

NEAL JONES

IWDDIY4U.

Maccarone New York
98 Morton Street
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I am an insect, sky, rotten wood, kingfishers and the humans here. Presenting myself as singular Art product feels inadequate while breathing in a cosmic landscape. In the boring Artworld I'm trying to find a tactic for an undergrowth survival, while aiming to communicate my changing reality. From the outside here I've been dipping my toe into the Artworld, peeking at both corporate politics and NETFLIX, watching NARCCIssists prosper and sweethearts disappear. I watch these things pass by with my fish-fly-bird eye.

I have a beautiful rented garden in London and grow everything that is delicious. I have made havens for wildlife, which I find delicious company. I built a greenhouse studio and started an art career there. It was a more nourishing solution to an arid underpaid enslavement in London. Here property prices kept rising and I gave thousands of pounds in rent to the genius landlords. I came to London to learn about Art and Culture, I left having learned about cruel nature.

I got priced out of London. I still visit my garden now and then to weed and sow. I live on the waterfront now: nowhere in history, 100 miles away from London. There is no High Art here, and no power. My little rusty houseboat is called Buzzard III and I have an affordable old boatshed nearby as a dark workroom. Soon I will go under. Most evenings I want to speed up the process. Making rounded meaningful art is an attempt to love it all anyway, even my decline. IWDDIY4U.

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Neal Jones (born Liverpool, 1969) lives and works in London and Norwich. Selected recent solo exhibitions include POOR ME, Allotment Paintings 2007/08, CONDO, Southard Reid, London, UK (2017); WINTER GARDEN, Young Team HQ, London, UK (2016); NATURE SCUM, Southard Reid, London, UK (2015); NJx, Southard Reid, London, UK (catalogue) (2014); Woody, Southard Reid, London, UK, Ye Deflated Artes, L-13, London, UK (2012); I am not painting, L-13, London, UK, Neal Jones: Sad Hill, Southard Reid, London, UK (2011); New Paintings and Handmade Things, L-13 Gallery, London, UK (catalogue) (2010).

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IMAGE WAR

Walking away from the river where the spectacle of water and sky dominates, past wild red dotted hedges with birds scattering, I find the slick concrete road and follow it back to the world of people and images. Car shapes, haircuts, clothes, shoes, all with an offensive/defensive flavour. Here comes an advert with happy model smiling with product, or little miss perfect with a LOGO next to her fat lips. Its not like I can shut my eyes, especially in the supermarket. Just like when I hear political shit on the radio, or coming from mouths, I can't close my ears. Reading the newspapers and watching tv is not a habit of mine: I find them prescriptive, predictable, and insulting to REAL life, but the shit still goes in through word of mouth drivel, and so I have to clear out regularly then constantly rearrange what's real or good. Someone was killed or an asteroid is coming, this is all fine, but then opinions interrupt and suspiciously appropriate adverts follow, it's as if the media, by directing public consciousness, acts as vehicle for advertising only. As if everything we see and hear is advert: for a passive image fed way of life.

We are bombed with images daily, sugary and addictive, product and power pornography. Because we see no blood we think images are innocent, glittery, fun: but they drown us, demean us and sometimes even kill us. Mainly they make us tired and confused, insecure, ugly and speechless.

It is no accident painting and power has walked hand in hand. From magical ceremonies, church sermons to Renaissance banking and the religious banking of today's images, these cozy stories and the resulting friendly artwork predominates.

Painting privately, without patron, and barely a product, I can see something closer to myself and be more admiring of myself. By painting it becomes possible to take control of what goes into my eyes daily, and what I think about, and how deeply. Paintings are no more innocent as images, and dictate a specific narrative similarly. There is the possibility though that they wont rip you off, or hurt you, sell you something, scream at you noisily or become addictive. There is the possibility that they could send you love, educate you perhaps, and lead you away as if to a floral retreat, towards a quiet escape. They could love you so much that they could take you around this earth garden noting all the successes and failures as they stand, the life and the death, glory and misery, with serene equanimity. Without retreat or attack.

Painting is a way of taking back image control, put upon us from birth and spun out daily, everywhere. We are surrounded. We are involved in an image war, fought by governments and big business, using the Internet, cinema and even museums and Art. Defend yourself well, then fight: for a more real world with more meaningful images that could be made for our mental health and our lusty and hopeful selves. We must paint our way out of simplicities and towards a more sympathetic image world.

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