

Stanley Street gallery

March 2021

Toni Messiter

Artist Statement

'If the planets are in alignment there are times you get to do the things you want. For me that happened when I rented a studio space where I was able to fully discover the joy of painting. Art has always been my passion, but it had always been something I did on my own way. Visual expression influences everything in my physical world. By the time the studio space was mine I was ready to embrace and explore my creative dream. With the wealth of life experiences, I was able to hone my skills and discover my trait. I am settled in this "figurative conversation" and am enabled to express myself in ways for which there are no words.

Biography

Toni Messiter is a painter who began her practice over 20 years ago. Her father, a painter himself, taught Messiter the fundamentals of colour and composition, instilling a deep and enduring adoration for the medium. The theme of adoration is a recurrent in Messiter's practice to which we see the complexity and sometimes conflicting reality of this emotion in her recent solo exhibition, *Beloved*.

There is a nurturing intimacy within one's interaction with dolls that calls to mind notions of childhood and family. To Messiter, the notion of the doll allows for an uncanny re-enactment, where one might objectify and thereby reconcile their emotions. Drawing from the aesthetics of 17th Century portraiture and in particular, portraits of the family, Messiter engages with this subject matter by animating the cherub-like figures in expressions and interactions familiar to us. In this way, there is a stylistic affinity for theatrics which dramatically unfold as ruminations on the human condition; presenting subjects that boarder upon absurdity and delight, provocation and enchantment.

In depicting her *Beloved*, Messiter acknowledges that she possesses the dolls in the same way that we feel ownership over the relationships that we forge: connections that through their nurturance are able to teach us not only of love and compassion but also of manipulation and power.



Stanley Street Gallery Opening hours Thur – Fri 11am – 6pm Sat 11am – 5pm

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