# Artist Profile: Oscar Hart

My practice concerns painting. Through the process of painting, I aim to scrutinise traditional and ‘Old Master’ painting, and inadvertently their connotations within a historical and contemporary context. This is achieved, in part, through the intentional juxtaposition I create between the surface that I paint on, and the traditional painting techniques and mediums that I use in the construction of figurative imagery. By doing this, I aim to investigate the increasingly ambiguous term: ‘painting’ and challenge pre-conceived notions of what ‘a painting’ can be within a contemporary context.

My work draws attention to the ‘objectness’ of the canvas, as opposed to the painting itself as an autonomous space. This creates a friction between the materials used to build the surface, and the painted image. The materials that I build these surfaces have a familiarity with an audience which is only partly transformed by the paint which creates a sense of the Uncanny for the viewer. The materials I use are strongly associated with the social fabric of life and can be found in day-to-day settings such as domestic, public, and urban spaces. This creates a strong sense of familiarity between the viewer and the work. Using these everyday materials and making them a prominent feature allows me to explore social and political issues through the medium itself, addressing “real world” issues as well as contemporary art issues. The materials also resonate with me personally, as I was raised in a working-class household and have worked surrounded by trades people who showed me how these materials are normally used in the context of architecture, construction, and development. I have spent the last few years working with these industrial materials in a builder’s merchant, both selling them and reviewing their efficacy for building purposes. Materiality in my work is especially important as it contextualises the work and puts it within the time and place of creation, whilst also helping the work to function as a social commentary.

In addition, my work functions as a critique of the elitism and snobbery and inaccessibility entwined with painting through the figurative imagery that I paint. Furthermore, the use traditional and expensive mediums such as oil paint is applied to inexpensive and crude materials such as concrete, chip board and found objects which exaggerate these issues further. These materials have also afforded me the opportunity to explore the lifecycle, longevity, and fragility of the artwork, which is an idea that I find exciting and comforting; the idea that nothing is permanent and the progression and evolution through innovation are essential to the future of painting.

Currently my work is driven by conceptual and material experimentation which keeps pushing my work forward and in new directions, whilst also trying to consolidate my researched to date. I am currently producing bodies of work, as opposed to seemingly disconnected individual work which I have previously made and focusing more on curatorial aspects of fine art practice to convey these ideas within exhibitions.