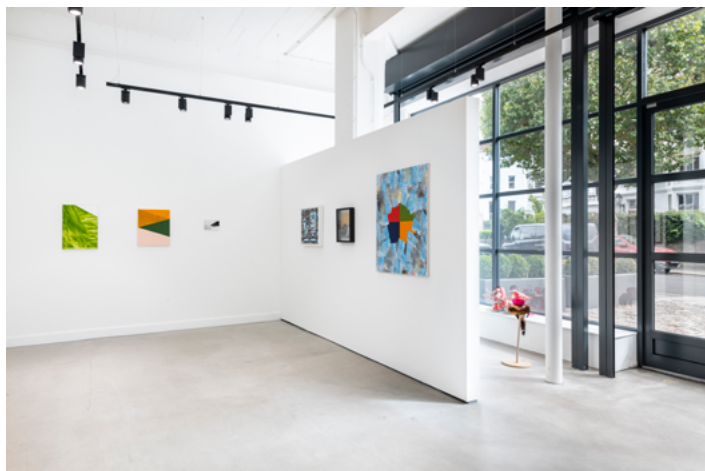


Q&A: Ian Hartshorne with Nancy Dewe Mathews



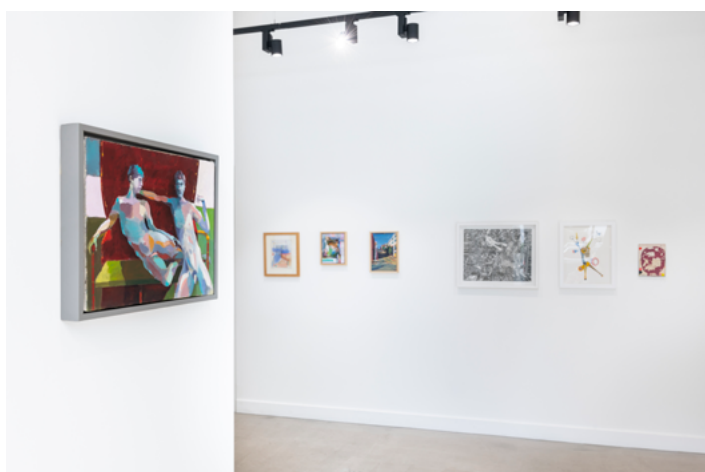
NDM: Why did you decide to launch this project?

IH: The *Fully Awake* cycle, which is in six parts, is a component of a larger project called 'Teaching Painting'. This is an organisation that was established in 2015, with a steering committee and chaired by artists Magnus Quaife, Sean Kaye and myself. Our aim is to promote painting and to set the academic agenda in relation to current debates both within, and outside of, an academic context. Teaching Painting is a cooperative of interested parties which creates forums for developing dialogues with and about painting in an ongoing mutually supportive manner. The intention being to address and examine issues surrounding the philosophy and teaching of painting. The other activities that we have organised include conferences, symposia and publications, all of which are a declaration on our part to foreground debates about painting that contribute to the ongoing vitality of painting as an educationally rigorous and essential cultural force.



When the idea for the 'Teaching Painting: A Conference' at Whitworth Art Gallery emerged, it was because we realised that the ideas and approaches to teaching painting between art schools are not always shared, or if they are it's usually in an informal setting, and we considered that the more we share these things between us, the better we are at learning from each other. This promotes commonality without compromising on academic freedom.

The *Fully Awake* exhibitions are curated by Sean Kaye and myself. The project could be perceived as an ambitious survey show that reveals the influence and artistic effect painting has had in art schools over the past 70 years.



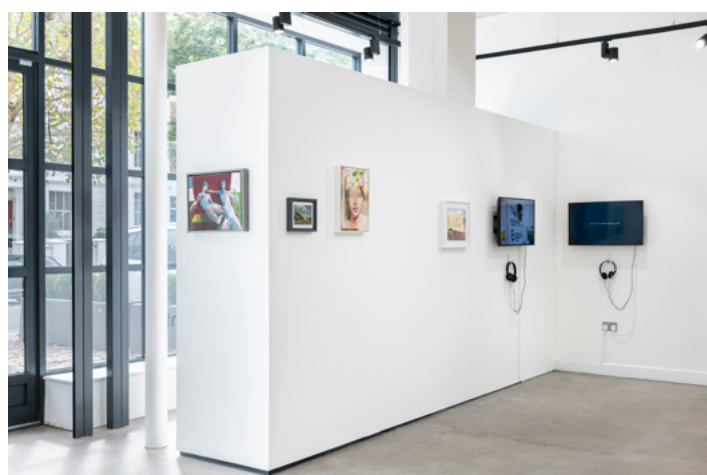
NDM: How has the project changed and developed since its inception?

IH: The concept is the same throughout the six shows. We researched how many UK art schools have art teachers who are painters. Seventy-two institutions were identified, so we asked one member of staff from each institution to be in an exhibition, and for them to invite two guests, someone they taught and someone they were taught by, to show alongside them. This means that in total, 216 people will exhibit their work over six venues.

NDM: What is your intention for the close of the project, and how do you see it concluding?

IH: The intention is to stage a major summation show which includes all 216 artists, however, finding a venue isn't as easy as I would like! We also intend to publish a major catalogue, again containing all the artists who have contributed to the project, as a survey of more than 70 years' experience of how painting has been taught in UK art schools, and how that has shaped wider debates and responses about painting.

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NDM: The project has been shown in multiple locations, such as Leeds, Glasgow, Edinburgh and London – how has it differed from place to place?

IH: The audience has certainly grown, with more people being aware of the project and with audiences beginning to recognise its importance; the responses via social media and written correspondence has been wonderful. Through the run of the shows we have been approached several times to continue the project into other venues and institutions, however, this is not going to be possible because we are not funded at all, and the whole project runs on goodwill and pure love!

NDM: Could you discuss a particular memory from art school that has stayed with you/informed your practice?

IH: Completing a foundation course was utterly transformative; I could almost feel the dark clouds of ignorance lifting as I progressed through the course. The one thing which has stayed with me throughout my art school education generally, is the level of intellectual rigour and the balanced criticism offered by my tutors. I aspire to emulate this through my own teaching. I am also motivated by the lack of support for painting specifically, but for the arts generally, that it receives at a political level... art is a civilising, sophisticated and endlessly engaging pursuit, and this is often devalued, which I strongly object to.

NDM: Could you describe something that was significant about a particular art teacher and what it was that made them have such a strong an impact on you?

IH: The incomparable Ansel Krut was my tutor. He taught me the passive 'it will do' attitude 'will not do!' Also, the view that teaching is a noble thing to do; the treatment of teachers currently is shocking in the UK! So I have decided to learn as much as possible from others, especially from my students, and to tell whomever else will listen to me what I have learned!