

NARRATIVE STATEMENT

Why is your work important to you and/or your community?

Cinema is the king of storytelling. Photography is a more efficient form of documentation. Music is superior at catharsis. Television and the Internet own propaganda. This leaves painting the domains of materiality and ambiguity. I pack a painting with cultural and personal references and work toward an image that is provocative yet conceptually flexible. Some paintings get kicked around my studio for years and over time the compositions grow denser, tighter, and more intricately layered—like the tangle of a garden in late summer. The act of viewing my paintings is an unlocking of these internal relationships. Experiencing dense paintings that slowly reveal their nature can help us contend with the pervasiveness of fast-talking, slick images. In a media-riddled world, painting is a stabilizing force.

Painting's societal role continues to evolve, but at its most essential it remains a deeply humanist endeavor. Beauty can be an excuse to pause and ponder. When we confront a painting, we are faced with questions not subjected to sermons. Implied narrative is an innate and inescapable fact in all paintings. The viewer will always manifest some sort of narrative meaning, and it is the viewer who brings absolution to a painting. My intentions are to lean into what painting does well and trust the ambiguity that arises is important.

My ambition is in identifying how painting is relevant in the contemporary moment. I think the kind of slow-looking and slow-making found in painting can resonate today. In fact, a painting's capacity to slow the viewer down could be a criterium for judgement – the slower the better. Of increasing concern is providing a shifting visual experience as one physically moves around my paintings—embracing qualities that are difficult or impossible to capture with photography.

How does your work fit into this specific category?

I work in several modes and superficially my work can appear to have little in common with itself, but there is a shared sense of color and mark that has to do with painterly ambition—the surfaces are not casual. By directly observing the motif I create paintings that capture and pool color. Working in this mode I feel connected to my lineage of teachers that can be traced back to American impressionists Charles Hawthorne and William Merritt Chase.

The paintings created from direct perception will sometimes act as color informants for abstractions based on gradations and imagined portraits of my son. I'm interested in how perceptually based painters translate color relationships in a manner that is distinct from painters who use invented color. Perceptually based painters often stretch cool/warm harmonies so that incongruous colors provide a charge within a commonplace scene. It's as if at the family dinner table, someone casually mentions the meat in the delicious stew is rattlesnake.

I treat all my paintings as objects as well as vehicles for information. The edges of the canvas inform my compositions, reinforcing the flatness of the picture plane. I want the viewer to feel the reality of the surface through the pressure of the edges while also engaged in a tangible painterly space. My abstract paintings empty-out imagery for a more direct attempt at harmonies of color, mark, and space. The flatness of the surface is about the present tense. The illusion of depth implies both the future and past. A tension between flatness and depth, image and object, compels a thorough inspection of my paintings up close and from a distance. The aim is that they provide a variety of experiences, becoming elusive and hard to categorize.

How has your art been viewed or engaged people in your community, statewide or nationwide?

It's very important to me to act as an artist and proud representative from the middle of America. My research activities are intentionally broad in scope, scale, and location. I actively exhibit my work locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally; I have participated in exhibitions at public libraries as well as spoken publicly on my work and process in places as far away as Iceland, Chile, and Italy.

I am a member of an association based in NYC whose mission is to rally still life painters in the climate of the post-modernist art world. The group is very active, organizing thematic group exhibitions that travel to venues all over the country. The exhibitions often include some very noteworthy painters: Wayne Thiebaud, Catherine Kehoe, William Bailey, and Lois Dodd to name a few. This group and its somewhat traditional outlook is an important aspect of my research platform because I share these values, but also do not fit neatly within a traditional framework. My research interests include pedagogical ideas around painting and diversity as well as strategies for communicating painterly ideas to the public. Perceiving the visual arts as a pervasive part of culture, I am just as disinclined to adopt too narrow a research program as I am to create too narrow a brand of painting.

My position as a professor of art at a flagship university affords a great amount of credence in the local community. As such, I feel a responsibility to create links between the university and the community through the arts. I look for opportunities and people with which to start projects that fill a gap in both the community and the university thus attracting a diverse coalition. We then set about working collectively to build something that can eventually endure without us. When arriving in Northwest AR I immediately went looking for the local figure drawing group but there was not one. So, I helped create and facilitate weekly Figure Drawing and Portrait Painting Sessions with a small team of volunteer artists from a non-profit. In 2020 I was invited to join the reformed Art Committee to coincide with the opening of the expanded Fayetteville Public Library. The FPL is a point of pride in our community having won the 2005 National Library of the Year. The committee's charge includes accepting/declining donated art, choosing art for circulating exhibits, commissioning art, overseeing the selection of artists, and developing arts related programming.

What is the story behind your work and you as an artist? Where are you in your creative journey?

I feel so fortunate to have discovered what I wanted to pursue early in life and never have doubted that I was on the right track. Painting is infinitely complex, and I work every day to learn more about its history, techniques, and tangential connections. For the last few years, I have been studying and writing poetry which is a kind of cousin to painting; they both ask more questions than provide answers and comfort us in times of exaltation as well as desperation.

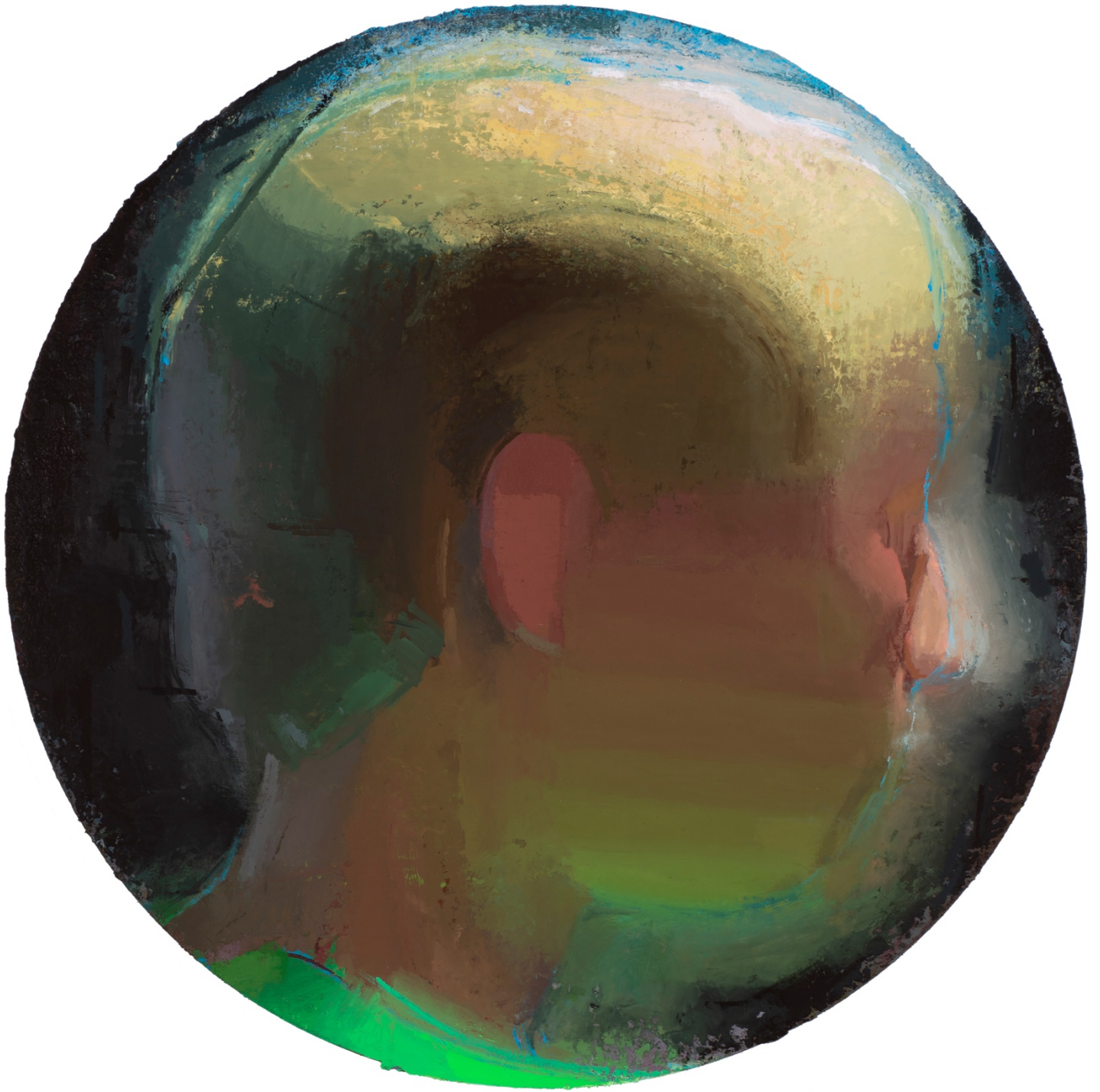
I am an artist and an educator and for me the two roles are inextricably linked. In 2007 I left a job working for the artist Jeff Koons in his New York City studio to pursue a career as an artist and academic. This decision has offered a tour of the South with time spent in Louisville KY, Starkville MS, and Tuscaloosa AL. In 2017 we put down roots in Fayetteville AR where I teach painting fulltime and live in a household of makers, dogs, and sheep on three acres.

Recent creative endeavors include participation in Art Week at the fabled family home of painter Fairfield Porter on Great Spruce Head Island in Maine—a poem I wrote about my experience has been included in the Art Week archives which will be housed at the Smithsonian Museum.

PORTFOLIO



Finn in His Cobalt Shirt, oil on linen, 54" x 48", 2023-



Imagined Finn, Husky, oil on muslin, 20", 2021



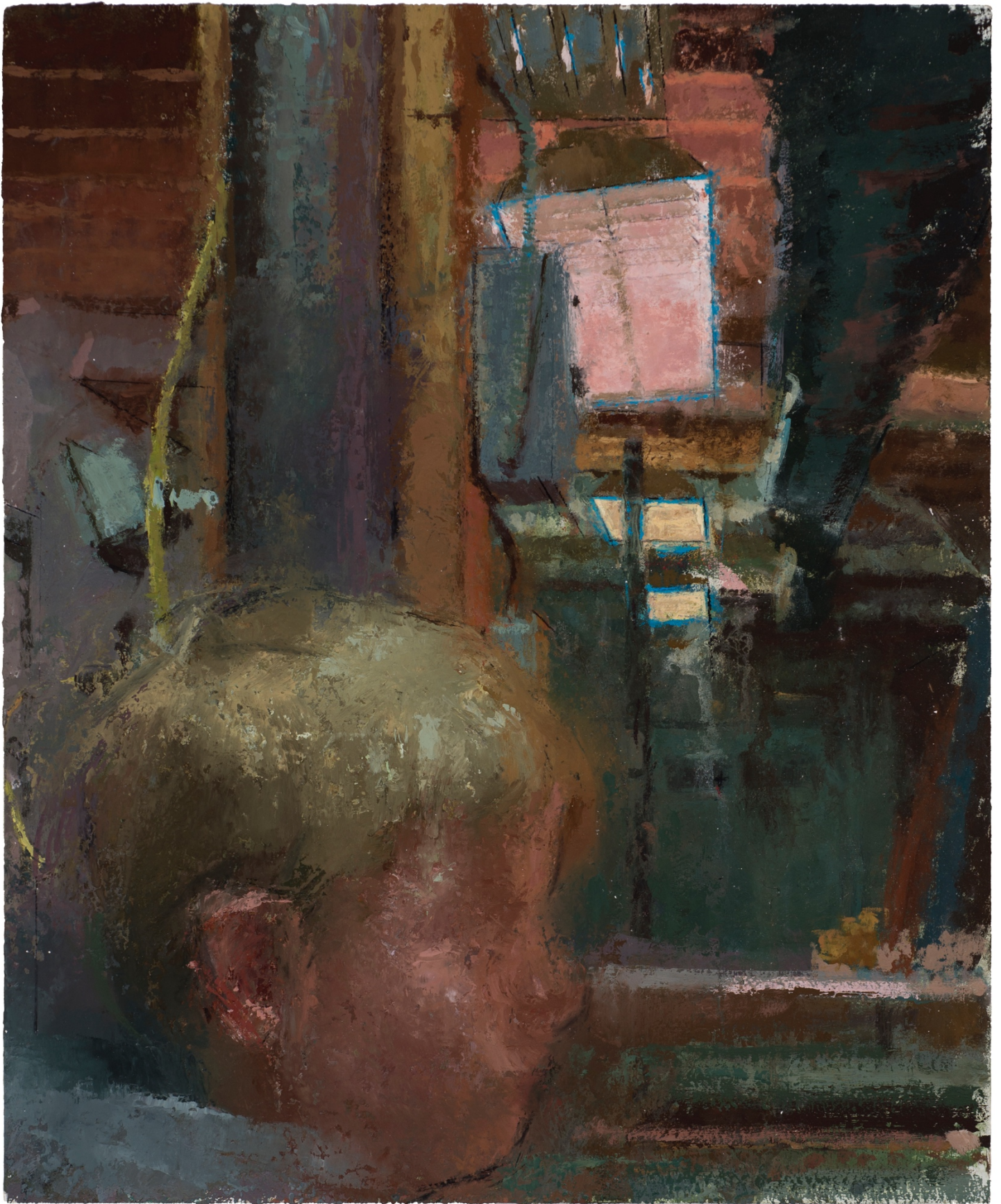
New Watermelon Darts, oil on multiple, 28", 2018



Finn's Hair - Gradation 1, oil on linen, 20"x16", 2020



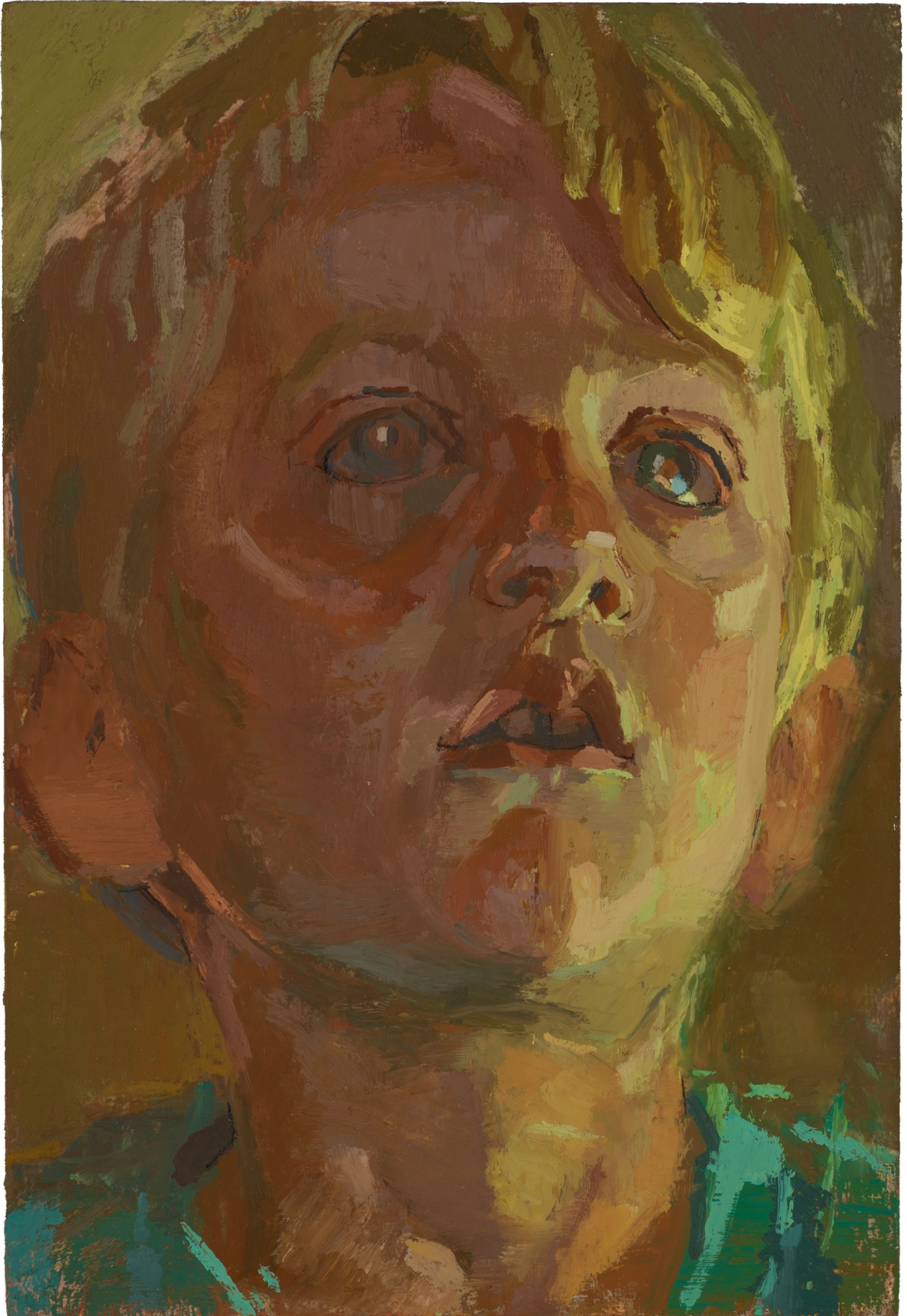
Imagined Finn, Long Hair and Beard, oil on panel, 24" x 18", 2021



Finn in New Watermelon, oil on panel, 10" x 8", 2016



Finn's Head - Gradation 2, oil on linen, 20"x16", 2020



Finn #4 - Iceland Palette, oil on panel, 10" x 7", 2013



Gradation Iceland Sky Large, oil on linen, 48" x 48". 2019



Sleeping Porch, oil on muslin, 48" x 48", 2013-2014



7am Sun, oil on panel, 12x10", 2022



Healing Grounds, oil on muslin, 30", 2017-2021



Summer of 2020, Behind Finn's Head - Gradation, oil on panel, 20"x16", 2020



Annunciation Afternoon, oil on linen, 48" x 48", 2016

Emma, oil on linen on panel, 20" x 16", 2019



Self-Portrait with Eyeshade (After Chardin), oil on panel, 24" x 18", 2022



February Magnolia Vet School, oil on muslin, 30", 2012-2015



Tree Diurnal Gradation 1, oil on panel, 12" x 10", 2021



Absconded Lighthouse Bell in Front of Margaret's House, oil on panel, 10x8", 2022



Winter Geranium, oil on panel, 16" x 20", 2016



Linytron 1978 off, oil on panel, 25" x 20", 2015