

CAMPLE—LINE

AMY WINSTANLEY
SLIM GLIMPSES
08.07 - 10.09.23



Amy Winstanley: *Slim glimpses*
– Caitlin Merrett King

Earlier

It makes sense to start in the garden. The sun's not out yet, so I text my mum and ask her if the peonies in her garden have bloomed. 'Nearly...', pings back, plus a photo of a ripe bud, raucously pink, stretching apart its thin, zingy green sepals, a feathery fan of slim leaves encircle the bud as if to say, 'ta dah!'

The Ancient Greeks gave us two words for time, 'chronos' and 'kairos'. Where the former refers to sequential time, the latter is all about the 'right' time. The opportune moment. The perfect time for the arrow to be shot to reach its target, the shuttle to be maneuvered through the threads on the loom. Kairos time is a feeling, a decisive desire for synthesis between self and surroundings, a *deep time*. We (humans) conceive of time as a consistent beat – particularly in the Western world, championed by Capitalism – but it *is not the only time that matters*. We have placed a rigid grid over a diverse and ever-changing web, to paraphrase artist and writer Jenny Odell. Sixty seconds, twenty-four hours, seven days, twelve months. The four seasons don't even seem to make sense anymore as we trudge further through environmental collapse. We portion our life out in fragments, in coffee spoons – *What time is it now? You don't know what time it is now*.

You look out the window to somewhere else, not the city, the clatter of traffic replaced for the gentle rustle of leaves or the trickle of a stream. The birch tree you can see stands in a garden from another, slower time, somewhere within the warmest portion of the year, when the Greek goddess Persephone returned from the Underworld and her mother Demeter rejoiced, gifting us flowers and luscious new life. You walk up to the tree, placing your hand on its silver trunk, and look up. The shimmering canopy envelopes you in histories of cool shadows, a suspended moment.

Caitlin Merrett King is a writer and arts programmer based in Glasgow. She has published writing with Sticky Fingers, MAP Magazine, Nothing Personal and Pilot Press, and her debut novella 'Always Open Always Closed' will be published by JOAN this summer.



Tilt, 2023

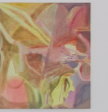
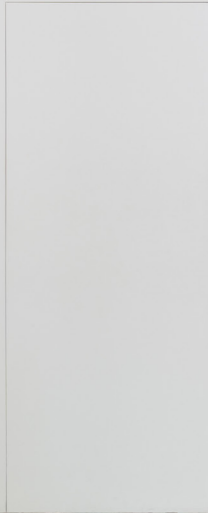
Here

Walking back into Amy's studio, I smile at the bananas. Or not bananas but you can't un-see them once you've clocked the shape (Amy notes this too). I'll avoid describing anything by association now and leave it up to you whilst you're there in the gallery looking at her paintings. It'll be different for you anyway, that's the beauty of looking isn't it? A notebook lies prostrate, open and crispy with thick layers of paint, the leftovers from the brush, not wanting to be wasted, each page becomes a study of the day or the afternoon or the hour's palette.

Here I am, writing in one of Amy's *slim glimpses* – a pocket of several hours set aside from caring responsibilities, household tasks, life's duties etc. – sitting in her studio whilst she reads *Vibrant Matter*, outside in the sun. I set my timer to sixty minutes and drink a black loose leaf tea prepared by Amy. *Staying with the Trouble* by theorist Donna Haraway lies on top of a pile of books on the studio desk. I flick it open looking for pencil marks, clues for digging into Amy's research, her own process of re-reading, listening, embedding. *To stay with the ragged joy of ordinary living and dying* is underlined on page 167.

Painting, for Amy, is a way of putting down roots, of creating connection to the non-human, whilst grappling with the ecological crisis precipitated by our human relationship to 'nature'. For her, painting is a form of curiosity, of attuning to the complexity of our entanglements, a search for shimmering or bir'yun, a word used by the Yolngu, an Aboriginal people living in the Northern Territory of Australia. For Yolngu painters, as Aboriginal philosopher Deborah Bird Rose describes, bir'yun is a kind of motion or commotion that brings us into the experience of being part of a vibrant and vibrating world. It is a process of bringing together different ways of being and doing towards transformation, and a reconnection with ancestral power. Bir'yun is all time, all together. A pulsing interconnectivity that, in spite of the destruction, *shimmers*.

A thick green stroke fades as it moves along, wiggling its way off the canvas, whilst a similar brilliant orange stroke slicks. A thickness of deep olive green jumps next to jazzy lilac. Mauve and yellow sizzle



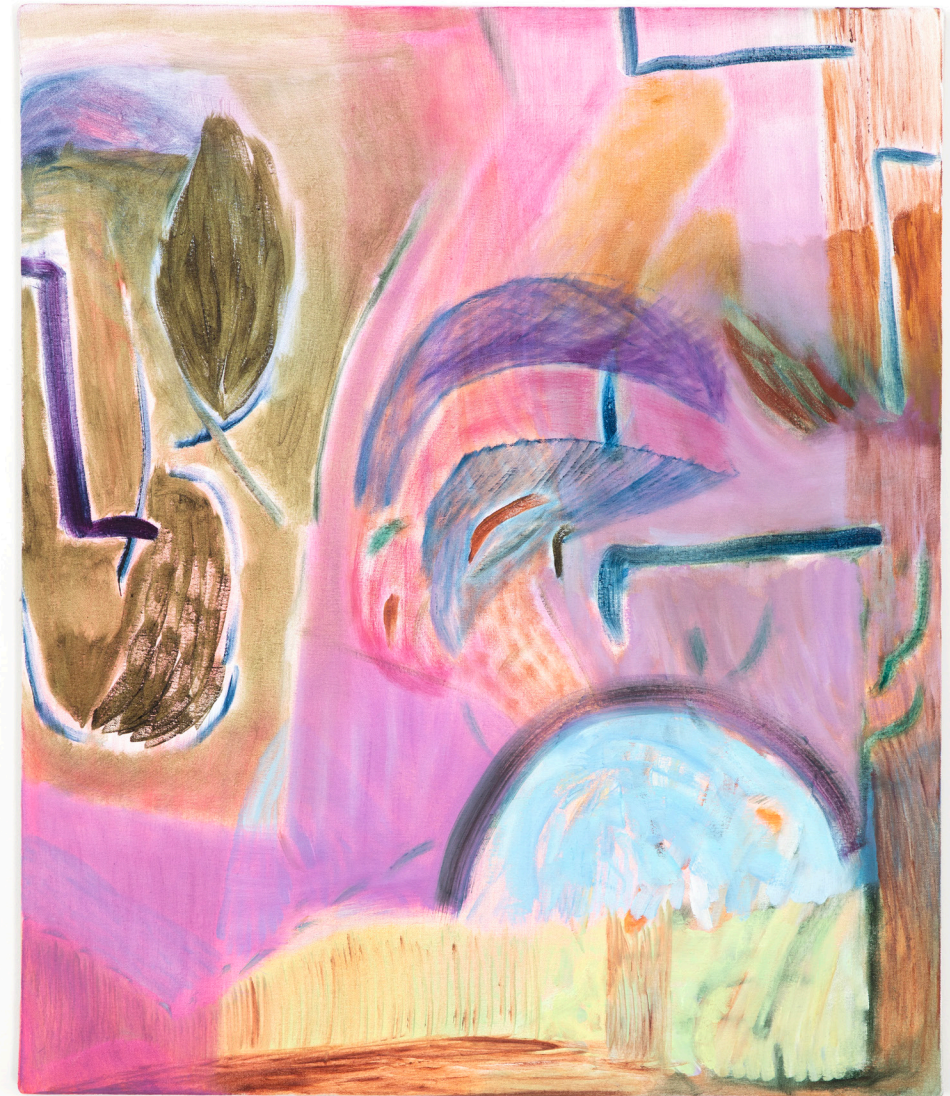
gently together. Cocteau Twins plays through the wall from the next door studio – aurally it does something to me like the hot pink brushed into an acrid teal. Long grains of warm purple clutter on the surface, and there’s an icy peach that cools my brain, melting into a pale lemon corner, in a beige puddle. How can an abstract painting encompass the reading, the re-reading, the listening, the research? A vague outline peers out but it’s just a ghost, maybe a shadow half-remembered or a memory poking through. A dense plumage, or flurry of action laid down, canvas turned or placed on the floor, and rewritten in motion.

Who knows what came yesterday or the day before. To be ‘finished’ is a ridiculous concept. Some of these paintings might move on, after you’ve seen them in the gallery, be washed away or worked over and become changed, not necessarily new but *more*, or maybe not. The paintings glow with their own time, Amy’s time, and against time, with no time, for the sake of more time, or for a desire for more time. *They stay with the ragged joy.*

The whiteness of the studio walls brings floaters to my eyes that swim and scatter. A sunset washes behind thick green nubs – this one burns in my mind after I’ve left, a glitched organism that chuckles at the complexity of the other paintings – I’ve anthropomorphised, making it human-like, capable of humour. But there is a humour – the floppiness, the sheerness, the contrast of the hot fluorescent oil paints to the shapes of organic matter, or not quite – what kind of place is this? Colours of a world, of speculation, harmonious and dank fizzing next to each other. A tent peg, two boiled eggs and a watermelon.

Later

Our contemporary, quantitative relationship to time has also carved out a chasm between the human and non-human. Ecological philosophy has been relegated in the hierarchy of importance in larger societal life, the relationship between humans, and other animals and plants has become extractive. *Lacking in meaningful relationships of kinship, care, and solidarity, we risk complete human ecological dislocation*, says environmental philosopher Matthew Hall in *Plants as Persons: A Philosophical Botany*, the main



Name Us to Love Us, 2023





stem of interest she was following when painting for this exhibition, Amy tells me. Hall calls for a renewed recognition of animism, where all living things are considered equally sentient, alive.

Clicking the link Amy has sent me to a lecture on YouTube by philosopher and Feminist theorist Karan Barad, I experience another *slim glimpse*: Barad concludes their talk with a kind of 'hope', a sense of feeling that actually we're all going to be ok. We're already in a time of erasure, where past, present and future are enfolded, however. Barad recalls the line *it's after the end of the world, don't you know that yet?* from the eponymous song by Sun Ra, which is repeated and repeated, followed by a cacophony of screeching and chattering horns. Calling for a reframing, a coming to terms with *the infinite possibilities for living and dying otherwise*, Barad asks, *how can we not trouble time in these troubling times?* By acknowledging our knotty entanglements with the non-human, embracing the work of decomposition and turning over the humus, we might find an otherwise.

I'm sitting on the picnic bench in the garden again, next to trays of seedlings. The sun warms my left shoulder gifting soft brown freckles. A text from my mum – 'Peony!' And a photo of the most beautiful pink knot of petals unfurling. 'I have one growing in a pot which has buds on... You could have it or I could split it... x' 'Happy to have half', I reply. 'I'll split it in the autumn. It might take a couple of years to flower', she replies. 'I'll wait,' I say.

References borrowed in order of appearance:

Emmanuel Vaughan-Lee, 'Another Kind of Time: A Conversation with Jenny Odell', *Emergence Podcast*, 25 April 2023. Accessed at <https://emergencemagazine.org/interview/another-kind-of-time/>

Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*, 2010, Duke University Press

Donna J. Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin with the Chthulucene*, 2016, Duke University Press

Deborah Bird Rose, 'Shimmer: When all you live is being trashed,' in *Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet: Ghost and Monsters of the Anthropocene*, eds. Elaine Gan, Anna Tsing, Heather Swanson, Nils Bubandt, 2017, University of Minnesota Press Nils Bubandt, 2017

Matthew Hall, *Plants as Persons: A Philosophical Botany*, 2011, SUNY Press

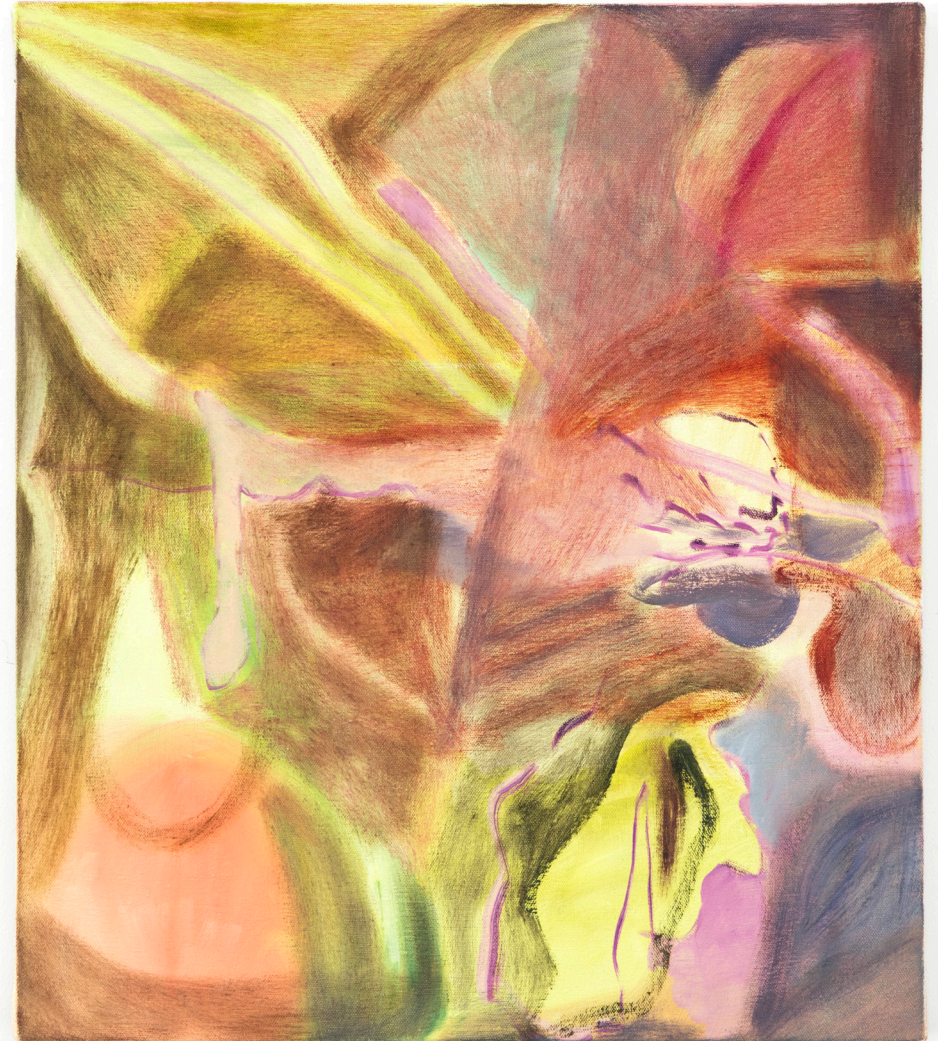
Karen Barad, 'Undoing the Future', delivered and recorded at Barnard College, NYC, 19 March 2018. Accessed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bMVkg5UiRog>



List of works

1. **Coming Together Apart**, 2023
oil on canvas
46 x 27 cm
2. **Dawn Tumble**, 2023
oil on canvas
25 x 35 cm
3. **It in it rains**, 2023
oil on canvas
25 x 20 cm
4. **It's Tasty**, 2023
oil on canvas
54 x 64 cm
5. **Name Us to Love Us**, 2023
oil on canvas
64 x 54 cm
6. **New Nothing**, 2023
oil on canvas
41 x 36 cm
7. **Pool and Pull**, 2023
oil on canvas
35 x 25 cm
8. **Reverberative Business**, 2023
oil on canvas
93 x 103 cm
9. **Slim Glimpses**, 2023
oil on canvas
103 x 93 cm
10. **The Kind of Mind**, 2023
oil on canvas
66 x 61 cm
11. **Tilt**, 2023
oil on canvas
25 x 20 cm
12. **Time for a Time Being**, 2023
oil on canvas
35 x 25 cm
13. **Untitled**, 2023
oil on canvas
40 x 46 cm

Dimensions are given H x W



New Nothing, 2023



Amy Winstanley (b. 1983, Dumfries, Scotland) is an artist based in Glasgow. She studied MA Fine Art at Sandberg Institute, Amsterdam (2017-19) and BA (Hons) Sculpture at Edinburgh College of Art (2001-05). Amy has exhibited in solo and group shows in USA, UK, Netherlands and South Korea.

Recent exhibitions include *Lost Hap*, solo show at Margot Samel Gallery, New York (22 Jun – 14 July 2023). *Strangers* group show at Rongwrong, Amsterdam (2022), *Moral Limb* solo show at Stallan-Brand, Glasgow (2021), *Grief Bruise* solo show at Lunchtime Gallery, Glasgow (2021), *Potluck* group show at Gallery 17717, Seoul (2021), *To All Our Absent Dialogues* group show at Warbling Collective, London (2020) and *Festival of Choices*, Graduation Show, Het Glazen Haus, Amsterdam (2019). Amy was nominated for the Sluijter prize for painting 2019 (Netherlands), and has been the recipient of the Hope Scott Trust award (2014) and the Creative Scotland Visual Arts Award (2010 and 2014). Along with the artist collective ALKMY she has published short stories and images in *What Ties Ties, Ties* (2020) and *What Thoughts Think Thoughts* (2021) both through Print Art Research Centre, Seoul.



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