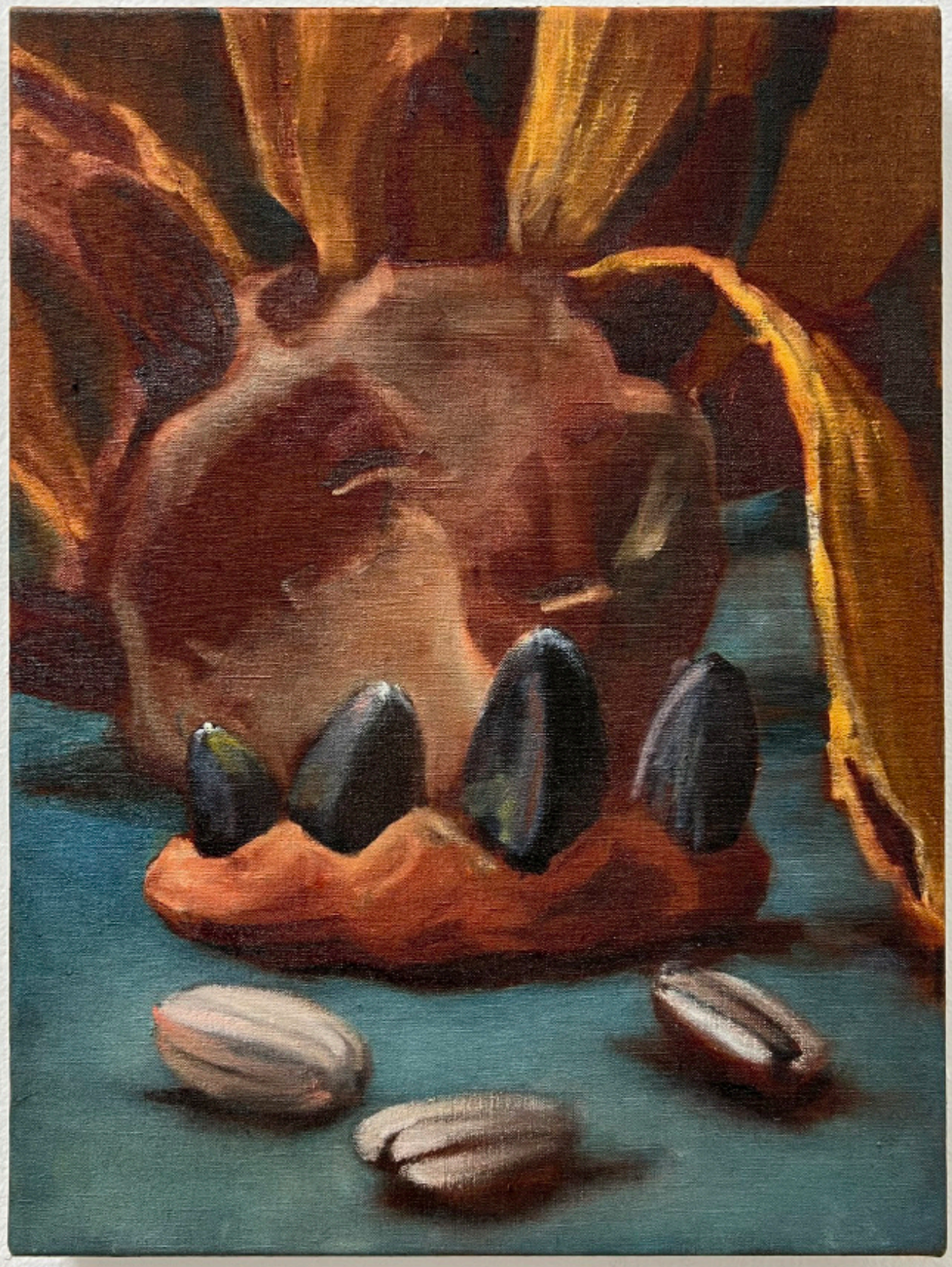


They are shipping (...) belatedly, insufficiently, occasionally hesitantly, 2022, oil on linen, diptych, 180x130 cm





If you can’t explain it simply, you don’t understand it well enough, 2022, oil on linen, 30x40 cm

May life be more joyous, and may we find electricity, water, heating friendship and light, 2022, oil on linen, 32x40cm

My face is a mess, 2022, oil on canvas, 30x43cm



It made me feel like I was getting stronger mentally as I was stronger physically, 2022, oil on linen, 28x35cm





You could have been told that we don’t wear gold, only silver, and that we stay up all night by the candlelight, 2022, oil on canvas, 60x80cm

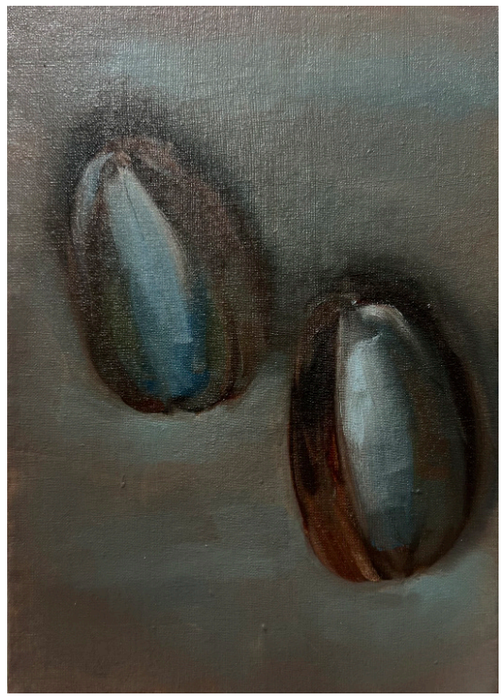




I’ve got it all, 2022, oil on linen, 142x198cm



Every time you get scared you get a little less scared, 2022, oil on linen, 190x130cm



29 October 2022, oil on linen, 15x21cm





My face is a mess 2, 2022, oil on canvas, 15x21cm



I hate people who play being shy and reserved, 2022, oil on linen, 42x30cm



Ancient, complex, sensitive, 2022, oil on linen, 90x120cm



Just a nice group of friends in hell, 2022, oil on linen, 130x90cm



90% perfect, 2022, oil on linen, 89x118 cm

First sense of communal life-threatening danger, aged 6, 2022, oil on linen, 130x90cm

SUNFLOWER DIARY

First sense of communal life-threatening danger, age 6.

26 April 1986

A nuclear disaster that brought down an empire. Chernobyl led to thousands of deaths, including that of the Soviet Union. 2.

26 April 2016

“Chernobyl” is the highest-rated TV series ever. HBO’s show rates higher on IMDb than other historical dramas and even “Breaking Bad”. 3.

4 June 2019

Put these sunflower seeds in your pockets so at least something will grow when you die in the field over there. 4.

25 February 2022

Leila and Marysia invited mom and me to their annual International Women’s Celebration at the cafe. A refugee from Hong Kong sat next to us at the dinner. Blue and yellow crocuses from the table left with us that night. Laurie invited us to plant in the garden near the Towpath Cafe.

8 March 2022

Sunflower sprouting from seed took two weeks. I planted some with my mom near Laurie’s.

2 April 2022

I spent an afternoon googling various martial arts. Now that to date official record of rape reports in occupied territories by russians reached over 3000 Googling Gentileschi’s raging paintings cutting off heads.

4 April 2022

Laurie texted apologising for her partner unknowingly mulched over the sprouts. We ordered more seeds, sprouted them and planted them in the communal flower beds by the Broadway market lock on the Regents Canal.

9 April 2022

“Kickboxing. Go for Adam’s apple or the balls. Chigun is prob for you - that building up of energy.” I like it, it’s kind of like painting. Perhaps painting has that energy charge too. Like a punch.

26 April 2022

Most of the sunflowers took to the soil. They definitely need a lot of watering.

1 May 2022

“We wanted to close the plant to them as much as we could. In particular, he needed to keep them away from the energy blocks. It’s the cockpit, the area you want to keep terrorists out of. I said: ``If you want some nuclear waste I can put some in your pocket!”

10 May 2022

Watering the sunflowers again. They are thirsty suckers. A guy stopped us to photograph and asked where we were from. He looked like he would have liked to chat.

1 June 2022

Three out of four heads of sunflowers planted in a pot by my house disappeared overnight. Squirrelled away. Competition.

7 June 2022

Watering the sunflowers with the canal water. First ones are starting to bloom.

15 June 2022

Vandals, those must be moskali. They ripped the whole plants out. The heads are hard to cut off so they left them hanging on the stems looking very sorry. I tried to cut them off completely but the local resident started shouting at me, how can I ruin the work that local children did. I thanked her for looking out for them.

20 June 2022

Some graffiti appeared that kind of matched the sunnies. The council repainted these boxes twice. The last time - in bright blue. Slava Ukraini.

29 June 2022

Three more sunflowers were cut down. Then I saw them in a vase on a boat moored nearby. I was so upset I went to Columbia Market and bought a bunch for £5. And most of them were sold out - I got the last bunch.

The sunflowers are half dead although the parents water them every other day. The water is being rationed, but not the one from the canal.

19 July 2022

What do you normally do on holidays with your parents?
We visit botanical gardens. In Glasgow we met your sister and her baby mutant Vivipary (def.: when seeds or embryos begin to develop before they detach from the parent.)

Are there any radioactive reasons for it in Glasgow? Do you think those Fukushima mutant sunnies really are nuclear?

18 August 2022

Meeting a Russian artist friend for coffee on the canal by the sunflowers. She suggests collaboration. I suggest we speak English and decline collaboration; not something I am up to as long as the Ukrainians are dying from Russian bombs. She is a nice person though.

26 August 2022

Went out at 7 am to the canal to harvest the seeds from the sunflowers that are now dry on the stalk. You don’t want to give the Ukraininans a bad reputation of vandalising public gardens, he said. What to plant next year?

30 Sep 2022

Sunflower oil tanks set for exportation were damaged by attacks in Mykolaiv: oil flows through streets of the city (17% of world sunflower export passes through that port). 1.

17 Oct 2022

Three more rockets arrive in my parents’ neighbourhood. No deaths reported. Doors blown off. No electricity, running water reestablished.

22 Oct 2022

Bought 2 kg of Sainsbury’s birdfeed sunflower seeds ``not for human consumption”. They successfully sprouted within a week.

24 Oct 2022

Panel with sunflowers and angels by symbolist Mykhailo Zhuk along with 15000 objects looted from Kherson Art Museum.

14 Nov 2022

ABOUT

This project traces the eight months of Russia's recent invasion of Ukraine: growing sunflowers from the seed with my parents as they got displaced to East London, telling their story haptically through planting, writing and painting.



Parents watering sunflowers during the heatwave, Regents Canal, East London, 2022

To keep a clear head from the grief over what's going on in my birthplace since February 2022 - I look to plants. It's always been about the plants, the family having worked on land, practising household herbalism, and in 2016-2021 getting into participatory art through staging herbal tea sessions.

Considering the hierarchy of art genres (still life - feminine and basic, history painting - ostentatious and highly valued), the entanglement of 'alive' and 'dead' in these paintings is not just still life, but more like future history painting. Because it does both: wishes for abundance, reminds of fleetingness of the life passing, as well as imagines the necessary violence in negotiation for coexistence between the plants and the humans.



BIO

Recent shows and projects include: Pi Artworks for Art Basel Hong Kong OVR, May 2022; Sensorium at Verv Lab, London, 2020; Herbal Tea Labo at AIR-Yamanashi, Kofu, 2019; London Creative Network, Space Studios 2018, studio residency at Florence Trust, 2015-2016; Bulldog Bursary with the Royal Society of Portrait Painters in 2012, BP Portrait Award at the National Portrait Gallery 2011

CONTACT

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