

I am an abstract painter; my practice is rooted in the traditional materials, processes and histories of modernist geometric painting. I make paintings in series using oil paint on canvas.

Currently, I am making paintings as big as is physically and spatially possible for me, their size determined by materials, the length of my arm span and my available studio space. I like to make paintings so large it feels as though you could walk into the space they offer, or be enveloped by it. The expansive canvases are stretched as tight as possible, then I size the fabric with several layers of clear-drying rabbit skin glue. This, importantly, gives me a drum-tight skin to work on without altering the raw colour of the canvas.

After this lengthy ground preparation, I apply a thin stain of paint that settles into the surface; the colours appear less bright on un-primed canvas and I like this fact, it seems to make the paint more integral to the body of the ground. Often, my paintings feature interrupted patterns. I start these by drawing a grid across the canvas and the slow measuring and mapping of space gives me time to think and plan the patterns, which range from simple minimal lines and shapes to more complex structures.

I build up the surface of the paintings using a range of techniques – repeated, small, mindful brush strokes together with broader, gestural, heart-quickenings strokes; flat matt areas contrast with areas of textured gloss, adding to the ultimately ambivalent feeling of the paintings.

I notice colour combinations, both subtle and complementary, in the world around me - in the garden, domestic spaces, urban landscapes, waiting rooms and coastal landscapes; I record and collect these colour palettes to use in my paintings. I tend to use a limited palette for each painting, which highlights my chosen colour combinations and interactions, giving the colours a chance to chime. I want the paintings to physically draw people in close to reveal a space, a 'site' of a lived experience.

Women want to make art, they want specifically to paint, a desire which is as much about wanting the right to enjoy being the body of the painter in the studio – the creative self in a private domain – as it is about wanting to express individualistically the none the less collective experiences of women. *Pollock, G, (1992) Painting, Feminism, History*

Julie Mayer January 2023