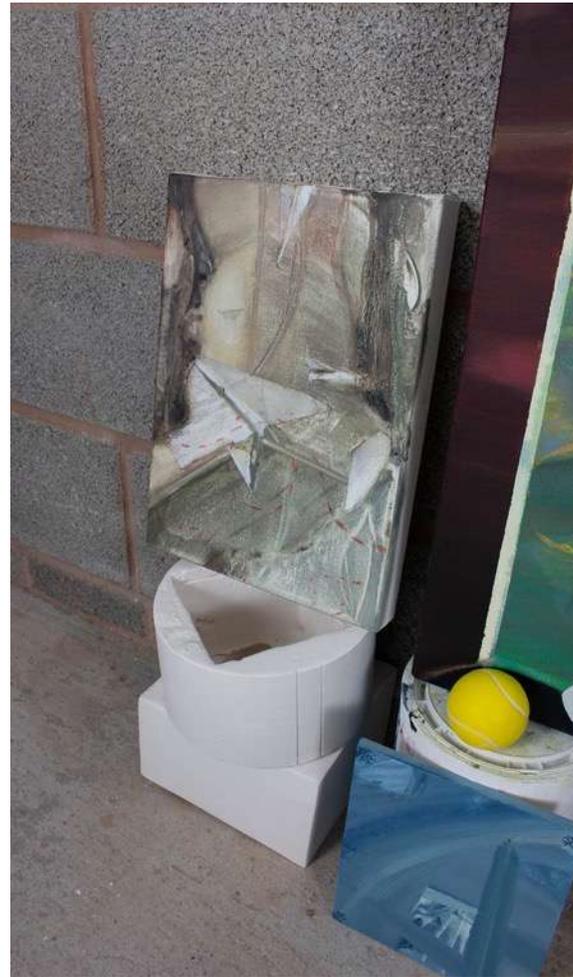


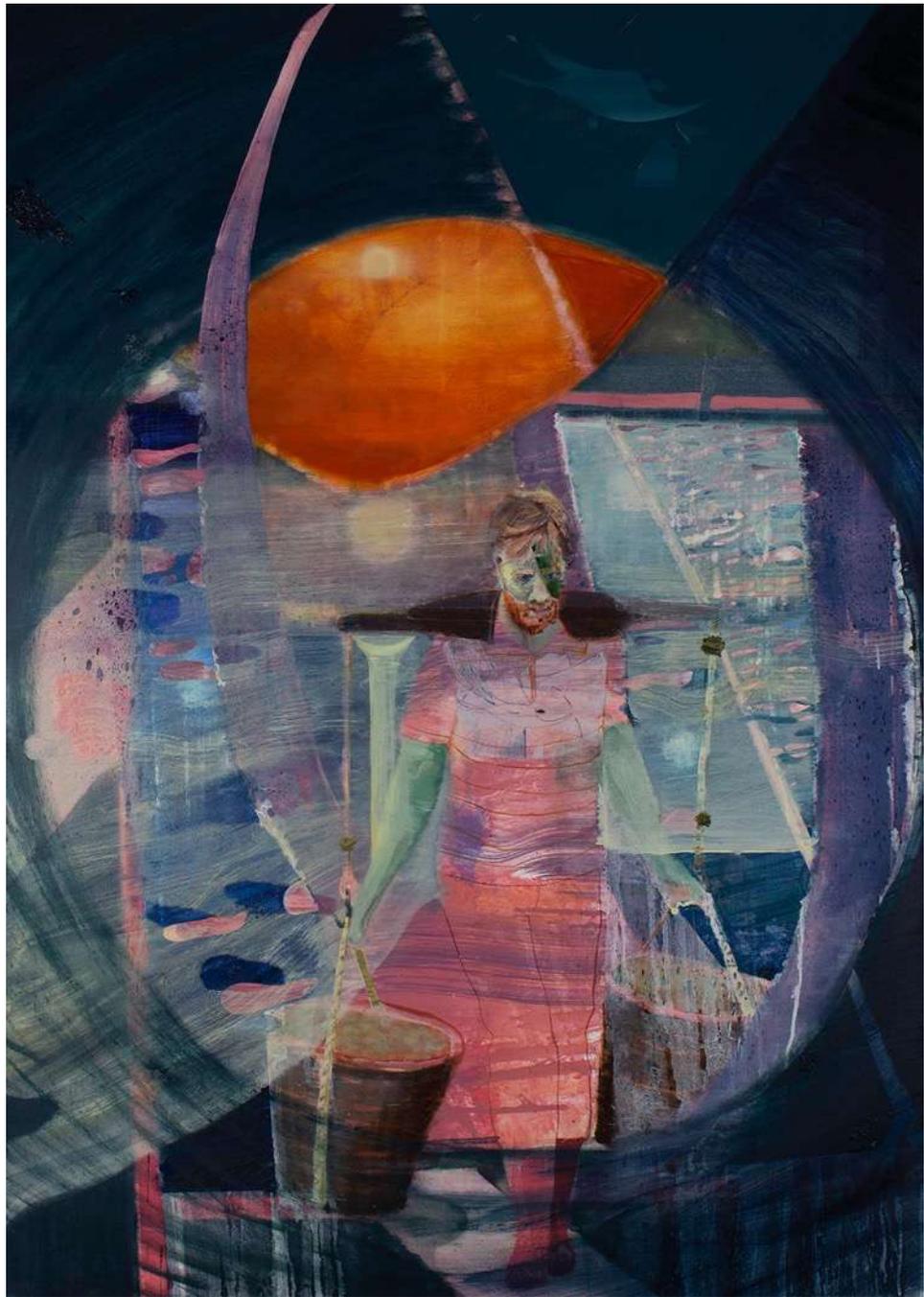
***Traces (5...4...3...2...1...)***

***(Installation), 2021***

5 balls, 4 paintings, 3 handmade  
plaster casts, 2 paint buckets and  
1 tennis racket

176 x 167.5 x 25 cm





*Bluebird,*

**2021**

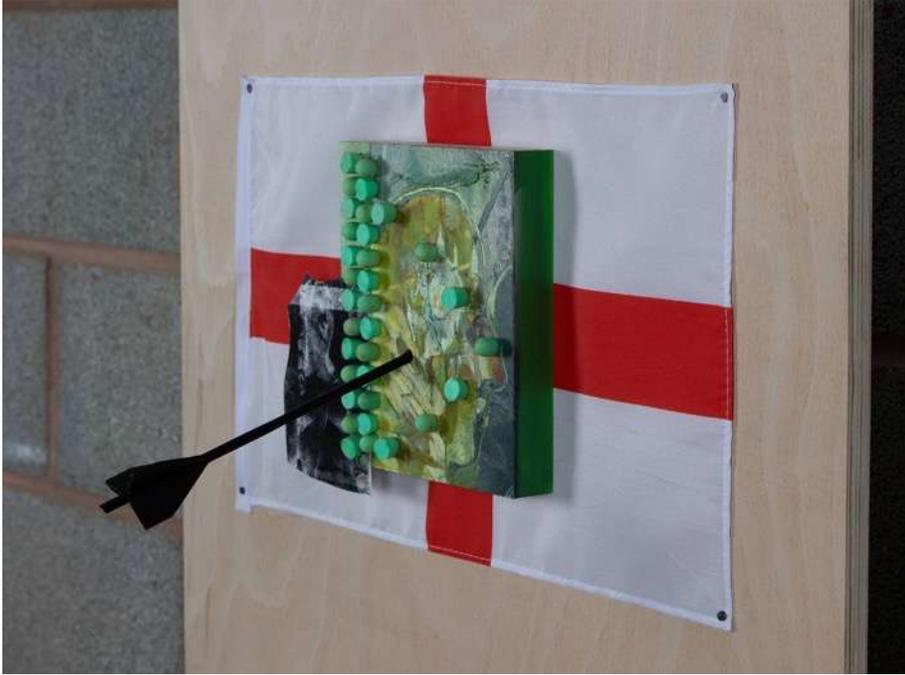
Oil on canvas

170 x 120 cm



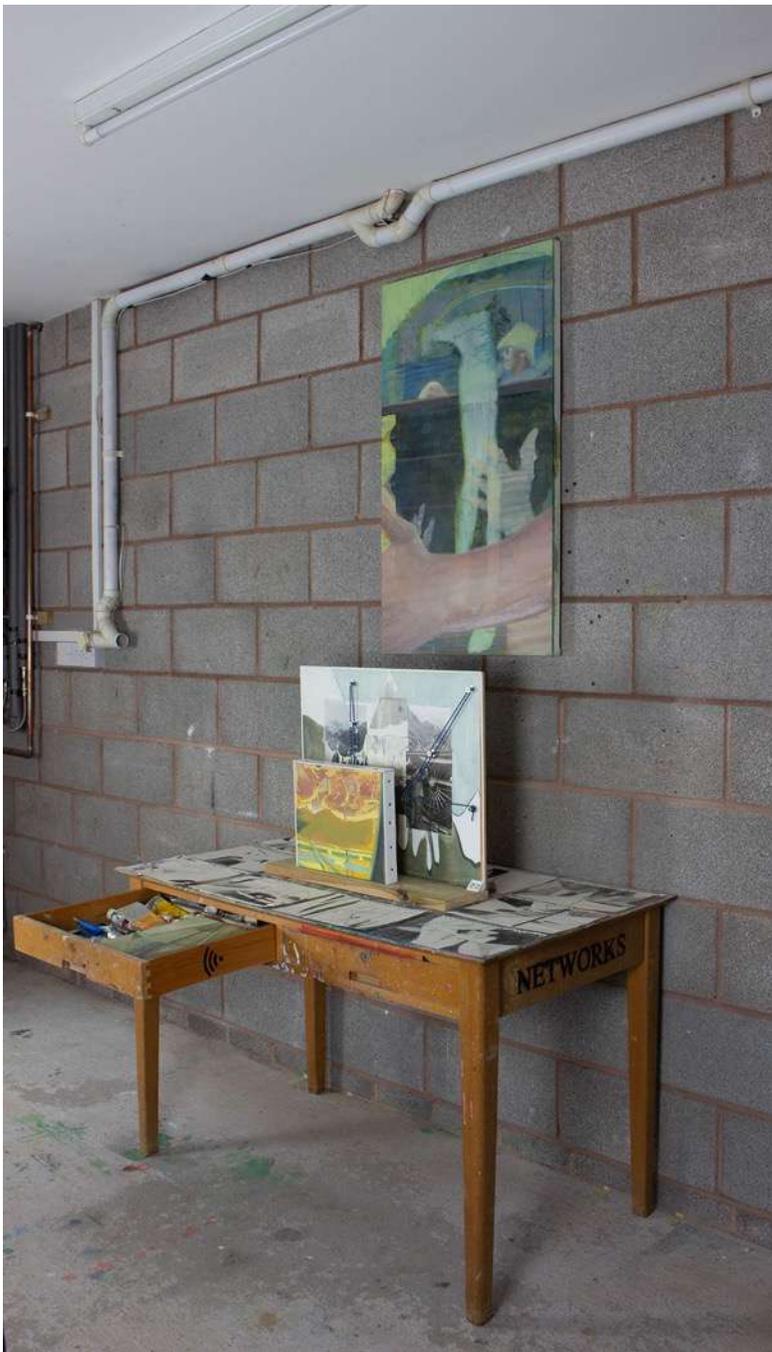
***Little Englander, 2021***

Oil and pencil on board embedded with wooden painted arrow, earplugs and handmade photogram mounted onto England Flag  
61.1 x 43.6 x 25 cm



***Networks (Installation), 2021***

Fixing A4 drawings, assemblage works and paintings around  
a repurposed table  
243 x 122 x 95 cm



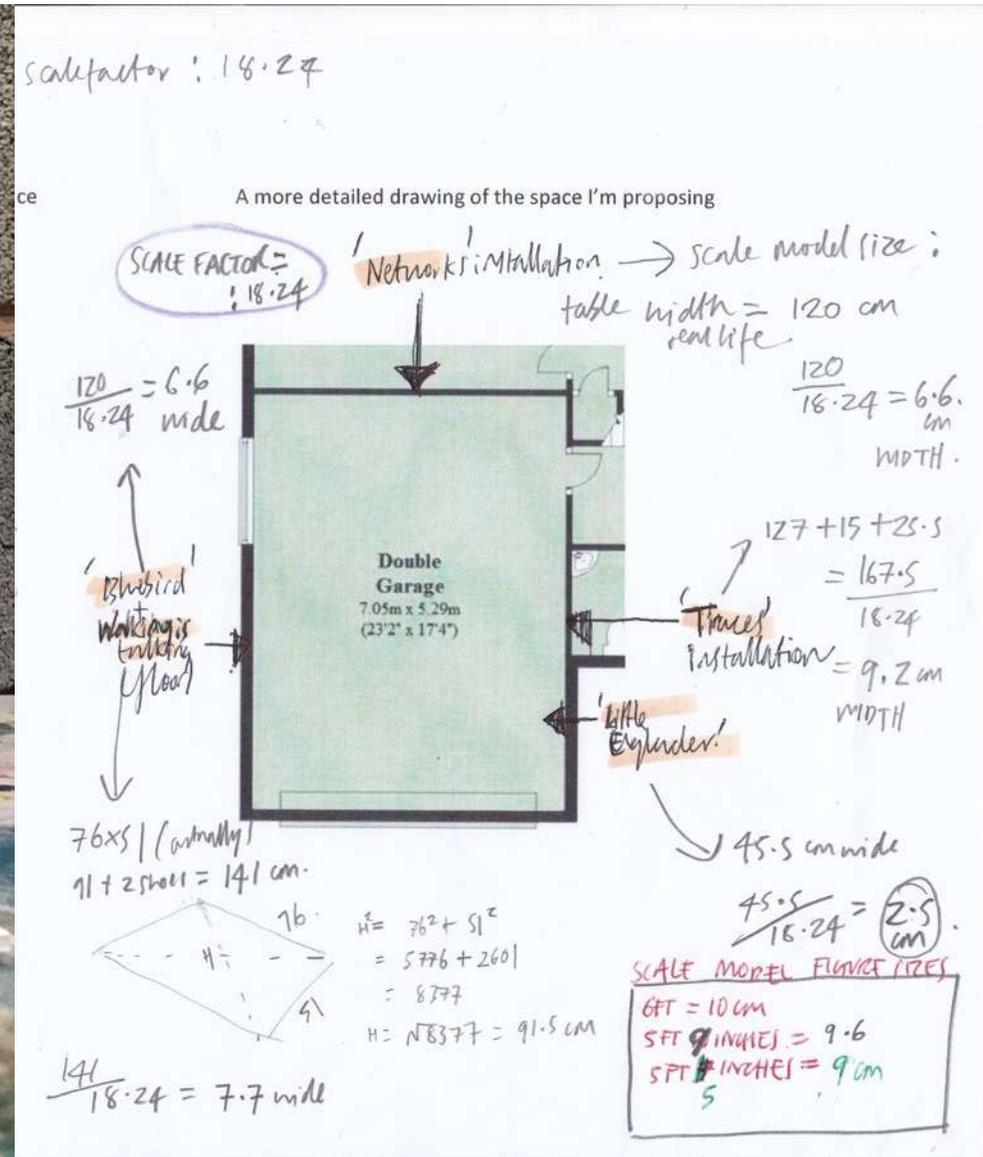
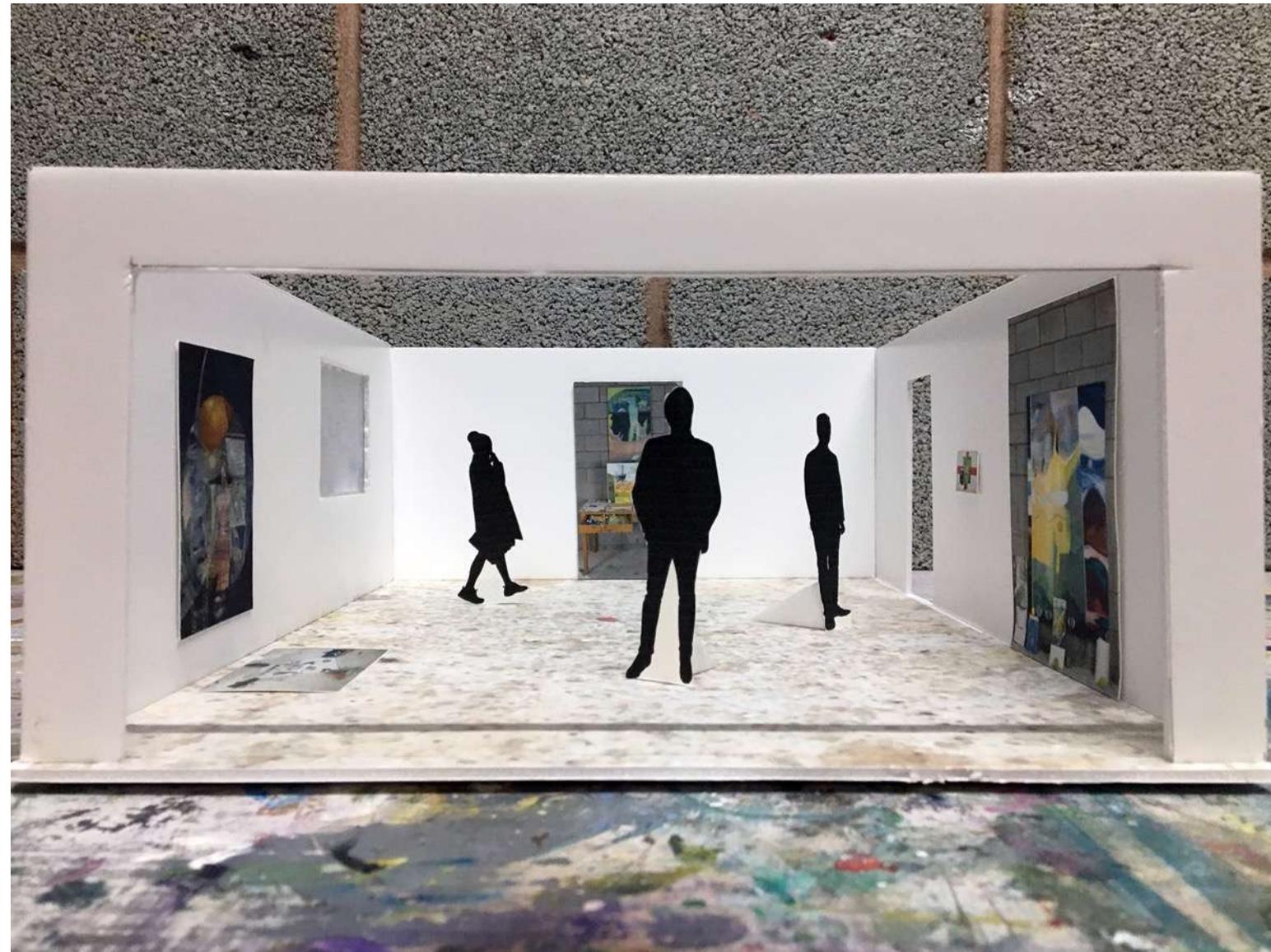
***Walking is Talking,  
2021***

Oil on canvas with  
handmade footprint  
paper and shoes  
76 x 51 cm



### **Exhibition Proposal Statement (200 words)**

I propose on installing my paintings in a garage, this garage being also the space that I've made them in. If given the opportunity, I would remove all the garage's contents to maximise on using all its area: this being  $7.05 \times 5.29 \text{ m} = 36.66 \text{ m}^2$ . Using an A3 scale model and the finalised installation shots of my work, I have imagined the possibility of an Exhibition functioning in this space and what it may look like. Brick walls and the concrete floor will remain untouched, marking the space as both functional for painting in and for exhibition purposes. 5 works are placed within the space, recognising that the space is small and that any more would seem overkill and chaotic. The three scale models – of 6ft, 5ft 10" and 5ft 5" in real life- evidences the need for no more than 5 works in the space. Around 5-10 people maximum at the same time would be able to view the work in the space. Conceptual curation decisions have been made so that by either entering through the garage shutter opening or through the side door, the viewer arcs in a circle viewing each work exhibited before exiting the space again.



Documentation of A3 scale model Exhibition space (based on garage space I have painted in)- made from foamboard, Perspex and card components, exploring how larger and smaller scale works relate to one another.

Floor plan – all paintings to hang from midpoints, except installation based work and work on the floor as pictured.

**Wall Height:** 2.55 m  
**Scale model heights:** 6ft, 5ft 9" and 5 ft 5"  
**Area of space:** 7.05 x 5.29 m = 36.66 m<sup>2</sup>

*Walking is Talking,*  
 2021 ●  
 76 x 51 cm

*Bluebird,*  
 2021 ●  
 170 x 120 cm

*Networks Installation, 2021* ○

*Little Englander, 2021*  
 45.5 x 28 cm ●

*Traces (5...4...3...2...1...)*  
 Installation, 2021 ○

