

Statement

Ashley Norwood Cooper

To find a form that accommodates the mess, that is the task of the artist now. --Samuel Beckett

Nothing will ever replace painting because nothing makes a mess like paint. It oozes and stains, drips and streaks, fades, chips and permeates. Paint refuses to abandon its illusions almost as stubbornly as it refuses to follow through on its own lies. Of all the genres in art, none is as problematic as figure painting. Here the battle between form and content plays out on the fields closest to home.

I paint because I am drawn to messiness. It fascinates me. I swoon when I see a gracious accident on the easel, but I have a perverse respect for the truth I see in clumsiness. I revel in inconsistencies and can't make myself fix them or cover them up.

We are living in a shit show. New technology brings the collective id of the whole world to a tiny screen that you hold in your hands as you fall asleep each night. My family and friends are plagued with nightmares.

Paint is ancient technology, a long discredited medium, but I take a brush to whatever vexes me. I am a middle-class mom, raising a family in a world I cannot understand or sooth. Paint is the form that accommodates my mess.