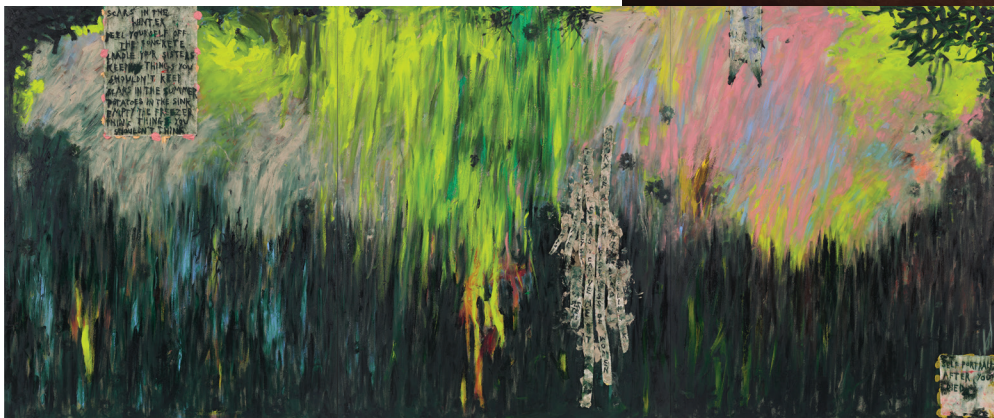


ABSTRACT PORTRAITS OF HUMAN EXISTENCE

Green Family Art Foundation opens a solo show for Daisy Parris this month.

BY JOHN ZOTOS



Above: Daisy Parris in their studio. Photograph by Max Bainbridge. Left: Daisy Parris, *The Heaviness Of It All*, 2023, oil and canvas on canvas, 78.75 × 189 in. Courtesy of the artist and Sim Smith.

An exhibition opening this month at the Green Family Art Foundation in the Dallas Arts District features five paintings by Daisy Parris. Parris (b. 1993, Kent, UK) lives and works between London and Somerset, UK and has already had quite a career, with an international exhibition history that includes shows far beyond Britain, in venues in Portugal, France, Spain, and Finland as well as the United States, in New York and Los Angeles.

In a show titled *No Storm Was Ever Quite So Fierce*, the paintings on view illustrate the vibrant intensity of gesture and color that Parris has become known for in work that eloquently handles abstraction combined with elements of text. The title of the exhibition was inspired by Parris’ favorite band, Sleater-Kinney, whose song “Get Up” has the lyrics “and when you were near, no sky was ever so clear.”

In this body of work Parris takes fronds of frayed canvas onto which textual elements are drawn in and adheres them to the

surface of each painting. Usually, a single section of text is used for each vertically oriented painting, where the strong phrases of paint have a sporadic thrust in the same direction, as in *4 Seconds Was The Longest Wait*. In this painting, sections of blue are overlaid with bold strokes of green; the upper left corner has the adhered text that reads “Your Falling Shape.” This text refers to another song by the same band: “Jumpers,” which is about high suicide rates at the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco. The lyrics are modified by the artist in an intense expression of emotion and rage. With a title that implies the actual act of a suicidal jump off the bridge, a harrowing feeling permeates the piece such that the artist invites us to share their empathy and sorrow.

This painting, along with *Weathered Flag*, whose text reads, “Faded by the sun, weathered by the storm,” illustrate Parris’ adept handling of rhyme in the use of language, which suggests an adequation in importance and skill among elements of painterly medium, titles, and phrases that comprise each piece.



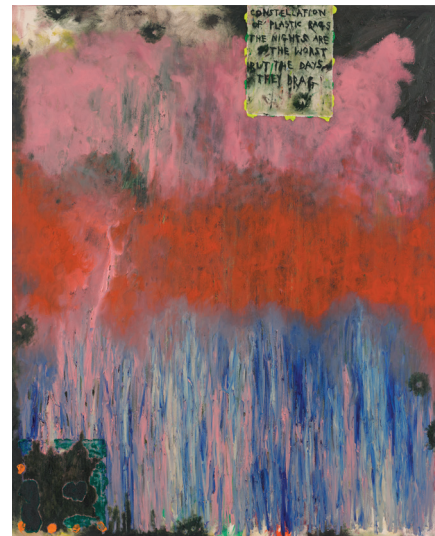
Daisy Parris, *Weathered Flag*, 2023, oil and canvas on faux fur, 23.62 x 15.75 in. Courtesy of the artist and Sim Smith.

Equally interested in pathos, human endurance, and resilience, here Parris explores the human capacity to succeed in the face of adversity. A frenetic green impasto supports a long flag-like canvas form displaying text that suggests our human capacity to survive and get through anything life throws at us. The artist brings both aspects together by concluding that “people are storms and people also weather storms.”

In an imposing triptych worthy by comparison to Monet’s *Nymphs*, *The Heaviness Of It All* has a combined length of fifteen feet. Long tendrils of paint in white, yellow, green, and pink cascade down, along with three sections of text, over a dark surface base. This energetic expression of reality takes on the natural world with bold brushstrokes and the signature elements of language that address the weight of Being in all of its existential aspects.

For Parris, painting is a way to work through problems or experiences during the quiet time of dealing with the surface, pushing paint toward extremes and boundaries in order to discover meaning and solutions to ongoing questions about existence. In surfaces that exude anxiety, rage, calm, and resolution, these pieces each seem to come together for the artist at the right moment; any less or more could bring down the entire composition.

Parris describes their work as “an ode to human existence... sometimes silent, sometimes savage, with paintings that construct self-portraits of personal battles and triumphs in a fast moving yet contemplative assault on the canvas.” This personal vision of the abstracted image, combined with text, in an art world currently obsessed with figuration boldly pronounces the continued relevance of so-called painterly abstraction. **P**



From top: Daisy Parris, *Faded By The Sun*, 2023, oil and canvas on canvas, 70.87 x 59 in.; Daisy Parris, *Constellation Of Plastic Bags*, 2023, oil and canvas on canvas, 78.75 x 63 in.; Daisy Parris, *4 Seconds Was The Longest Wait*, 2023, oil and canvas on canvas, 19.75 x 15.75 in. All courtesy of the artist and Sim Smith.