

Monochromatic Minds | Pre-Recorded Talk | James Alison Transcript | 21 August 2020

Jennifer: Hello I'm Jennifer from the Jennifer Lauren Gallery and today I am joined by James Alison who attends Garvald in Edinburgh. James do you want to say hi?

James: Hiya

Jennifer: And where are you joining us from today James?

James: I'm calling you from Longstone in Edinburgh.

Jennifer: Fabulous. James I can only see the bottom of your face can you angle your camera up a bit. {camera moves}. Perfect. So James do you want to tell us how long you've been going to Garvald?

James: Yes. I've been going to Garvald for 28 years, oops no 25 years, sorry 25 years.

Jennifer: That's such a long time.

James: Yes

Jennifer: And what do you do at Garvald?

James: I do some art with Morven and I do some puppetry with Jasmine as well. And I also do drama with Emily.

Jennifer: Wow great. So this is a picture of you in the exhibition next to your work. I thought we would start with you talking about your work and the talk you did in the exhibition. So would you like to go through that?

James: Yes, sure I'll do that for you. No problem.

Jennifer: Super.

James: Want me to start now?

Jennifer: Yes please

James: When I draw I first get a piece of paper and I draw lines. I draw what I think in my head. You can draw whatever you want to do. I look at photographs. They help me actually. Photos help me design my picture, to look at it. Photos shows me details that I might not have in my mind. I work from my head and my imagination and looking at pictures. I use both and join them up. It's a mix of the two.

I do different marks to fill in the spaces and patterns. I do dots, and stripes, and lines and circles. I like drawing animals and people. I use different size of pens- big pens and small pens.

I sometimes get carried away but I know how to stop but sometimes I forget to stop and it gets lovely patterns. It gets nice colour when I sometimes add colour- I use paint and paint pens to add lines and pattern on top of paint. I like to add colour but I also like using black pen.

I like drawing because it keeps me occupied and busy. And its good to draw. It is interesting. Other people can be interested in drawings too. It feels alright to draw. It feels fine. When I draw I feel more relaxed. And it's is comfortable. I am comfortable. I concentrate on what I am doing. I am just thinking about how I am doing it. I am thinking how the picture makes a story.

I choose to draw birds because I like wildlife. I watch Springwatch- a tv programme about wildlife on every year. I like all the different kinds of birds. I like the way they fly. They dive for fish and how they catch them with their claws and pick fish up from the water. Golden eagles are rare in Scotland. But there are more than in England.

The Queen drawing I have in the exhibition is different from the bird drawings. I wrote to the Queen and got a letter back. Which is why I wanted to draw her. I like Royalty, I like Her Majesty and the royal family. They are kind. The Queen is in her robe that she opens parliament in. She is in the park enjoying the sunshine. She is sitting on a wall in the sunshine outside. The crown is nice and the robe is nice- when she is on the throne she looks beautiful. I like to have work in exhibitions. It makes me feel happy and excited. It is great, I love people to come to exhibitions and see my work and see what they say about it. It is good to see my drawings on the walls, it makes me want to draw more.

Jennifer: Oh super. And I've got the picture of the Queen on the screen now.

James: Yes

Jennifer. So great. And the next picture I have put in is your chair James, do you remember?

James: yes I remember. I done that yes.

Jennifer: What was it like drawing on the chair?

James: It was good. I had fun yes I had fun.

Jennifer: And was that the first time you've ever drawn on a chair?

James: Yes it was my first time.

Jennifer: I think you drew a bird and a mouse on it didn't you?

James: Yes that's right I drew an owl and a mouse on it.

Jennifer: You did! So how did it feel when you gave that talk in the exhibition?

James: it was great, really great. I enjoyed it.

Jennifer: Good. It was lovely to hear you talk. And I know you haven't been going to the studio at the moment, but have you been doing any drawing at home?

James: Yes I have I've got two here.

Jennifer: Oh, show us! Wow

James: Yes and I've got this one too.

Jennifer: Wow, very colourful. Just move it back a little bit as it's a little close to the screen. It's slightly blurry.

James: This one is better!

Jennifer: What kind of birds is it James?

James: It's a parrot and a kingfisher.

Jennifer: Wow, super. Have you been drawing everyday at home?

James: Yes, but I've not done drawing all the time as I have been busy with something else.

Jennifer: Oh have you, that's great. I've got a picture now on the screen of a hanging bird. How did you do that?

James: I've done them with cardboard boxes, cardboard and paper. I drew on the paper and that's how I did it yes.

Jennifer: They look great hanging with your patterns on them.

James: Yes they do look great with the patterns. Yes. Nice patterns.

Jennifer: And then I've got this colourful picture can you see? This is the last picture that I have put in. Can you tell us about this one?

James: Oh that's my barn owl

Jennifer: This one is beautiful.

James: Yes it is my barn owl.

Jennifer: I love the colours that you've used and you did it on black paper didn't you?

James: Yes on black paper yes.

Jennifer: The white really stands out on it! So James I've got two more questions for you. What are you looking forward to doing when you go back to the studio?

James: I'll be looking forward to seeing more space, more faces and doing more drawings. So I'll be looking forward to that when I go back.

Jennifer: Yes, that's good and my last question is why is art important to you?

James: why art is important to me? Right. I can answer that. Art is very interesting to me, I am very interested and it makes me feel very comfortable doing all the drawings and that. And that's why I'm so famous at the moment! I'm a famous artist at the moment!

Jennifer: I love that ... you're a famous artist at the moment. That's great James.

James: And I am very proud of what I do with my work as well.

Jennifer: And so you should be, it's amazing.

James: Yeah

Jennifer: Definitely. And I'm very proud too that I own some pieces of your work too.

James: Yes that's right.

Jennifer. Good, well James thank you for chatting with me today.

James: It's a pleasure.