

## An ode to the observers, the seekers and the lovers.

An ode to the pigeons outside my studio window, high above the city floor. Residing on the roofs of Courtenay Place. Some of them look like they have been bathed in oil, I think maybe because they squat above the extraction fan vents of nearby bars.

brunelle paints swans as an ode to Hugo's (brunelle's partner) world and in parallel, an ode to the romantics. Two swans together floating upon a deep blue. dias said to me, "His world is swans and mine is dogs." The swan painting feels different to the other works, it is more ethereal, less familiar. I think of the swan in comparison to the oily pigeon outside my studio. Must we try to seek beauty in all things? Or is it when we stop actively seeking beauty everywhere is when it becomes more apparent? There is beauty in everything and beauty in nothing.

Sometime last year, there were three swans floating around the harbour by my old house. They looked completely out of place, trying to seek shelter near the rocks when the swell was large. Each morning I would check on them from a distance. The bird enthusiasts on Lyall Bay Facebook pages assured me they were doing fine.



As I was writing this, a woman who has a studio down the hall from me knocked on the door and asked if I wanted to have an assemblage of large pink lilies she was holding. She explained that she always likes to have flowers on her desk but these ones were making her hay fever retaliate. Being gifted these flowers will impact me forever. I have never even thought of keeping flowers on my studio desk; a new tradition I will begin.

*a soft protest* is a curation of moments. The paintings have a sense of spontaneity and immediacy that comes with capturing a fleeting moment in time. Which is then slowed down during the transition into painting, a painting that will live for years – existing. The meanings behind these

paintings will forever change within the flux of our fast-paced world. However, to brunelle the memory is forever. A documentation of her relationship, a generous glimpse into the private life. dias' work *blew before you* is a painting of Hugo blowing out his birthday candles. A tradition a lot of people partake in – once a year. A marker of time, another loop around the sun. We attend birthdays, we host birthdays. brunelle tells me the figure in the background of the painting is Hugo's dad. As Hugo blows out the candles, Dad is already on the search for a knife to cut the cake, he has lived many birthdays, he knows how this works.



brunelle dias. *blew before you*. Oil on canvas panel. 25.5 x 30.5cm.

brunelle mentioned she was questioning calling her work “studies”. I like this, every painting impacts the next. Forming a limitless flow of time and place. A memory held in the mind, and also a memory held in the artist's hand. dias does not conduct preliminary drawings, the rawness of process is open for us all to see. *a soft protest* calls upon a reconsideration of movement and observation.

There is a delicacy to this rawness, wispy marks making up familiar objects. In the work *i'm not taking down the veil, i realise now, it was hung for a reason*, we can see the familiar gingham print of a kitchen towel. Visual patterns on fabrics lead us to an impression of familiar things and daily rituals. In the foreground, there is an axe wedged into a slab of wood. Cutting firewood, a task that results in providing heat for a household is like the satisfaction we feel once hanging up a full load of laundry to dry. Although dias recognizes these routines, I later find out these are Hugo's family sheets at his family home. brunelle's role is observing and seeing (not actively seeking) beauty in domestic banality. In the background, sunlight is shining through the laundry in an angelic way. The light is natural; however, I can't help but be reminded of theatre lights illuminating fabrics on the bodies of performers. I think about the dance between the luminous background and the tangible foreground. I am made aware, there is beauty in all things (thank you).



brunelle dias. *i'm not taking down the veil, i realise now, it was hung for a reason.* Oil on unstretched canvas. 161 x 171 cm.

I had a disagreement recently with someone about storytelling. They suggested that telling stories was the purpose of living. brunelle's work is essentially storytelling, the telling of her life, her time and where she sits in relation to the world. However, these stories are not actively trying to prove experience, they are a demonstration of embodiment. dias reassures me that there is power in daily movements, and repeated tasks as an assertion of meaning - using her painting practice of monotony to assert protest. Protest essentially being, "stepping out, reflecting, and critiquing," painting also requires this removal of self; brunelle surmises, "This is the why and the painting is the how."

I think that painting has power over time. While painting from a memory is a means of recollection, painting as an action demands being present. Strokes land on the canvas in the present, leaving their mark in the future. Each time a painting is viewed, a combination of the past and present is carried with the viewer in time to come. Painting – an ode to those who have lived before us, those who will come after and those who do as I write this (the observers, the seekers and the lovers).