



Herald St

Art Basel Hong Kong

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28 – 30 March

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Poppy Jones

(b. 1985, London; lives and works in Bexhill-on-Sea)

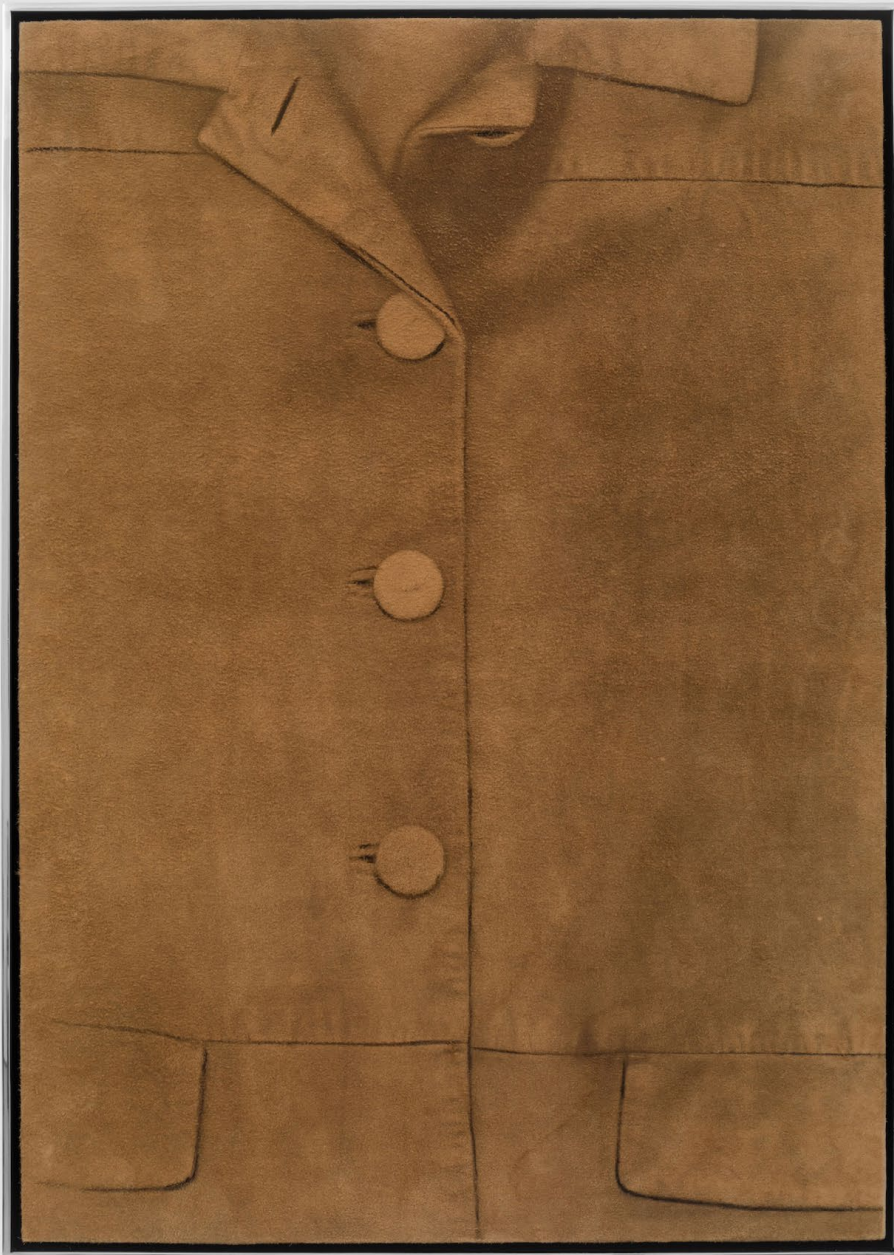
Poppy Jones's intimate still lifes sit somewhere between painting and object, with haptic surfaces crisply contained in aluminium frames. These window-like works show domestic items from her rural East Sussex home, fading into the soft suedes and jewel-toned cottons and silks that constitute their supports. Each piece incorporates photography, lithography, and watercolour on found fabrics, including swatches from the artist's own clothing. Throughout her methodical process, she embraces fingerprint smudges and other such 'mistakes' which make their way onto the surfaces, and some of her larger works include a seam running down the centre, further evidencing the second-hand nature of the reused materials. Among these dimmed vignettes are sources of light: the glow of a reading lamp, the satin sheen of tulip petals, or the sunlight beaming from the blank pages of an open notebook revealing tender moments suffused with a quiet beauty.



Frozen Flowers
2024
Oil and watercolour on suede, soldered aluminium frame
42 x 59.5 x 2.5 cm / 16.5 x 23.4 x 1 in
HS20-PJ8955P

£25,000





Breathless

2025

Oil and watercolour on suede, aluminium frame

42 x 30 x 2.5 cm / 16.5 x 11.8 x 1 in

HS20-PJ8947P

£20,000

Mortal Day
2024
Oil and watercolour on suede, soldered aluminium frame
59.5 x 42 x 2.5 cm / 23.4 x 16.5 x 1 in
HS20-PJ8953P

£25,000





Poetic Self
2024

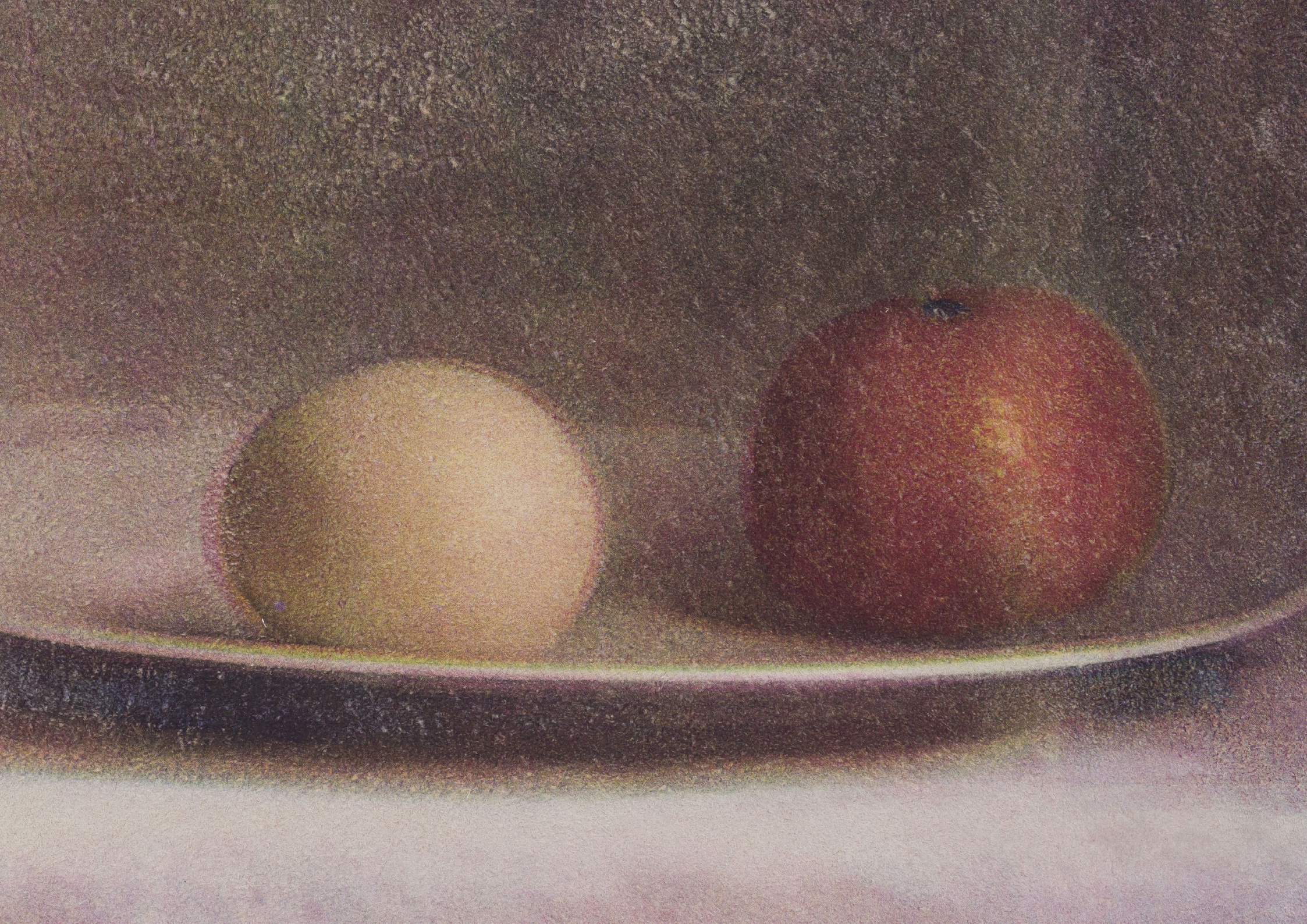
Oil and watercolour on silk, soldered aluminium frame
42 x 30 x 2.5 cm / 16.5 x 11.8 x 1 in
HS20-PJ8948P

£20,000



Still Objects
2025
Oil and watercolour on suede, soldered aluminium frame
19.3 x 25.8 x 2.5 / 7.6 x 10.2 x 1 in
HS20-PJ8945P

£15,000

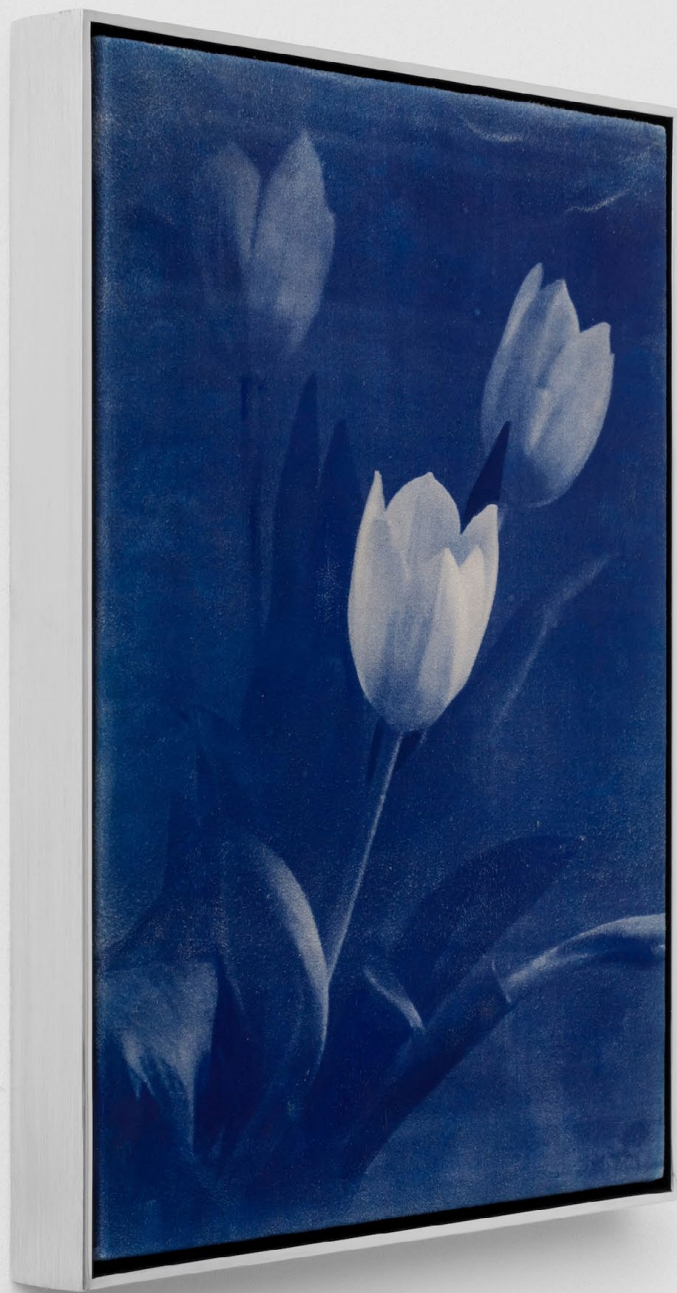




Trio
2025

Oil and watercolour on suede, soldered aluminium frame
29.2 x 21.1 x 2.5 cm / 11.5 x 8.3 x 1 in
HS20-PJ8942P

£15,000



The Seasons
2025
Oil and watercolour on suede, aluminium frame
42 x 30 x 2.5 cm / 16.5 x 11.8 x 1 in
HS20-PJ8951P

£20,000





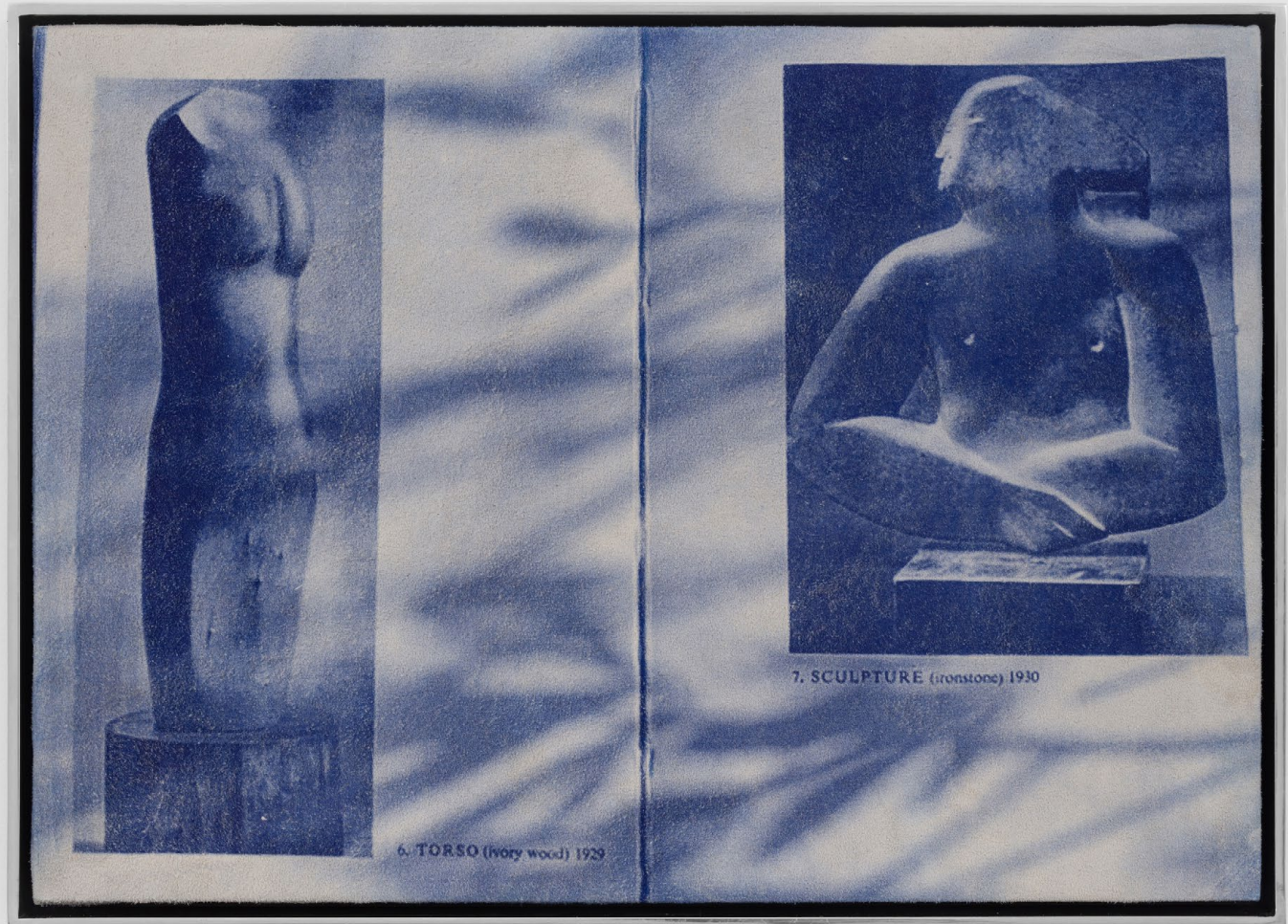


After Life
2024

Oil and watercolour on suede, soldered aluminium frame
42 x 59.5 x 2.5 cm / 16.5 x 23.4 x 1 in
HS20-PJ8956P

£25,000





A Book (Torso, Ivory Wood)

2024

Oil and watercolour on suede, aluminium frame

21.1 x 29.2 x 2.5 cm / 8.3 x 11.5 x 1 in

HS20-PJ8944P

£15,000



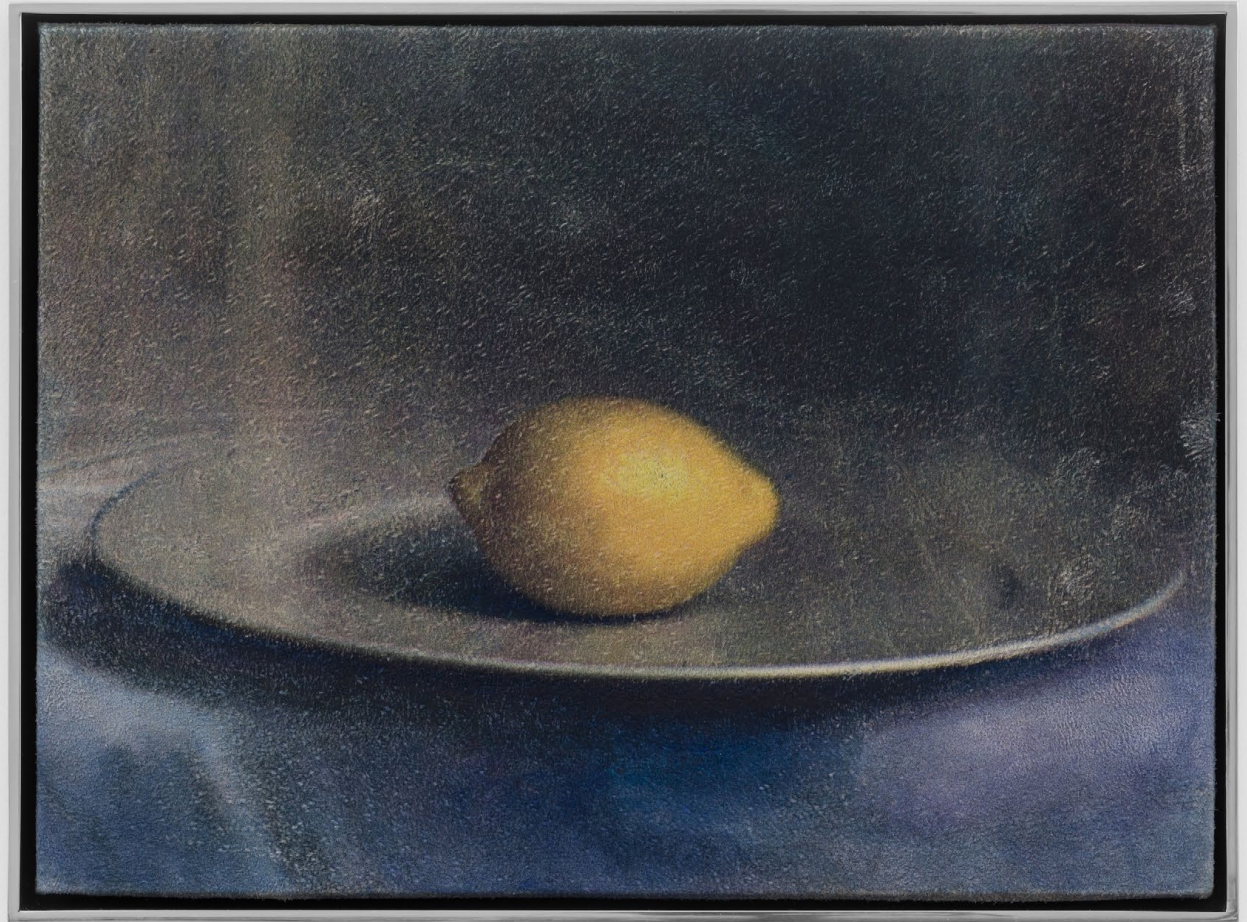


Night Flowers
2025

Oil and watercolour on suede, soldered aluminium frame
29.2 x 21.1 x 2.5 cm / 11.5 x 8.3 x 1 in
HS20-PJ8943P

£15,000





Blue, Lemon
2024
Oil and watercolour on suede, soldered aluminium frame
19.3 x 25.9 x 2.5 cm / 7.6 x 10.2 x 1 in
HS20-PJ8941P

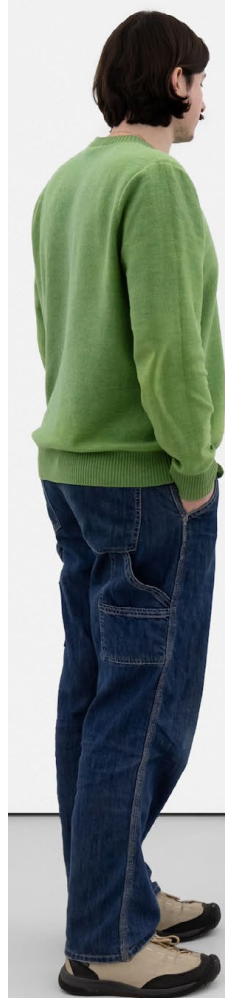
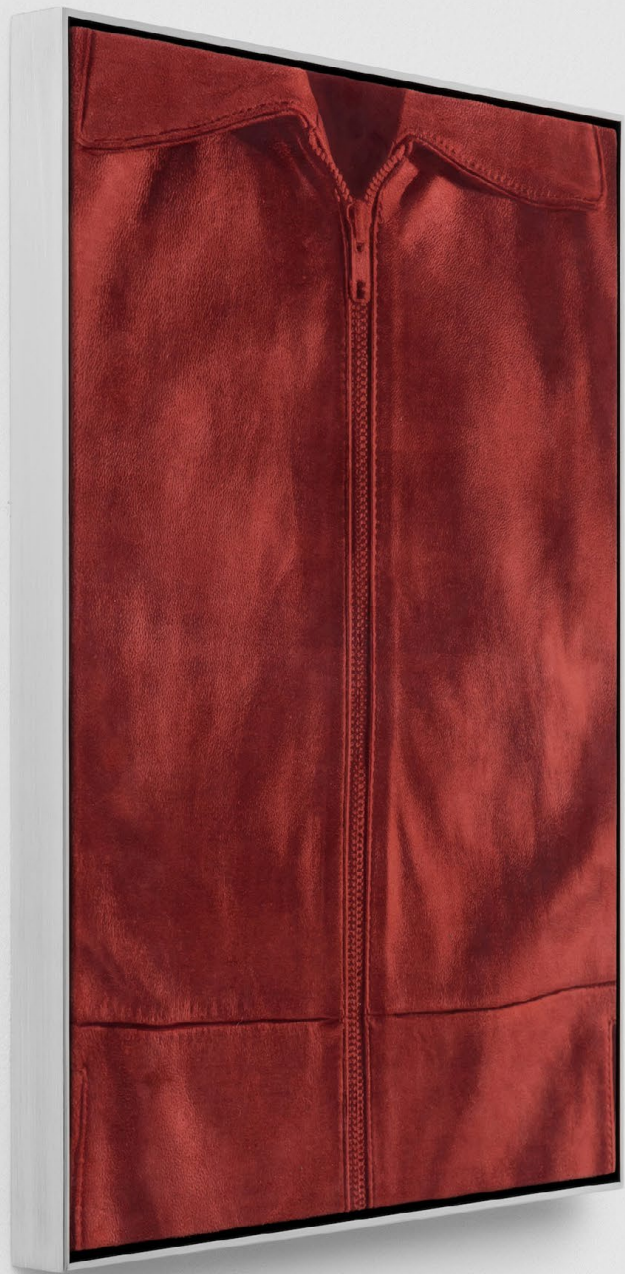
£15,000



Leather Jacket
2025

Oil and watercolour on suede, aluminium frame
42 x 30 x 2.5 cm / 16.5 x 11.8 x 1 in
HS20-PJ8949P

£20,000





Spectral Noon

2024

Oil and watercolour on suede, aluminium frame

30 x 42 x 2.5 cm / 11.8 x 16.5 x 1 in

HS20-PJ8952P

£20,000



Evening Sun
2024

Oil and watercolour on suede, soldered aluminium frame
42 x 59.5 x 2.5 cm / 16.5 x 23.4 x 1 in
HS20-PJ8954P

£25,000



Puritan
2024
Oil and watercolour on silk, soldered aluminium frame
42 x 30 x 2.5 cm / 16.5 x 11.8 x 1 in
HS20-PJ8950P

£20,000





POPPY JONES AND PAUL SIETSEMA IN CONVERSATION

Poppy Jones came to her current work in the best possible way. After consciously producing experimental works, perhaps with a little too much artistic intention, she found herself sequestered at home during the Covid lockdown with a new child and began to casually document the goings on around her. Her self-trained mind and eye, and the rigor of her engagement with printmaking and painting asserted themselves perhaps subconsciously, which naturally positioned the images she began to create within the framework of her earlier interests. The physical necessity of easy and accessible image capture and production imposed itself, and she found herself using the workflow of iPhone to the printer to the polyester plate to the small etching press. The need to involve her hand drove her to retouch and enhance the images with watercolors, naturally producing a subtle and highly immanent process. The resultant imagistic mix is enigmatic and poetic and almost brutally formal, but also touchingly intimate. Not modernist, of course, but rather the milieu of fast social media-based image making gently tugged through the sieve of the cultural. With their humble scale, the individual works correlate with the space of the head and its confined perceptual apparatuses, but also with the space of the screen of a tablet, laptop, or phone. In these small forums, the fleeting strokes of the hand are either hitting keys, swiping, or laying down paints to enhance or correct an image depleted by its interaction with somewhat inappropriate substrates such as suede or silk. The force and heavy-handed assertiveness of “proper” painting are removed and replaced with a delicate tactile sensibility, a gentle assist to a current technology rather than an exaggerated and anachronistic expression of self.

During our conversation, Poppy sent me links to Wenceslaus Hollar’s printmaking work. The delicate strokes of the etchings and engravings this Czech-born, London transplant made in the 1640s were so fine that the prickly strands of the fur being depicted wore down quickly as the copperplates were printed. This subtle technological deficiency inadvertently added a structural softness that further melded Hollar’s strokes with the delicate hand of the furs and fabrics he portrayed. Within prints often no larger than 3 by 4 inches, a realm of the proximal proliferates, one in which the rhyme of depicted material and method is both intimate and structural. The subject matter of these prints is described as suggesting the nearby presence of a fashionable woman who has discarded her luxurious accessories after coming inside from the Bohemian cold. The subject who had removed these items and placed them on a table is out of view, and perhaps importantly, out of mind, so that the objects and their sensual nature are enhanced and re-established as a primary experience for each viewer.

PS What led you to the imagery you are working with now?

PJ Between 2010 and 2019 I worked with traditional printmaking tools and materials, making monotypes on paper that sampled fragments of textiles and art history.

I had a baby in 2019, and the Covid lockdown began just after his first birthday. I had spent his first year trying to find ways I could make work and care for a small child. I had several needlepoint embroideries on the go, some based on Sonia Delaunay’s studies and inspired by the quilt she made for her baby son in 1911. I was also working for weeks on an embroidery of surrealist artist Eileen Agar’s face. Whilst thinking about the artistic lives of women through-

out history, I found the process of making these textile pieces reassuring. I was also thinking more about fashion textiles and their ability to directly capture and connote a moment in time.

For a while, I wanted my work to be more directly autobiographical and was exploring ways to do this. I had a plain panel of a 1930s suede jacket that had fallen apart after I had worn it for years, and I framed it in aluminium. I was excited about the immediate presence of this tablet-like object, and I kept it in my studio to look at and consider its potential.

In 2020, around the time of my son Jude’s first birthday, the lockdown began and we moved into my parents’ house nearby. My dad is a photographer, and their house is full of photography books. I read Sally Mann’s autobiography *Hold Still*. The way photography allowed her to make work whilst caring for her children inspired me; I realised that the long afternoons at home in the garden could be punctuated by artistic intent, which my baby would be unaware of and unaffected by. I started documenting the early morning domestic interiors with my camera phone.

Derek Jarman’s home in Dungeness is along the south coast of England, not far from where I live and work. In his memoir, *Modern Nature* (1991), Jarman is dying and speaks powerfully of the intensity of his experience of the natural world.

Re-reading *Modern Nature* during the Covid pandemic, experiencing the intimate and physically immersive experience of early motherhood whilst communicating with friends virtually through fingerprint-smudged computer and phone screens highlighted the strange contradictions of everyday digital interactions.

I was making images intuitively, drawing on art historical references in a very loose unconscious way. After making *Tulips* (2021), I could see its relationship to André Kertész’s *Chez Mondrian* (1926), a photograph of wooden tulips taken at Mondrian’s home, which my partner, Joseph, had introduced me to several years before.

Surprised by the realism of the lo-fi printmaking process I was experimenting with, I made an image of my jacket on a panel of tan suede.

I’ve been thinking about a quote by artist Richard Hamilton:

Printmaking is a fascinating activity. Part of its attraction is that it can be done at all. In this cloning of an authentic, authoritative, individual yet repeatable mark, there is a kind of sorcery. It is a genetic mimicry that parallels organic creativity. Perhaps this unthinking ability of an image to give birth to itself persuaded Watteau to the habit of ‘counter-proofing’. Having made a drawing with sanguine crayon he could make a reflection of it, transferred simply by pressing it against another piece of paper. No doubt the artist craftsman of the 16th century who chased ceremonial armour and weapons for the nobility found it gratifying to process a shadow of their work by filing the exquisitely engraved lines with pigment to make an impression on paper from the metal drawing (July 1984).

PS You mention reading Jarman’s *Modern Nature*, in which he describes the intensity of his experience of the natural world. I’m assuming that the move to satisfy the way a camera and cinema itself process imagery led to a quite particular quality to Jarman’s perception and understanding of the world. You mentioned screens and using your phone’s camera. Is it a phone you take pictures with exclusively?

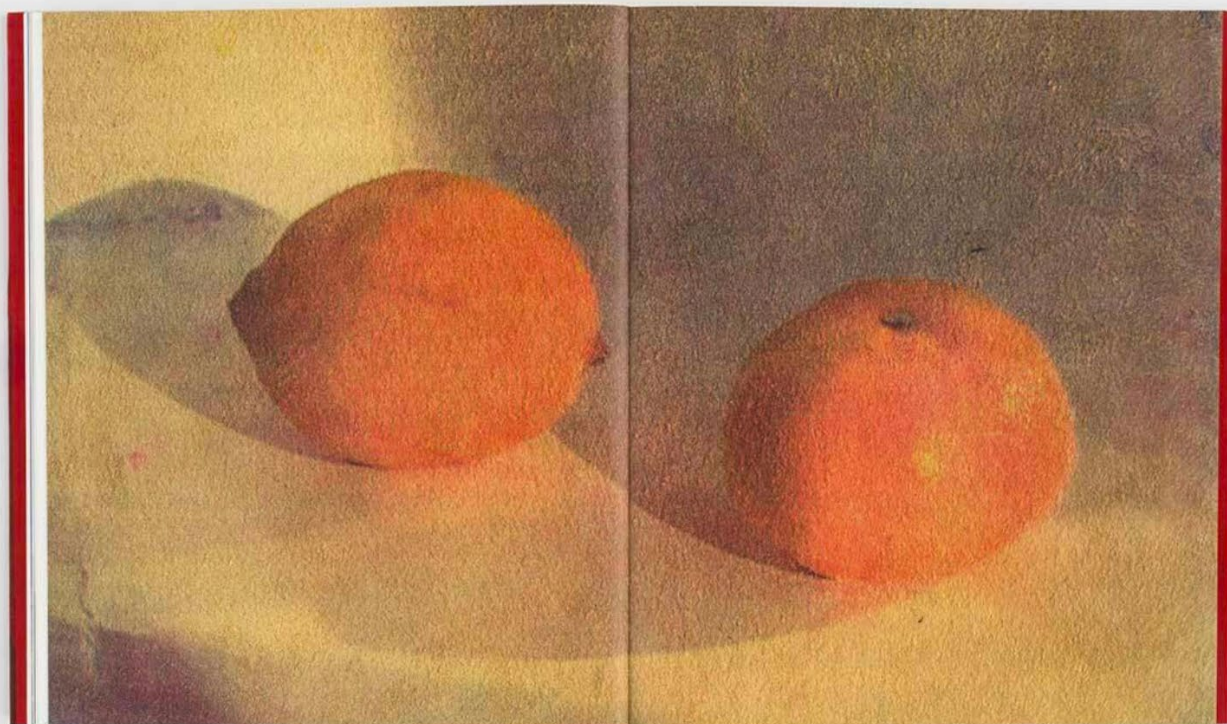
PJ Yes. Part of the reason I make small works is that I am interested in how many of us spend so much time captivated by small images on our phones/tablets, etc., so it makes sense to me to use a phone in the process of making my artworks.



30



31



There is a temptation to itemize the objects in Poppy Jones's pictures. Why? Partly because stillness, as in the still life composition of Jones's prints, encourages a sense of play, an occasion to once again believe you might hear the sea if you hold a conch shell to your ear. The details of a puffer jacket's sheen are, according to the British artist, just as significant as the perimeter of a plate or the dialogue between a vase and its shadow. Her staged inventory, like a packing list, provides intrigue on the strength of its chance order. An egg. Nine cherry tomatoes. The dramatic bow of white tulips, four or five days old. All are equal in their eeriness, significant because their shift from everyday object to subject invites inquiry. Whose tulips? Were they sent? Did they arrive with a note? Was the glass of water abandoned in a hurry? Is the blue shirt borrowed? That missing layer on loan, offered to a guest who stayed well after the sun began to set. And why is the lined notebook empty? So empty, in fact, that its context is given new life. Altered. The lined notebook, obscured with leafy shadows, is a pleasing version of getting nowhere when everyone is so busy getting somewhere. Or is it the opposite? The lined notebook is a Lydia Davis short story: familiar like a warning, deceptively plain.

Shadows are a theme. Gloomy, indistinct, and lovely, they accompany Jones's images like friendly ghosts. Shadows reveal to her audience that there is a point of view, a time of day, a tree overhead, a

finish to the fabric, some wear to the shirt. Shadows reveal the shirt was folded one way, for so long.

Jones's focus on the unremarkable is intensified by the artist's lithographic approach, in which her own snapshots are printed on cotton, silk, or suede, sometimes cut from her own garments, and then embellished with oil or watercolor. The texture generated from this method creates a romantic grain, tempting our instinct to touch. Jonas Mekas's 16mm diary film *Walden* (1969) comes so easily to mind. As with Jones's work, its depiction of time passing incrementally, over seasons, outside and with friends, is souvenir-like in nature, adjusting to smallness—to what is perhaps often overlooked—as a way of experiencing meaning. Both artists appreciate how critical it is to look, and keep looking, and not look away when everyone else might.

The combined technique that Jones employs blurs the instantaneousness of photography into a dreamier space where even sepia tones do not connote nostalgia but feel, instead, speculative, like omens. A vase of backlit, dying poppies, printed on charred orange, recalls the movies *Blade Runner 2049* or *Dune*, or the apocalyptic haze of wildfire skies. Delicate and split, the flowers' petals are preserved in death like dead flies on a windowsill. Stare long enough at Jones's work and one begins to confuse endings with signs of life. A flower's last days are perhaps its most beautiful.

Poppy Jones *Souvenirs*

Durga Chew-Bose is a writer and filmmaker living in Montreal.



MADE you STARE

Artists and partners Poppy and Joseph Jones are obsessed with taking everyday materials and making you take another, deeper look. By *Beatrice Hodgkin*

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAFYDD JONES



Artist Poppy Jones has been reading *Tender Buttons*, the collection of cubist poems by the early-20th-century American writer Gertrude Stein. "Her descriptions of everyday objects, and the combination of those descriptions of different objects, are really surreal and kind of create unexpected meanings," she says.

Her own artworks take similar subjects: an egg, a jacket, a shirt. They also create unusual stories. Sometimes they are photographs of clothing, altered in Photoshop, printed on that piece of clothing itself, and then painted and marked with fingerprints. The result is part object, part still life, part surrealist composition – and part internal monologue.

We are sitting, together with Poppy's artist husband Joseph, on the edge of an East Sussex meadow, wind blowing the long grasses, sun blinding, outside her

Above left: *Still Life*, 2023, by Poppy Jones.
Above right: Poppy and Joseph Jones outside Poppy's studio in East Sussex.



"PORTRAITURE IS A MIRROR; LANDSCAPE IS A WINDOW; STILL LIFE FALLS IN BETWEEN"

black clapboard studio. It was built by Joseph and is in the back garden of the house owned by her parents, photographer Dafydd Jones and designer-maker Linzi Jones. Poppy and Joseph are softly spoken; the breeze keeps whisking words away. Conversation flows interchangeably between the personal, their work, their love of surrealism and modernism, the support of family, and the south coast artistic communities of Bexhill-on-Sea, St Leonards-on-Sea, Eastbourne and Hastings. "Good art asks multiple questions," says Joseph at one point. "Whereas art that perhaps isn't as successful might provide too much of an answer."

The pair, both now 39, met while studying for an MA at the Royal College of Art, graduating in 2010. Poppy's teaching took them to Falmouth in Cornwall, then to a 2015 residency at West Dean College, Chichester. Joseph's lecturing then drew them closer to Brighton, where he still teaches; they now live down the coast in Eastbourne. In 2019 they had a son, Jude.

Poppy's solo exhibitions in London, LA and Zürich have seen her work resonate with a wide audience. Her 2024 shows *Solid Objects*, at London's Herald St gallery,

and *Frozen Sun*, at Mai 36 Galerie as part of Zürich Art Weekend, were well received. "Jones's lithographic, watercolour-embellished photo prints on suede and silk... have a charged, even eerie quality... [they] arrest time, but also have an uncommon exactitude and poise", wrote critic

Tom Morton in *Frieze* magazine. She is currently part of the group show *The Shape of Things, Still Life in Britain*, at Chichester's Pallant House. A monograph is being published this autumn by Zolo Press.

"Poppy's success is on a different level to anything I am doing, in terms of the number of people who want her work," says Joseph. With her growing profile, and the childcare, it has only been since September, when Jude started school, that his work has gained significant momentum. "I've come out of a very long period of teaching," he says. "I've always been making my work, but have maybe not been as motivated to show it."

Joseph grew up in a very religious Christian family. Poppy lived with her artist parents in New York for several years when her father was working for *Vanity Fair* magazine. She is still close to them, and today they help with the childcare. Her family "have had a big impact", says Joseph, through "their approach to creativity and their relationships to art and life". Poppy adds: "Also the idea of being self-employed and not really knowing what's going to happen next. That's a very unstable way to live, and it was helpful for us to have my parents do that as well."

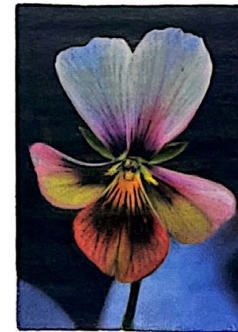
Following Jude's birth, Joseph took Poppy's surname, switching from Long to Jones. "A fresh start in some ways, a shift" in terms of their family dynamic, says Poppy. "Maybe it's like a new identity," she adds. It's also "a feminist act", they agree.

An exhibition in May at The Artist Room in London's Soho presented Joseph's paintings of cats, so photorealistic as to seem surreal. The exhibition blurb cited Jean Cocteau: "I love cats because I enjoy my home; and little by little, they become its visible soul." To this, Joseph adds: "I like the paintings to feel like you are looking through a window. Perhaps seeing your own reflection". Following an August group show in LA at Ehrlich Steinberg, upcoming exhibitions include a solo presentation at Nada Miami with Roland Roca, and a group show at The Shophouse in Hong Kong in October.

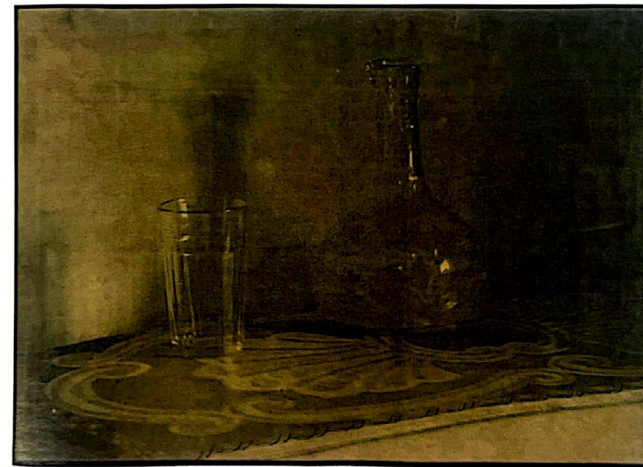
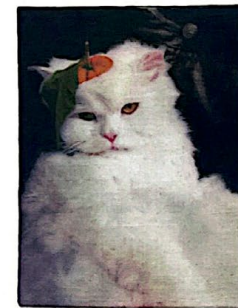
While their work is very different, both cite shared inspirations, including Eileen Agar, Richard Hamilton and Marc Camille Chaimowicz. They also both create work as a counterpoint or commentary on our digital age of image oversaturation – both wanting to "slow the viewer down", Poppy says.

Standing in her studio, Poppy becomes more confident. Her complex process, she says, makes it "hard to understand what you are seeing..." Is the final work a photo, a painting, a handmade object or an image of an object? "The way we view images now, especially the [volume] and the lack of questioning – they become these ephemeral things floating around." With AI in the mix, "we don't know any more."

One might also ask – who are you seeing? Making the work, she says, "is very personal". She speaks of one much-loved suede jacket that started to fall apart. She framed a section. "It felt like the textile itself was giving a lot of information... of a specific time period. And you can see my fingerprints on it." She reworked it as a hybrid photo-



"I'M INTERESTED IN WHY PEOPLE BECOME INCREDIBLY OBSSIVE ABOUT A CAT"



PHOTOGRAPH: JACKSON WHITE © POPPY JONES, COURTESY THE ARTIST AND HERALD ST; LONDON: OLLIE HARRIS © JOSEPH JONES, COURTESY THE ARTIST

Left: *Viola*, 2023, by Joseph Jones. Below left: *April*, 2024, by Joseph Jones. Bottom: *Solid Objects*, 2023, by Poppy Jones

painting-print. "It is in some ways autobiographical... It felt like I was expressing something of myself."

Nicky Verber, founder and owner of Herald St gallery, says of Poppy's work: "We live in a time when so much is demanded of still images – they have to fight for attention and are increasingly under pressure to be more than they are. In contrast, Poppy Jones brings new depth to quotidian images. The economy of her work favours the small scale: these pieces don't try to overwhelm."

"I don't think you can make art outside of still life, portraiture and landscape," says Joseph, sitting to one side of the studio on a stool. "What I find interesting is where they work like windows or mirrors. Portraiture is a mirror; landscape is a window; still life falls in between. You can look through a still life, but it also reflects back at you. There's something kind of interesting there."

When they leave the studio and drive along overgrown lanes and beside the beach, through Bexhill-on-Sea, past the 1935 De La Warr Pavilion art centre, designed by Erich Mendelsohn and Serge Chermayeff, Joseph describes it as "a modernist spaceship that's landed in the seaside town". It's a significant space for the couple: they eat at the café, meet artists and see exhibitions. "We have a real interest in modernism and histories of modernism. It's a big theme," says Joseph. "We're kind of interested in modernism at the edges, like in Cornwall and Sussex. And the De La Warr is a very literal, physical embodiment of those interests."

A short way beyond the town is Beeching Road Studios, set up by the district council to ignite the cultural and creative economy. It's run by Flatland Projects, and is where Joseph has a small art space. "It's amazing when you've got all these artists, you can create community pretty quickly," says Poppy. "Loads of graduates who were going to London, getting fantastic degrees and skills, suddenly were coming back," adds Joseph. It's important to him to support and be part of the burgeoning art community.

"Poppy hasn't seen some of this work," he says when we arrive in his studio. Two small paintings of cats and one of a flower, created using images found on the internet, hang on the walls; another cat lies ready to be worked on; yet another sits propped up on the desk. "I'm trying to finish it, it's not quite there," he says.

In the car Joseph had described his work as playing with kitsch tropes. "They are all quite conceptual," he says of his acrylic-on-canvas paintings. "Cats and flowers are divergence objects. People used to believe in God as a divergence. And I'm kind of interested in why people can become incredibly obsessive and compulsive and divergent about a flower or a cat." He follows people who have posted as many as 20,000 pictures of each. Poppy says: "You've got the similar compulsion, but you're expressing it in a slightly different way." He replies: "If I had an answer as to why [people are obsessed with them] then I wouldn't paint them."

Milo Astaré, director of The Artist Room, says: "Joseph has the adept talent to render these overly saturated images into something fascinating, beautiful and surreal. His immaculate dexterity invites viewers to look closer and spend time with the works. This is his skill: he makes us look."

The photorealism is "a way of thinking about the value of the object – it reflects the way that we think and look at and care for the world today", says Joseph. "No one really knows what will happen to these 700 million images of cats that are on Instagram. I'm interested in what will last – like a pop art image of a Brillo pad." ■ HTS

josephjones.uk, poppy-jones.co.uk

The Poise of Poppy Jones's Solid Objects

Inspired by Virginia Woolf, the artist's prints at Herald Street in London explore themes of life, death and the allure of possessions throughout history

BY TOM MORTON IN EXHIBITION REVIEWS | 03 APR 24



Staged across Herald Street's two spaces in London's Bloomsbury and Bethnal Green, Poppy Jones's solo exhibition, 'Solid Objects', takes its title from a 1920 short story by Virginia Woolf. This haunting tale opens with its protagonist, a young man 'standing for Parliament on the brink of a brilliant career', finding a lump of green glass on a day trip to the beach, and glimpsing 'a dying flame deep sunk in its mass'. Moved by this piece of detritus – which seems to him 'so definite an object compared with the vague sea and hazy shore' – he returns to London, abandons politics and dedicates himself to the search for similar treasures. Years pass and, no longer young, he finds a strange kind of fulfilment (or is it consolation?) in his growing collection of *objets trouvés*, including a shard of porcelain in the shape of a starfish and a chunk of scrap iron he believes to be a 'cinder of the moon'.



Poppy Jones, *Egg*, 2024, oil and watercolour on suede, soldered aluminium frame, 20 × 26 cm. Courtesy: the artist and Herald St, London; photograph: Jackson White

The everyday items depicted in Jones's lithographic, watercolour-embellished photo prints on suede and silk are not broken or abandoned, but they do have a charged, even eerie quality. Like the still lifes of 18th-century French painter Jean Siméon Chardin (surely an influence on the British artist), these images not only arrest time, but also have an uncommon exactitude and poise. Contemplating them, the world outside their aluminium frames begins to feel somehow insubstantial – stare too long and we might forget ourselves, and the futures we had planned. In *Egg* (2024), a single, fetishistically rendered hen's egg rests on a white ceramic saucer, its tawny shell shaded by matte, heather-grey shadows. In Western iconography, an egg usually symbolizes the promise of new life, but Jones's work seems to be less about change than about stasis, even immobilizing obsession. When an object is this perfect, who'd want to see it craze and crack?



Poppy Jones, *Cool of the day*, 2024, oil and watercolour on silk, soldered aluminium frame, 43 × 30 cm. Courtesy: the artist and Herald St, London; photograph: Jackson White

Light Years (2023) is a study of a swan-necked art nouveau lamp, glowing in a gloomy, wood-panelled room. It may have been switched off moments after it was photographed, but in this image, it burns forever – an eternal flame. As such, it operates as the antithesis of the extinguished oil lanterns and snuffed-out candles found in baroque-era vanitas paintings, which served as indexes of both the brevity and futility of Earthly existence. In *Blue Flower* (2023), we glimpse a pair of pale tulips through a denim-toned wash. The piece's title appears to reference the writings of the German romantic poet Novalis, for whom the figure of the blue flower symbolized all that was infinite, ineffable and beyond mortal reach. What does Jones mean by presenting us with these blooms – or, rather, their image? Perhaps that they can only be experienced within the confines of an artwork, which will always hold us at a distance, always leave us with a sense of pained, exquisite longing. I'm reminded of Woolf's protagonist, who detects the celestial in fragments of shattered pottery, and who, by the story's end, becomes a reclusive madman-cum-mystic, more determined than ever to find a 'solid object' that answers the call of his soul.



Poppy Jones, *Solid Objects*, 2024, oil and watercolour on suede, soldered aluminium frame, 30 x 43 cm. Courtesy: the artist and Herald St, London; photograph: Jackson White

Cosmetically, at least, many of Jones's still lifes would not look out of place in an Edwardian drawing room. This is not true of *Tethered* (2023), which depicts a nylon puffa jacket. Here, the artist homes in on the garment's fleshly, deflated-looking purple fabric, as though she were a surgeon inspecting a collapsed lung. Standing in front of the piece, I began to notice my own breathing, and wondered, a little morbidly, when I'll breathe my last. Eggs, lamps and flowers may speak of life, death and the allure of objects across the centuries, but Jones's repurposing of the puffa as a *memento mori* is a brilliantly contemporary stroke.

Poppy Jones's '*Solid Objects*' is on view at ***Herald Street*** Bloomsbury and Bethnal Green, London, until April 13.

Poppy Jones

The Artist Room, London 24 March – 22 April

In British artist Poppy Jones's photorealist composition *Sans Soleil* (all works 2023), an immaculate wineglass stands upon a table. The sepia tinge and uneven tones recall a nineteenth-century calotype. Looming behind is the glass's mottled shadow, making the pristine glass look rather blemished or injured in its mirror image. The eerie and paradoxical composition – which contains echoes in its staging of Henri Magritte's 1937 painting of a mirrored man *Not to Be Reproduced* – disrupts the accuracy of the picture's cosy nostalgia. The work's title (literally meaning 'without sun') could be a reference to Chris Marker's eponymous 1983 essay-film, which questions the possibility of memorising, narrating and documenting reality. Such a hesitance or distrust lurks behind Jones's wistful still lifes.

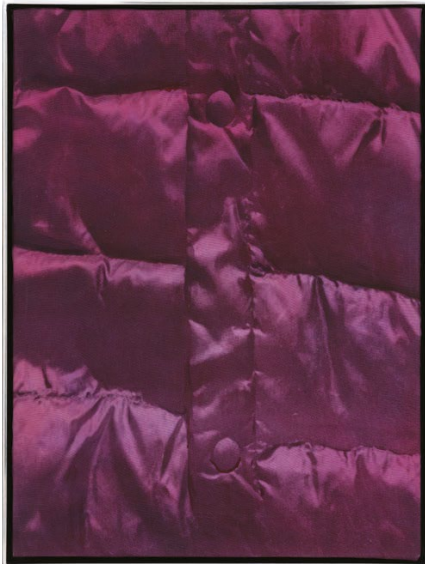
Walking into the gallery space, one first encounters the seductive clarity of a photographed

Conch – its titular subject reminiscent of surrealist photographer Dora Maar's famous shell-hand, which makes one wonder what is hidden within. A tension between display and invisibility persists in Jones's works. In *Tulips (Profile)* the indigo silhouette of the flowers melts into another shadow on the wall. Like a reversed cyanotype, the photograph reveals the lights blocked by the plant and allows only a vague contour of its likeness. *A Book (The Erasers)* shows the blank sun-dappled pages of a volume lying open on a table, simultaneously disclosing its interior and refusing the possibility of reading. The treatment is at once honest and futile, as if caught somewhere between a fleeting memory and a foggy dream, its content faded.

Jones develops her photographs through a lithographic process onto fabric, which are

then painted and framed in thick aluminium.

The resulting 'objects', as she calls them, combine photographic images with complex haptic qualities, the evident materiality of Jones's still lifes frustrating any desire for documentary transparency. In *Day's Close*, which depicts a section of wrinkled puffer jacket, the threads of the silken canvas add to the jacket's illusionism, making the image inseparable from the fabric surface (as the most 'wrinkled' image, its canvas is paradoxically the most tightly stretched). In other compositions, the base suede's blotchy stains, finger marks and dust-grabbing textures frequently vie with the painted images applied on top. In their hazy tactility, these paintings give the nostalgic snaps an inviting palpability, turning obscure images into objects of fetishistic allure. Yuwen Jiang



Day's Close, 2023, oil and watercolour on dyed silk, soldered aluminium frame, 26 × 20 cm. Courtesy the artist

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