



PAUL WALLINGTON | INFORMATION GAP

My paintings come out of a preoccupation with the studio as the driving force behind the creation of my work. Having recently graduated from the Michaelis School of Fine Art, I found the internal world of the studios on campus to be a complex and enriching environment. The presence of the artist's studio in their work has a long and well-documented history yet I am particularly drawn to photographs of Francis Bacon's studio in Kensington, London. Bacon created an ocean of reference materials in which he worked: books piled on top of tins of paint, pages torn from magazines and newspapers, sometimes even copies of his own paintings torn from books and painted over again. This influenced my own process in trying to find certain images that interested me and linking these images to one another. Sifting through magazines and books became more and more central to my process as did torn pages from magazines, screenshots from films and self-portraits taken on a timer. As I continued painting I started to piece together bits of a story that were strewn about in my studio.

Social psychologist Suzanne Oosterwijk explains that "people experience curiosity when there is an 'information gap' between what they want to know and what they currently know." I believe that much of painting is an information gap. A gap between imagining what one will create and what the result actually will be. In what one initially wanted to achieve through painting, only to end up somewhere completely different. I am curious as to how paint, particularly oil paint, works as a medium and how the painter must build upon layers in an effort to selectively erase and reveal their painterly vision. To paint each figure, rock and feather is an attempt to bridge the information gap. With each layer that piles up on the canvas, the old images are almost entirely forgotten, with only mere fragments showing through.

The process of painting is like piecing together a distorted and broken narrative, like William Faulkner's *The Sound and Fury*- a story told four times through four different perspectives. A singular painting only tells one part of the fractured tale. The result is a world where there are vultures as big as men, divers lost in underwater caves and men weeping from their own fevered masturbatory impulses. A place of mist and decay and expired love. I am often lost in thought when I think of the depths of oceans, the murkiness of lakes and the darkness of caves. I am interested in the idea of entering a place that would seem otherworldly to humans yet somehow caters to creatures that live in perpetual darkness, their hearts as cold as slush. It is because of this fascination of things left to one's own imagination that my obsession with oil paint continues.

Oil paint is able to tell a story of an imagined violence, a wetness that appears to come from the human body in a way that other mediums do not. Barbra Dawson writes on how the "process of mutilation" was critical to Francis Bacon's work, essentially because as an image is translated onto a page, its meaning shifts. With this also comes the ability to change paint into a visceral medium where the physical act of painting is a frustrating and often chaotic one. To paint is to constantly destroy and rebuild, ultimately showing a broken image that like a fractured mirror, gives hints rather than comprehensive narratives. These shards of information offer something more interesting than a cohesive story as they allow the viewer to link and communicate with the other fragmented pieces in ways personal to them- to bridge the 'information gap' with their own perspective. Ultimately, the painting process is a mirror to another place that focuses on questions rather than answers. A place where there is no beginning, no middle, or end- an ocean that is constantly moving.

- Paul Wallington

References:

Barbara Dawson, *Francis Bacon: Incunabula*, 2008.

Suzanne Oosterwijk, *Choosing the negative: A behavioral demonstration of morbid curiosity*, 2017.



Beating like Soft Hearts, 2020

Oil on canvas

90 x 144 cm

R 9000



Eating a Springbok Skull, 2020
Oil on canvas
80 x 60 cm
R 4000



Whale, 2020
Oil on canvas
80 x 60 cm
R 4000



From an Old World, 2020

Oil on canvas

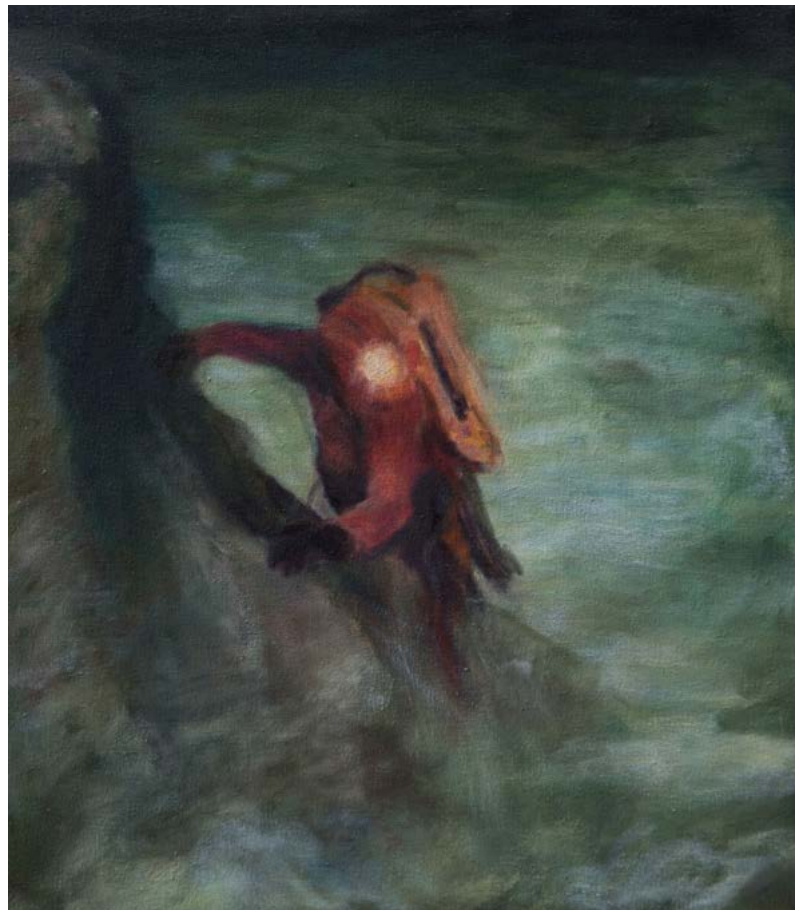
111 x 124 cm

R 13500 (framed)



*Remarkably Fragile, a Belly like the
Earth's Core, 2020*

Oil on canvas
54.5 x 45 cm
R 2500



Flash Flood, 2020

Oil on canvas
57 x 49 cm
R 2500



Moonrise, 2020
Oil on canvas
103 x 100 cm
R 11500 (framed)



Self Portrait III, 2020
Oil on canvas
108 x 98 cm
R 9000



And We are Fifty Feet Out to Sea Being Chewed Apart by Sadness I, 2020
Oil on canvas
66 x 56 cm
R 5500 (mounted)



Somewhere in Worcester, 2020

Oil on canvas

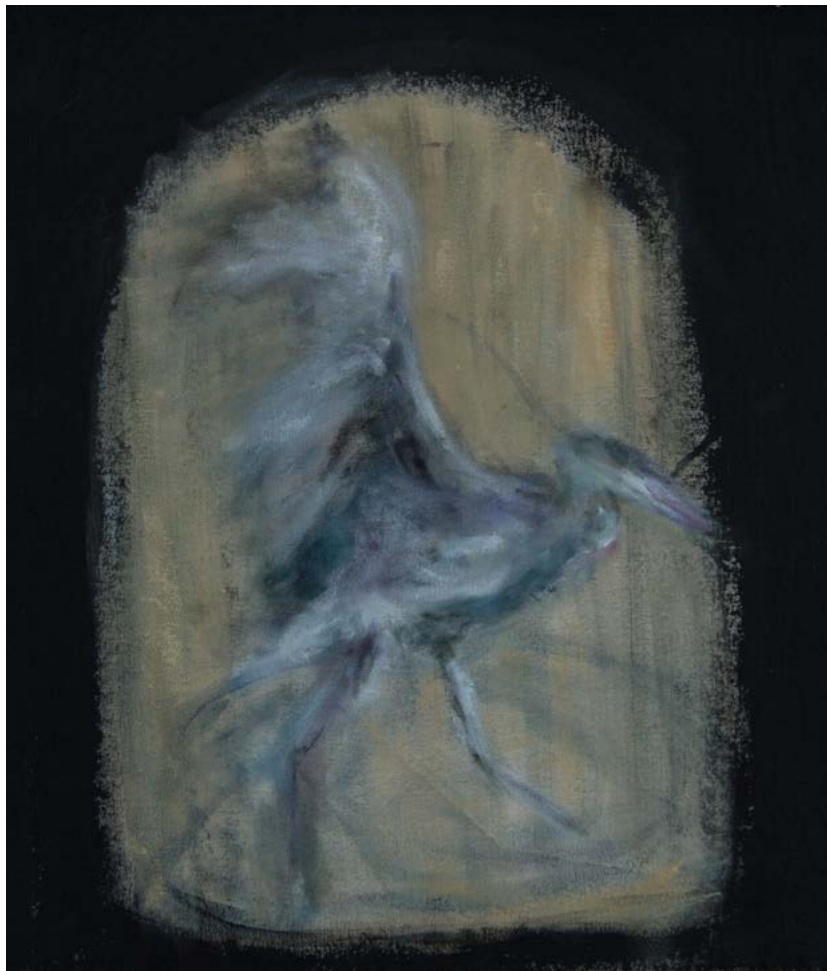
95 x 138 cm

R 9000



Figure from Sea, 2020

Oil on canvas
40.5 x 30.5 cm
R 2000



Caged Heron, 2020

Oil on canvas
62 x 54 cm
R 5500 (mounted)



My Body is Not like a Bird, 2020

Oil on canvas

100 x 110 cm

R 9,000



*And We are Fifty Feet Out to Sea Being Chewed
Apart by Sadness II, 2020*

Oil on canvas

66 x 56 cm

R 5500 (mounted)

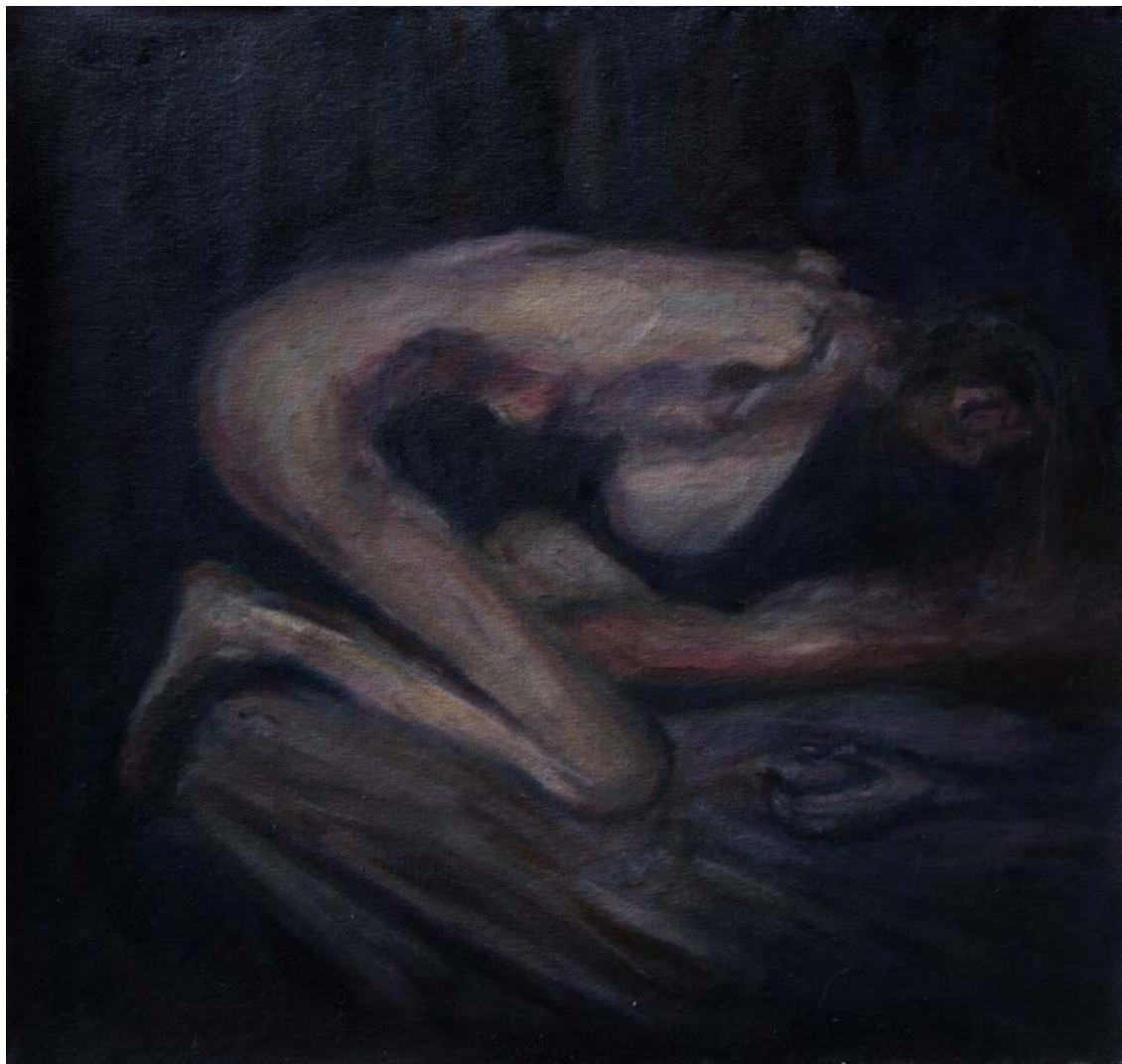


Bear, 2020

Oil on canvas

80 x 60 cm

R 4000



An Old Mattress Darkly Stained, 2020

Oil on canvas

59 x 62 cm

R 5500 (mounted)



To Bleed Green Blood, 2020

Oil on canvas

48.5 x 37 cm

R 2000



Frozen in Time, 2020

Oil on canvas

45 x 53.5 cm

R 2500



Ghosts Do Not Haunt They Regress, 2020

Oil on canvas

81 x 96 cm

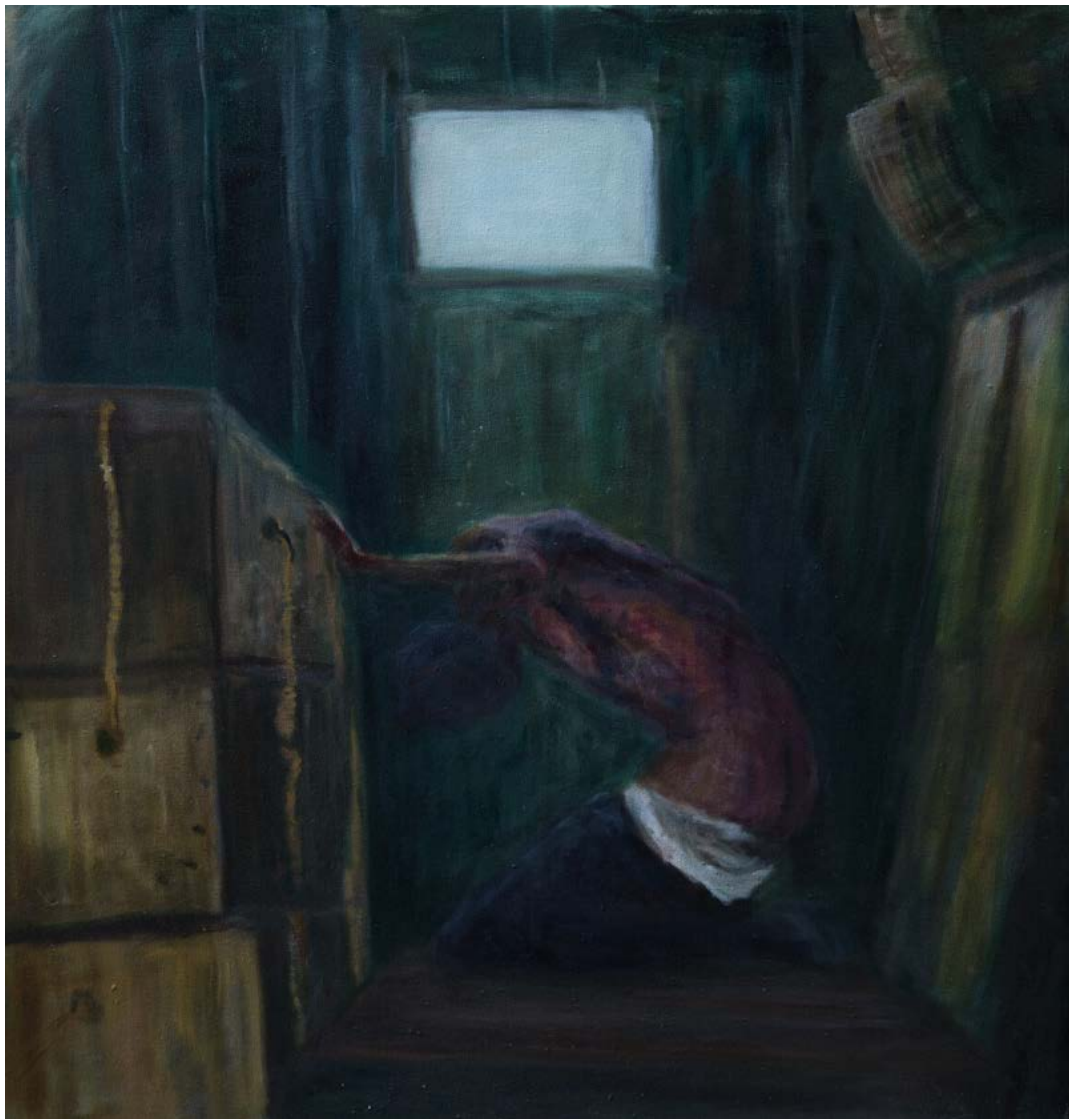
R 9000



Atropos by the Sea, 2020
 Oil on canvas
 54.5 x 49 cm
 R 2500



Portrait Taken in Rhodes Memorial Area, 2020
 Oil on canvas
 51 x 37 cm
 R 2000



The Doldrums, 2020

Oil on canvas

98 x 93 cm

R 9000



Self Portrait II, 2020
Oil on canvas
44 x 36.5 cm
R 2000

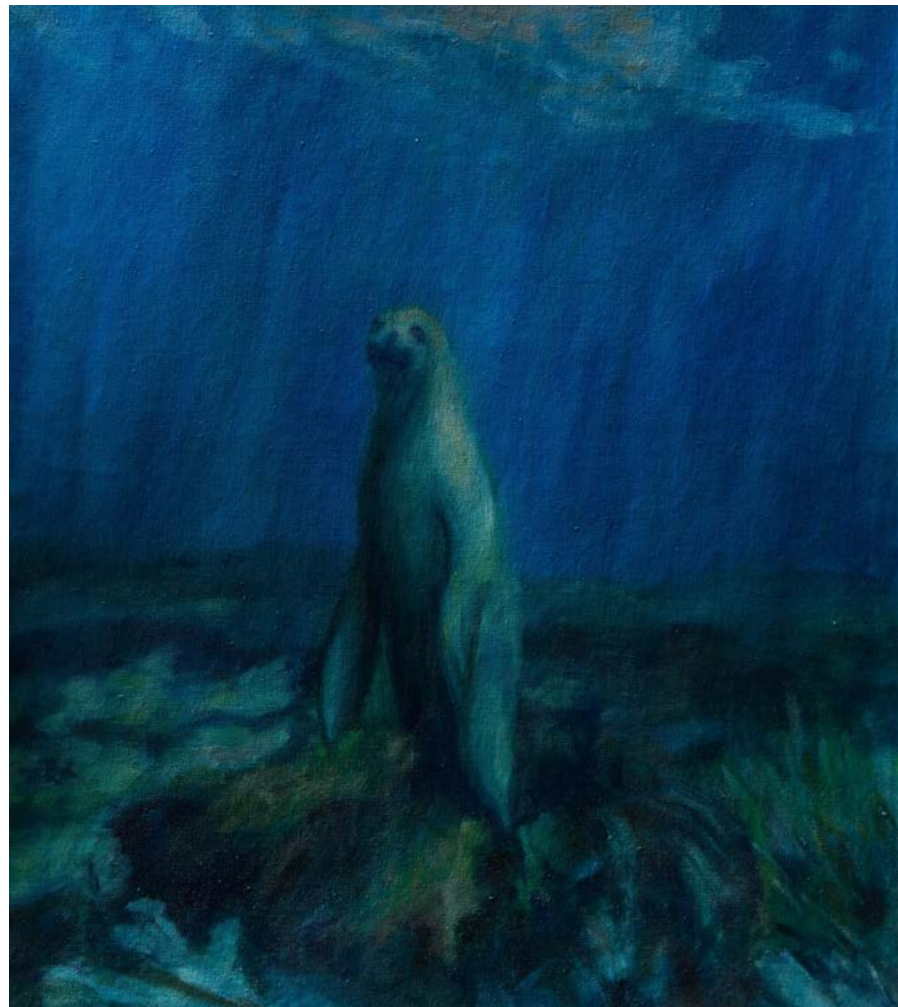


To Live in Perpetual Darkness, 2020
Oil on canvas
89 x 70 cm
R 5000



Self Portrait I, 2020

Oil on canvas
35.5 x 22.5 cm
R 2000



*And We are Fifty Feet Out to Sea Being Chewed
Apart by Sadness III*, 2020

Oil on canvas
66 x 56 cm
R 5500 (mounted)