

how to knit a nebula
exhibition of painting by kate jacob
catalogue

26 January - 10 February 2024
preview Thursday 25 January 7-9pm

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Kate Jacob

How to knit a nebula

In *How to knit a nebula* Jacob articulates through painting her attempts to trace the voids, space, and places of loss and memory. A nebular, a giant cloud of cosmic dust and gas, is the former site of a star, but also its birthplace; a fitting description of the metaphysical time and space Jacob is reaching for in her painting.

Jacob uses a material process to knit together fragments of being, imagining the effects of time and motion inside and outside the body. It's a world of broken, hazy lines and shapes that rise and fall allowing us to exist in both the intimate and infinite realm.

Kate Jacob, born in London is now based in Sheffield, South Yorkshire. She studied at Manchester Metropolitan University, recently completed the Turps Correspondence Course, and the Fine Art Mentoring course at Morley College London.

Jacob has previously exhibited in Mura Ma's opening four-person exhibition, 'Edgelessness' in January 2023. She has also exhibited at The Graves Gallery, Sheffield, Harley Gallery, Worksop; Wolff Gallery, Studio 1:1, The Mall Galleries, London, and Morley Gallery, London. She's also founded and managed art projects, including Summer Schools at the former Mappin Art Gallery, Sheffield as well as co-founding Open up, South Yorkshires Open studio event, now in its 25th year.

interview with the artist

There is a central weight to your work, meaning that the concentration of the paint is in the centre of canvas. What is it about the middle for you?

In previous work the energy in the painting was at the edges, all the action was pushed to the sides and in the centre was space. What interested me was how the areas connected, the relationship to the edges and what bridged the spaces. This current series began with the question of what is happening in the space, what was in the middle? My focus became the centre of the space, and that became where the energy amassed in the work and it's evolved as a series about mass and space.

Making the centre the focus point allowed a different set of questions to arise as I tried to see through the spaces I'd created previously. Imagine zooming in on a photo and expanding and expanding and expanding, to the point where its lost focus and it's as if you've fallen through to the other side of the image. In trying to see something more clearly you

Do you work on a few paintings at the same time?

Yes, at times I can have 20- 30 paintings all at different stages, I've just done a count and found 40 canvases dotted about my studio. They rotate around, on the wall, leaned up on a surface or piled up by the door.

Working on lots of canvases at once allows me to indulge my leaning towards an obsessive, immersive nature, if I like a mark of a colour, I want to use it everywhere. It also curbs my frustration when I can't see a way into a painting, so if something it's not working I can turn to another and keep things moving. It suits the way my brain works, I start with speed, a frenetic energy and slow down as I go along, so working on lots at the same time allows the fast process to flow, and the slower process to focus and consider. It means I don't get bogged down in one or the other and can let my energy change and jump around. It's like having lots of tentacles so my brain can resolve, consider and see and do all at once.

As well as the physical manifestation of how I work I like that they build together. I see them as a book where each one is another page turned. Where the colours and marks made on one painting jump around, always a legacy of one on the next page or chapter. This makes for relationships to form, the narrative of each one becomes a part and sum of as its whole.

All the walls of the studio have works in different stages and they follow the speeds I work at. On wall 1 they're unresolved, embryonic and unfiltered. I work on them constantly, with speed, making quick decisions waiting for the moment when something connects or a narrative surfaces.

Directly opposite that is the wall 2 where I put them to settle. Here I work on them maybe once a day, sometimes once a week and it might be just a single brush mark or a drop of colour. I'm looking to see what they need in a more considered way than its opposite. Having them behind me as gives me 'behind thinking', parking them in the recess of my mind, allowing them to resolve out of 'sight'.

Wall 3 sits between them and is where they sit untouched to let them breathe, this is the space to see how they sit. This process can take months and on occasion years. Paintings rarely follow a linear pattern, going neatly from wall to wall in order, they bounce around. I instinctively know when there is something missing but don't always know or see it straight away, and accordingly each painting has its own pattern - 1-2-1-2-3-2-3, 1-2-3, or 1-2-3-2-1-3. It's an organic process, one that's developed unconsciously.

How do you respond to the ideas of abstraction and expressionism? Would you describe yourself as an abstract expressionist?

Only in that I think these are labels, and labels are a useful way for people to initially access the work; so when describing the work, the first way for people to imagine or understand it is as abstract as I'm not relating to known images or objects. Expressionism is possibly less fitting as the work is more about the experience of being, rather than the expression of it, it's more layered than pure emotion.

My ism? What's the box for the experience of an event, a place, a moment in time all at once? Take grief as an example, it's not just sadness or anger, it's a mass of thoughts, emotions and states of being, experienced over time. It encompasses many states including guilt, flatness, relief, euphoria, closeness, disconnection and melancholy; and we move and flow between them. It's not linear, it's layered and connected.

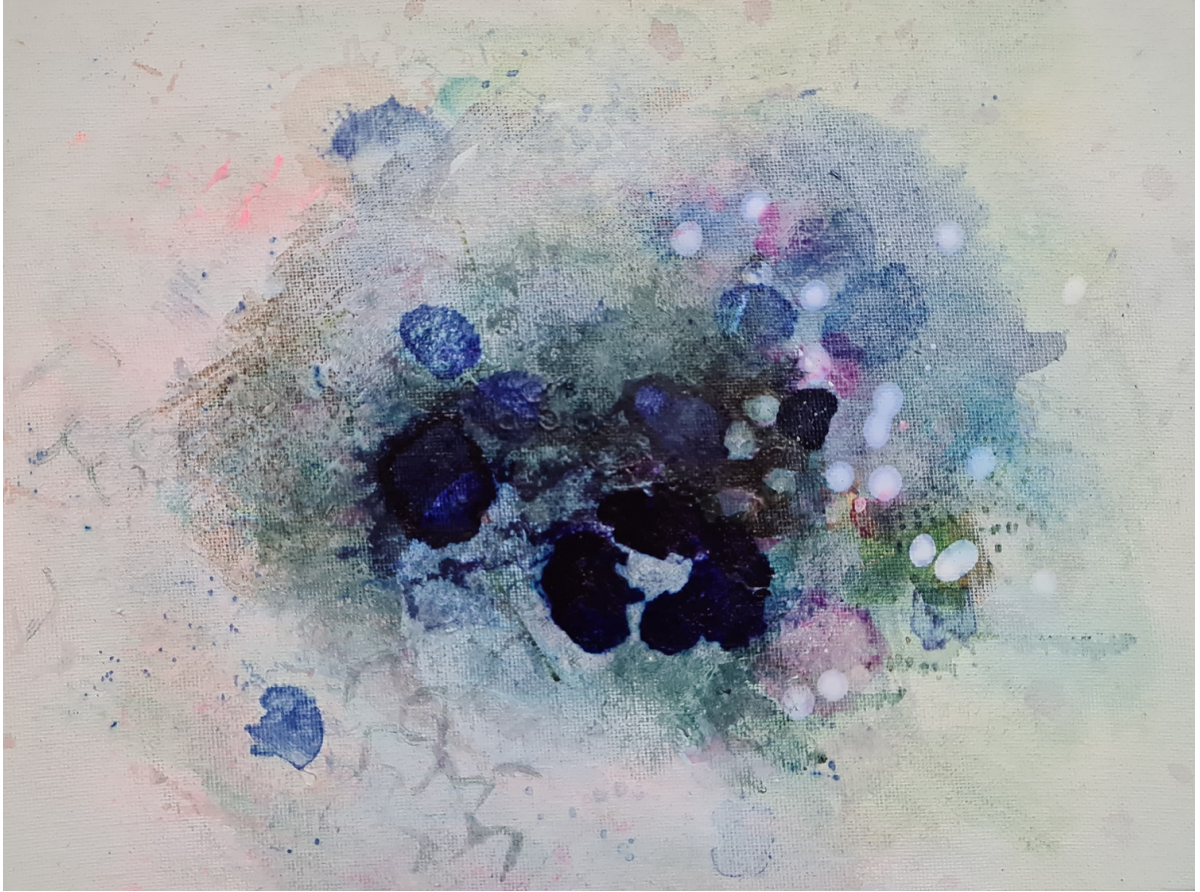
Who are you painting for?

I am aware of an external audience during the process but that comes in and out of awareness, but even if I didn't show my work I'd still have a need to make it, It's another language that I need to speak in to make sense of myself and this bat shit crazy world we live in. I think this need gets greater the older I get.

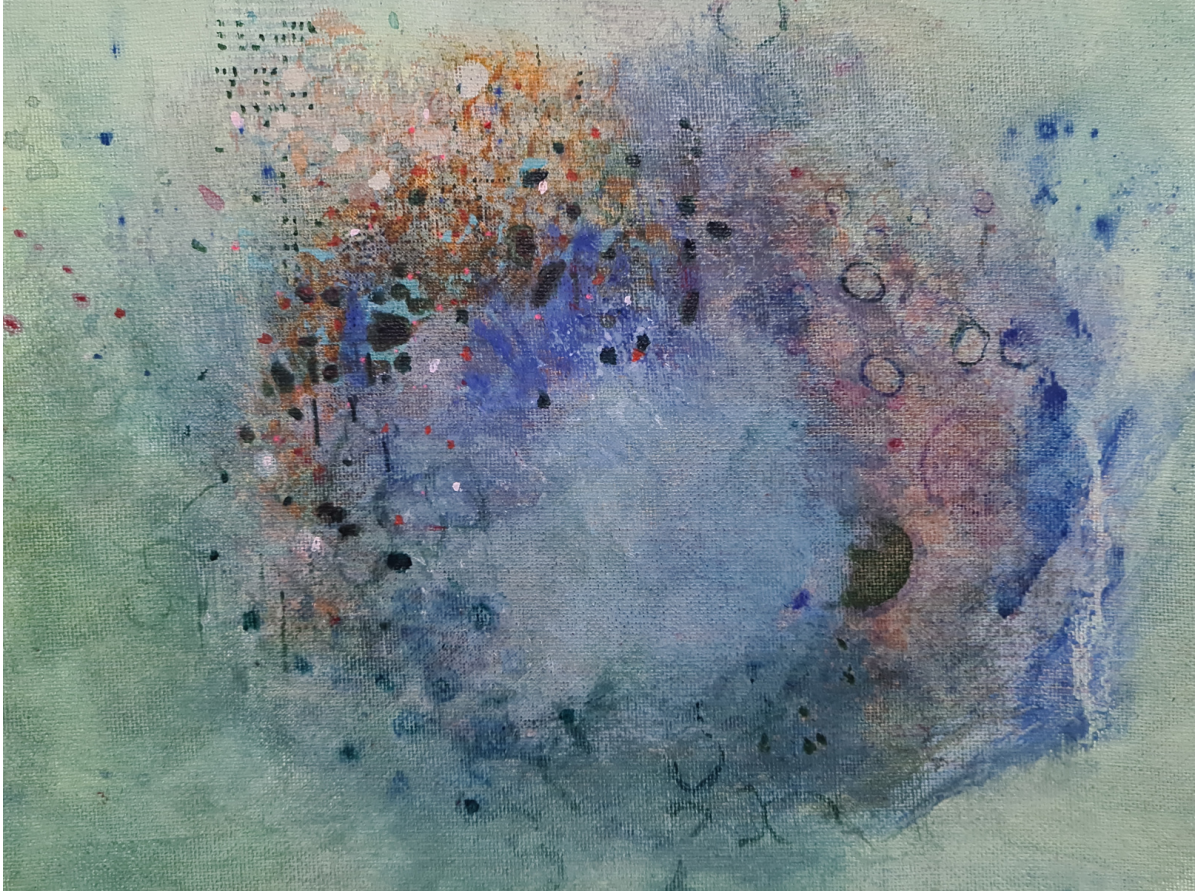
This also talks about what function art has for us, and I think most artists at some point question who am I doing this for? What significance does this have for others? Painting has a history of being elite, and other, and I think a lot of modern art has been about re-evaluating this, in an age of raising consciousness.

Contemporary painting can raise questions, and is often about the search for answers, whether that's challenging political structures, cultural and social norms, race and gender identities. Like science, there is need to know why, to understand the how, the what the next, ultimately its what connects us to ourselves, our communities, the physical and other worlds we frequent. I think art does this but in a different language and speaks to us at a different frequency.

Kate Jacob was interviewed by Nan Collantine
For all enquiries please contact nancy@murama.co.uk



Kate Jacob
From Mass to Matter.
23x30cm
Acrylic on canvas
2023
300



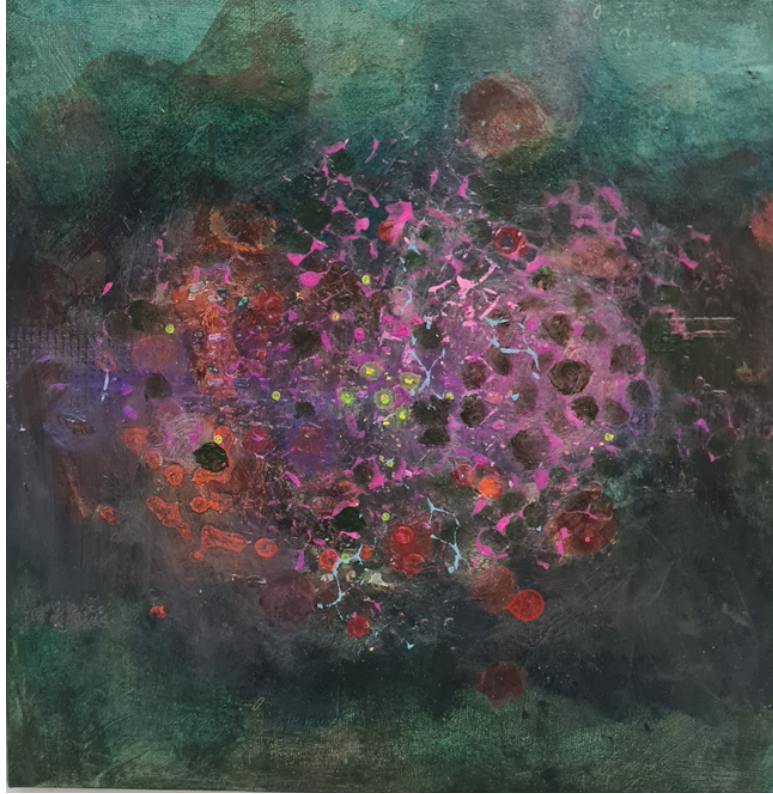
Kate Jacob
Rise and Fall
23cmx30cm
Acrylic on Canvas
2023
300



Kate Jacob
How To Knit A Nebula
23x30cm
Acrylic on canvas
2023
300



Kate Jacob
Memory Bank I
30x30cm
Acrylic on canvas
2023
395



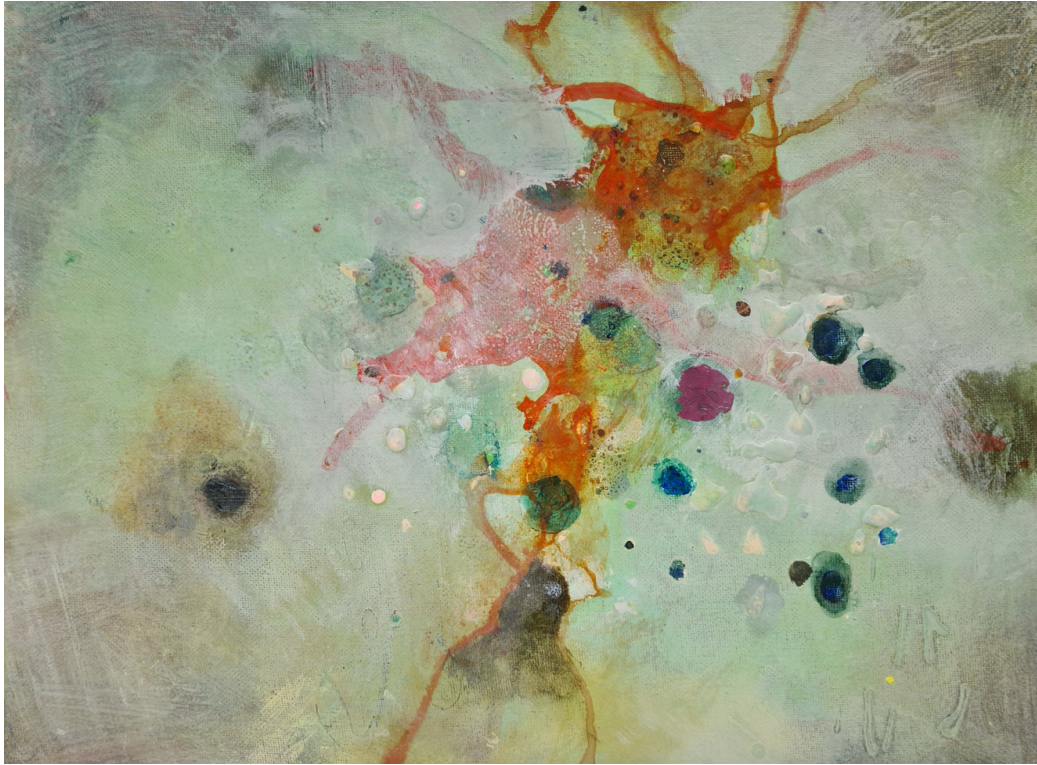
Kate Jacob
Memory Bank II
30x30cm
Acrylic on canvas
2023
395



Kate Jacob
Remembering
30x30cm
Acrylic and ink on canvas
2023
395



Kate Jacob
Who will Hold Me?
30x30cm
Acrylic and Ink on canvas
2023
395



Kate Jacob
Broken
30x40cm
Acrylic and Ink on canvas
2023
450



Kate Jacob
Not Everything is Equal
30x40cm
Acrylic on canvas
2023
450



Kate Jacob
Saturate
30x40cm
Acrylic on canvas
2023
450



Kate Jacob
Soak Up
30x40cm
Acrylic on canvas
2023
450



Kate Jacob
Keep Looking
60x60cm
Acrylic and pastel on
canvas
2023
725



Kate Jacob
Visceral Self
60x60cm
Acrylic on canvas
2023
725



Kate Jacob
As I Breath
90x90cm
Acrylic and ink on canvas
2023
1250



Kate Jacob
Slow Mo at Full Speed
90x90cm
Acrylic on canvas
2023
1250



Kate Jacob
Weigh Down
90x90cm
Acrylic on canvas
2023
1250



Kate Jacob
Never Absent
100x100cm
Acrylic on canvas
2023
1450



Kate Jacob
Measures of Time
100x100cm
Acrylic on canvas
2023
1450



Kate Jacob
Atomic
120x120cm
Acrylic on canvas
2023
1750



Kate Jacob
Somewhere Between Here and There
120x120cm
Acrylic on canvas
2023
1750



Kate Jacob
Press and Release
120x150cm
Acrylic on canvas
2023
1950



Kate Jacob
When I Look Back
120x150cm
Acrylic on canvas
2023
1950

To enquire or reserve an artwork please email nancy@murama.co.uk

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