

South Parade

Zoë Carlon

Around the edges: recent work on paper

29 April - 8 June 2024

An uninhabited restaurant noted down a sided street; chairs stationed and upright, menu half-opened, waiting to be read. Venetian red daubs of geraniums lining a train station walkway, the blushing petals and stems sprawled over containers, languishing limbs stretching out. Another moment, one finds themselves by a window with a garden beyond it - or perhaps the viewer is outside looking in, at the potted plant within the window's inner sill. Subject matter ushers for the viewer to draw nearer, to allow petals to brush lightly over skin, to take a seat at the vacant table. To wait for another to join, to let the scene unfurl.

Zoë Carlon captures the blurring textures and coloured streaks of our pedestrian lives through her paintings on paper, bringing inanimate material to life. She expresses how she is most drawn to interior spaces and the stylised environments we engage with every day - the theatre of our lives, the sets we build up and take apart. In particular, the constructed displays of planters in town centres, flowers extracted from their natural landscape then presented in stationed vessels; an act of care in planting them, but all the while staged. In her images of interiority, windows and cafe seating come to the fore, providing glimpses into commuters' lives and fleeting sights of a transitory world.

Zoë notes how each painting is a different encounter, but when presented together could be perceived as one travel experience, moments of the same journey. Viewers might see the visuals as being parts of the same narrative, absorbed like stills from a film. Zoë is, however, not wishing to push a singular narrative, wanting to keep it open instead; for viewers to feel these moments of discovery and intrigue in their own traversals. Through specific cropping of the subject attention is given to certain detailing, translating visual language into multiple entry points or meanings, removing the site-specificity of the source. In doing so, she isolates central images further - be that a balustrade, bouquet or stretch of blurred sunlit trees, the visual becoming less recognisable, to create a more homogenous, anonymous architecture of each captured landscape.

Colour and gesture is deeply considered; what the images could become spatially, the feeling inherent in selected tones. Her paintings choose to disregard the original subject matters' colour palette, focusing more intensely on colours that elevate emotions felt, notably indigo and royal blues, charcoal greys and forest greens, or rich ochres and reds. Adding depth with every new application of oil paint, her works move between loose painting motions to more concentrated mark-making, contributing to the building of a vignette. As viewers engage with each work, they too are meandering. Here through Zoë's astute gaze, lies a practice of attention and tenderness, inviting the next passerby to accompany her in looking.

By Lucy Rose Cunningham

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Zoë Carlon, [b. 1993 UK] studied at the University of Leeds UK and The Hungarian Academy of Fine Arts Budapest, Hungary and is based in Wakefield, West Yorkshire, UK. Recent solo exhibitions and presentations include *Feria Material Vol.9 Presented by South Parade, Mexico City MX (2023)* *Strange Comfort, South Parade London UK (2022)*. Recent group exhibitions include *What we make where, in collaboration with Josh Armitage, Hyde Park Art Club Leeds and AMP Gallery London UK (2023)* *Moving in, Super Super Markt Berlin DE (2023)*, *Material Poetics, Presented by South Parade at The Shop Sadie Coles HQ, London UK (2022)* and *Chronicles 5, Galerie Droste, Berlin DE (2022)*.

Zoë is currently a Visiting Artist Lecturer at the School of Fine Art, History of Art and Cultural Studies University of Leeds. In 2021-22 she was a Tetley Associate Artist in residence at The Tetley, Leeds. Her work can be found in The Government Art Collection, London UK, and The FUAM Collection, University of Leeds UK.

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Zoë Carlon's paintings depict spaces that are simultaneously public and private. Selected subjects including unoccupied interiors, views through windows and peripheries of the maintained natural world, are developed from photographs she takes en masse of both her immediate environment and unfamiliar transitory spaces. Compositions are formed of thresholds, creating a boundary between interior and exterior space while the use of manipulated perspectives and an invented palette establish awkward impossibilities within each scene. Within her practice Zoë is interested in our capacity for active attention, and experience of solitude, in relation to the rate at which public and private domains are increasingly blurred.

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Left to Right:

1. Zoë Carlon, *Untitled*, 2023. Oil on paper, 29.70 (H) x 21.00 (W) cm
2. Zoë Carlon, *Restaurant*, 2024. Oil on paper, 29.70 (H) x 21.00 (W) cm
3. Zoë Carlon, *Untitled*, 2024. Oil on paper, 29.70 (H) x 21.00 (W) cm
4. Zoë Carlon, *Window Pelargonium II*, 2023. Oil on paper, 29.70 (H) x 21.00 (W) cm
5. Zoë Carlon, *Flowers in Town*, 2024. Oil on paper, 29.70 (H) x 21.00 (W) cm