

Hello and welcome to the latest episode of OUTPUT Gallery's podcast. OUTPUT is a space that works exclusively with creatives from or based in Merseyside. My name is Gabrielle de la Puente, I run the space, and I will apologise upfront because we have had quite a gap in our usual programme. Unfortunately I got sick with Covid and I'm still feeling the effects of it a few months on. But I've roped in some help and we're just about to launch the entire programme all over again and continue working with the artists that we had lined up. If you've been following OUTPUT's work you'll know that towards the end of last year we adapted from in-person exhibitions to postal exhibitions. This is exciting for many reasons but most of all it means that we can carry on delivering artwork to our audience, and it's much safer this way for the time being. The latest artist to do that with us, I'm joined with today, it's Donal Moloney. Donal was born in Cork and now lives and works in Liverpool. He works at Liverpool Hope University and also as an artist. You might know his work if you visited OUTPUT Open 3, the off-site group exhibition we did at Make, Hamilton Square. Donal works in painting and other mediums and often creates incredibly intricate, careful, condensed works. We're going to start off today the way we always do on these OUTPUT podcasts, by asking you - where did your relationship with art begin?

Oh my god... I've never been asked that, at all. When I was a kid I went to art classes on a Saturday morning with my brother and sister, and it kind of started there. We had a really lovely art teacher, it was actually in a secondary school. You'd go into a classroom, a big art studio you had all this stuff around you, and you'd be drawing peacocks or whatever, and the teacher would break down how you drew a peacock, and then you'd do it. You'd do mono prints or felting, we did that for years. Of all the outside school activities I did, I liked that. I don't know what age, we were probably 6 or 7 when we were doing that.

Was that in Cork?

That was in Cork yeah, in a secondary school called Colaiste Choilm. I remember once for some reason they couldn't run it and we used to go to her studio, the artist who ran it, in her house which was in my estate, it's all coming back to me now. I do remember, it wasn't suddenly when I got to secondary school that art was a subject and you chose it... I had a bit of, it was my comfort zone, I knew something about it, so I was picking it up again then. I guess if you look back at anyone's history of how they got interested in music or whatever they're into, if it's science or... there's usually a teacher isn't there? I got lucky with some really nice teachers, really supportive teachers.

It's often the case when we do these podcast interviews that people will name a teacher, or they'll remember a specific conversation in foundation that just set everything off. It's really important, education.

I've got them in spades. I've got Miss Ruth O'Mathony in Ballincollig Community School, and she was brilliant. I think my parents were trying to say, go towards

maybe architecture or what else is it? Website design, that was a big thing in the late 90s, early 2000s. I think my art teacher had a chat with my parents and said, I think he should go to art school, and I think my parents said, alright. Everyone has these strange roles. I dropped art when I was 14, 15 - I was thinking I'll do architecture - I ended up back in it because at school, I won't go on about this too long, but in school we had this thing. In the Irish secondary education system it's called transition year, I don't know if you have something similar here, but it's just after what would be your GCSEs, in Ireland it's called junior cert. It's like a gap year, where you do a lot of... you do your subjects but you're not building up to any big tests, so it's a chance to get involved in anything like musicals or extra things. A lot of us started hanging out in the art room and I said alright, I think I'm going to pick it back up again. It was through getting together with friends and being in that studio environment, looking back on it. So I said nah, not going to do it, then ended up back in it again and couldn't let go.

So with the help of that teacher, what was that movement like from secondary school education to something more formal like a BA, what was the shift like?

I didn't do a foundation, but what this art teacher did, she used to run these portfolio classes on Wednesdays, we used to have half days on Wednesdays to do sports but I did this portfolio course. I wanted to do something creative but I didn't know if it was going to be multimedia or graphic design. So you built it up slowly. I realised when I got to my final year I could go and do a foundation or I could just take a punt and go for the degree. The degrees in Ireland are four years long, unlike the English BAs which are three years long. So it's a bit like the Scottish system. The first year, I wouldn't say it's like a foundation, I don't really remember it being like that. It's more that you almost get two second years, that's how I think back on it. Those years where you might be a bit in the wilderness, you're trying to find your feet, and your identity, and what you really want to do. You had two years of that, so I think having those four years was quite important. To answer your question, in those Wednesday afternoon classes where you had people from all different schools building portfolios, that was kind of giving me an insight into preparing for art school. I don't think anything really prepares you for when you walk in, the first day. I literally thought we'd have to paint and draw from the model, I was so clueless. I went to open days, but I don't think I was listening. I was just going round the studios and smelling the turpentine, the atmosphere, students lounging on couches and overhearing these interesting conversations... I couldn't engage with them. I went along and then suddenly, I was told oh here's your studio space, off you go. There was some introductory projects but really it was, oh, you're an independent learner now. All these people, a lot of them had been to foundation but a few of us came straight from school and we all kind of corralled together and went, what is going on?! I remember going into art history and furiously writing down the notes in the first lecture about Van Gogh and something about his letters from his brother Theo. I went home that night and learned them off, I thought it was like school!

No!

It was quite funny... someone was like, there isn't going to be an exam. You have an essay and you can choose what you want to do the essay on. And I thought, oh right! It made me realise, I'm interested in this stuff anyway, and I don't need to learn it off because it was coming in, what was important. I'm sure it's like that for anyone, even coming off foundation, because you're coming into a new environment with new people.

Yeah. My equivalent was going to University, my first lecture was a critical studies lecture, and all they spoke about was politics and the left, the right, different political words that I didn't recognise at that point. And I felt so stressed out, and I went up to the lecturer and said, I'm really sorry, I don't know what any of this means. I didn't do anything political in school. What does it mean? Do we need to know all this for art? He really kindly got a book from the library that was like the A-Z of political terminology and I just read it, I took it in. But it was such a- finding your feet at the beginning of an art course, where you really just don't know what's going on yet. You look back on that and think OK, I'm glad I went through it, but, wow. I wish someone had told me.

I don't remember much politics. We had a studio, you'd have studio days with tutorials and then you'd have art and design history. So we didn't get that kind of critical theory until a bit later. All I remember was images and lovely old slide shows, the whirring of the slide projector before digital slides, sometimes they'd be upside down. And really charismatic lecturers. The way they spoke about stuff, they'd pause on images and to be honest, this is like 2003-2007, I think I got the end of a very kind of, maker's... I don't know what it's like now, from people I know who are teaching there it's very much about making, it still is. But it was almost like at the time, I felt really encouraged to just make things and not to worry too much about what it might mean. Not being afraid to try something out without having all the rationale for it. You could actually do stuff and then think about it later. I think I've always done that anyway, but I have experienced as you've said, maybe more in post-grad where it's like, what are you making, and why are you making. Who are you reading about. I think my MA was trying to catch up with coming to the UK and being surrounded by people who'd been through the UK system at the time, they seemed to be really well-versed in critical theory, and I quietly kept to myself and listened a lot, and read as much as I could. I did that classic thing where you spend half an hour reading a book and you put it down and think, what was that about? You find your own way in, don't you.

Eventually. So what was the art you were making on that BA compared to... you did your MA at Slade, that's right isn't it?

Yeah.

And then how did it change?

On my undergrad, I started out making sculptures. I did technical drawing, it's all t-squares and set-squares. I loved that in school and I learned so much about perspective and rendering things geometrically, I loved that. The angles between roofs... I wasn't very good at it, but I found I could take stuff from it. I went into art school and I leant on that a lot, and basically spent my whole time trying to figure out how to paint. I loved people like Hughie O'Donoghue, and I loved Anselm Kiefer. I liked artists like Gwen O'Dowd who were showing around Cork at the time in a couple of small commercial galleries, kind of poetic romantic paintings and wonderful surfaces. I was constantly trying to figure out how people made stuff. I was trying to figure out how to make colour, how to make big paintings, because my heroes were making big paintings. I made lots of big paintings but they were more like drawings really. I was taking painting outside, large canvasses, copying this guy John Virtue, I'd seen pictures of him doing that so I did that, as you do. Then I ended up starting to make smaller works, and started to get interested in little detailed sections, and that stuck and snowballed all the way through. So I had this relationship with, I guess, condensed information in paintings. Compressing it and letting it release, compressing it and letting it release. I can say that now looking back. Yeah, I made lots of paintings, basically. I did loads of life drawing, I loved life drawing. We had great life drawing tutors, great painting tutors, looking back. People like Leo McCann, and Megan Eustace, Simon English, Jill Dennis, Jacinta Duff. Really encouraging people who were just about making. You had the tutors who'd come in and say ah, you're working from a photograph and you're using acrylic, you're working like a machine, because it's artificial. And I'm like, that's really interesting and I'll probably never forget that, but I'm just going to keep making stuff because that tutor around the corner said keep making more of them, and try to make them better, and go to see loads of shows, and don't worry about emulating somebody, everybody copies someone somewhere along the line. That doesn't stop. Yeah, I just made load of paintings, loads and loads of paintings.

I've been to Cork, and there were quite a few galleries.

Oh right!

Did you find that Cork's exhibitions were enough, or were you travelling to see stuff?

It was actually really good at the time, in the early 2000s. It was before the economic crash. There was the Fenton Gallery, Vanguard Gallery- Fenton Gallery had a stable of artists that were pretty much the same as Purdy Hicks in London, so you had a lot of those artists showing. You had a Municipal Gallery, the Crawford Art Gallery, which had a great collection going back centuries. Around that time a gallery opened up in one of the Universities, the Glucksman Gallery, that had a really good programme of contemporary art. So you had a really good mix but I'd be going to Dublin quite a bit to see shows up there at the Kerlin, Green on Red, etc. The National Gallery, so you'd do the route round Dublin, Temple Bar as well. I'd go to London a little bit, I had relations in London so I'd probably be going to London every year or two and do the run around the Tates, I didn't really know the commercial galleries at the time, so I'd do the Tate, hop on the boat, do

the other Tate, do the National Gallery, do the British Museum, and then pass out. It was only really when I moved to London and people said let's go East, let me show you... and suddenly, wow. But yeah, it was a mix of stuff in Cork. When were you in Cork?

I was trying to remember just before this call, but I went over at the beginning of 2019. I can't remember because the pandemic has just totally thrown off any sort of timeline. I can't quite gauge time any more. But I had gone to look at an exhibition and ended up with a commission from Crawford Art Gallery to review another exhibition and the plan was for me to go back and forth and to write about the art scene there, but then the pandemic, so.

Great! It might continue, do you think?

Yeah, I'd love to go back, it was really nice.

There's a lot of grass roots studios. I get back a couple of times a year and I try to keep in touch with people who are there. I'm a little bit out of the loop with it but through the internet you see what's happening. People are staying there, and people will often go back if they go away for work or post-grads, they'll come back. So it's an interesting scene. It's always been an interesting scene, looking back to the mid-90s with studio groups there, the backwater artists group. There's some really great, committed people.

I went to the print studio.

That's above the backwater artists studio, it's an incredible facility.

That's where I went to see the exhibition by Chila Burman, who ended up showing in OUTPUT Gallery. That was how that show came about, it was very good.

Ah right!

You also did a PHD didn't you, after the MA. Was there a big gap between them, did you go straight into it? What was your PHD about?

I took a year after my BA and then went and did an MFA in painting, I did that at Slade, finished that in 2010, then did a PGCHE in teaching in Higher Education, I'd realised at that stage it was something I really wanted to do. So I did that, and then I came out of that in 2011, and I'd been thinking about the PHD for a while. I spent quite a lot of time talking to people who were doing them or had done them. And then in 2012 I started to take it seriously and started to apply to different places. I think it was 2012 when I started at the University of the Arts London. It was at CCW, I think it's still called CCW - Camberwell, Chelsea, Wimbledon. So you're not really anywhere, you have your supervisor, you don't have a studio space, you

just have your own studio. You meet your supervisor and use the libraries and facilities. You were at UAL, so, were we there at the same time?

I was there 2013-16.

Yeah, so we would have been.

So what was your PHD about, then?

It ended up being about tiny mirror reflections of light, in paintings. So - painted depictions of little chinks of light. That's it.

That's lovely, that's so nice.

It took me about three years to do it. I think anyone who's done any kind of essay or thesis, you don't really know what you're doing, you're hunting and gathering and trying to figure out where you are. It's really intense, like, just give me a subject to write about! I thought I was going to write about time in painting, but then I realised that was so vast, what was I thinking about. It really naturally drifted into that, and I had really great supervisors. Daniel Sturgis and Steven Farthing, and Rebecca Fortnum at the very beginning. I just had some wonderful conversations with them. It was Stephen Farthing who guided me towards, he said there's lots of shiny things in your paintings and you're writing about lots of other stuff, why don't you write about those shiny things? They're called specular highlights, and that was it. I started to look into it and I could see how it was tying together lots of other things. Then I got into a rhythm with it, and it became a little less distressing. Looking back on it, you had to go on all those circuitous routes to come out with something that is a strange thing, I never would have thought about that but it was really lovely to look into it, and it felt like something that I could add a tiny little bit to. So actually, overall, the experience wasn't as harrowing as I'd heard, from people warning me off doing PHDs. They'd say three years, it'll really take you eight or ten, someone was doing it for twelve years, you know... actually I got really lucky with supervisors. I think I've been really lucky throughout with really good teachers who gave me enough rope. They knew when to help me reign it back in and when to let me go and search for stuff. So you look back at having felt quite respected, in a way. That they knew it was a good thing for me to go and get a bit lost.

Yeah, I think that's an important part of arts education.

I think so. A teacher I had year ago, Bruce McLean, he said that art's about learning to be comfortable with being uncomfortable. I love that, it's so true. It's that kind of, you always look back and realise, deep breaths, it's OK. Getting a bit lost, you find interesting things and you come back from those, not to sound too hippy dippy about it but you do find things that are unexpected and exciting. The idea of just, coming up with an idea, and just making it or rendering it, is not very interesting. It's safe, but it's not very interesting. Different artists work in different ways, some artists work with a bit of that and a bit of getting lost, I think I'm like

that, I like to get a bit lost, and find stuff. But I also like process, and materials, and I have an ongoing thing with that. You're building on experience but you're also allowing other things to come in and out of the work, so you don't get stuck in a rut, in habits.

Do you find that - this is a bit of a leading question - but do you find that has shaped your work as an educator now?

Yeah, I think so. The thing of getting lost, or maybe- I think that's one of the biggest learning curves, for me going into education, I've been teaching in art schools for about ten years now. Not everyone learns like me, and it's such a simple thing that sometimes you don't realise. I was obsessed about art school, I loved it, I really really- it was like a boarding school for me. I'd get there really early in the morning, I lived in at home in my undergrad, which had its benefits. My father would drive in, because he was working in one of the other universities. So I was in quite early, and you know, I'd just get the bus home in the evening. It was like my hobby and my interest and my profession all mixed into one. So that was me, and I thought everyone that goes into art school is just like that. But I look back, and it wasn't always rosy, for me and other people. That's exactly what it's like for students now, even more now. You realise that you can't impress your way of thinking on others, and it's that classic thing - you learn so much from your students, you totally do, you really really do. You've got to listen, and be very mindful of what advice you're giving. I took everything tutors said, the moment they left the tutorial I was scribbling it down. These were artists, working artists! They had to know what they were talking about! I'm personally quite careful what I say with students, guiding them on, it's about exploring. I love it, it's talking about art, it's great. It's their art, something concrete, their work. Looking at all the ways it could go and develop, and there's a coaching aspect to it, which I really love. If you like being with people, if you really like art, and you like working with people in those in between parts of the work, just being able to introduce them to something. Then they come back the next week and it's all over their journals, they're talking about it non-stop. I put at the end of a message recently, a message to students about the new Adam Curtis documentary, Can't Get You Out Of My Head. I just put it at the end of the thing and I found that a lot of the students are speaking about it, I've seen it pop up in journals, and I just think that's great. You realise that you're not an expert, you don't know everything, but you've got a lot of stuff you can share with students, and that's really rewarding. It's tough, but it's so rewarding. I can't even remember what the question was...

No no, it's fine! It's really nice, I remember things that my tutor said to me. I remember it word for word, because I would write it down and it has stuck with me this whole time. These really insightful, sensitive comments. You just think, how do these art tutors pull it off? It just feels like magic. I love it.

I feel like there's a book to be written, a crowd-sourced book of one page, one quote that really stuck with people. Wonderful. I always loved the inspiring, little short ones that tutors would say. Or you'd be sitting doing your work while someone else was having a tutorial and you're listening in. Then they give this

amazing, they leave the student with a really interesting question and you take that in. You remember all these things, and you end up repeating them, because they're so useful. I think, that tutor probably heard that from someone else. I remember in my second year of MA I was taught by Lisa Milroy, and she was taught by Michael Craig Martin, he was taught in Yale I think by Josef Albers, and she was telling us this thing about colour one day and explaining that she had talked to Michael Craig Martin about colour and what he had learned about colour through speaking to Albers. She was saying, now I'm sharing this with you, there are some things that are still really important. I thought that was really nice, the advice would shift and change and mean different things at different times. I just kind of thought, there's something really nice there, that connection and thread. Stuff does get passed down, there's no fine art textbook or curriculum, is there? The closest we come to it is probably, and this is more for the critical theory side, is the Whitechapel documents of contemporary art publications, which are incredible. They're really useful, these little bitesize bits of essays on beauty or painting or magazines or networks... there must be twenty-something titles now. But there's no textbook for the practical side. And I think it is so interesting how all that stuff has been passed down. Maybe other subjects are like this as well, but there's no - at art school, you give students a studio, give them access to workshops, do demonstrations with them, get them visiting artist talks, take them to galleries, hopefully take them on an overseas tour... that's kind of it.

Then it's just conversation.

There's no guidebook for tutors, you build a lot on your education and experience.

How much of that do you think is going to be lost over the past year because of social isolation and quarantine?

Big, big question. As it happens, our students are back face to face now, those that want to and feel able. Not everyone is able, with their circumstances, of course. So we've been in before Christmas and then like everyone, had to go online since January, and now we're back and hoping we can stay on for as long as possible. It's looking positive, we just need to get past Easter and see what we're like after that. For students, I can only imagine... for you and me, how privileged we were to be in studios and have that access. Now students have to shift online. Universities all over the world have done some really fantastic things with students. If you're trying to replicate the studio exactly, that's not really possible so it's about thinking of the restrictions as somehow in a positive sense. Limitations that you can somehow work within. I think back to this time last year and our final year students of all, at least the first and second years had the possibility of more face to face but the final year students quickly realised it's going to be online, the whole year. That huge leap, it doesn't matter what staff go through in some ways, but the students have to realise - right, I've got this desk, or I've got that shed, rethinking everything. What have I got a lot of? I've got a lot of outdoor space, and... it was tutors all over the country not just having to placate the students, that's not the right word but kind of, why don't you try this, could you use a bit of bubble bath, what have you got around your house, make a painting

with teabags. That's never going to go anywhere, it's trying to think about, here's your limitations now. You're going to have limitations in the future, or you might be on a residency in the future and you're going to- how can you make this work? I've come to realise this week, I don't think it's about the students gaining resilience. I'm robbing this from Brigitte Jurack, she made this beautiful video recently about a show in the Williamson that became a video. She talks about that, about resilience, it's about adaptability. I thought that was a much better word.

It's more positive.

Yeah, exactly, and a bit more true to what students have to do. You put yourself in their shoes, or you try to. We've got a lot of contact time with the students, we see them every week, we wouldn't be letting them drift for a month or anything. We always have a day a week, so we moved that online. Trying to work with the students to say like, what can you do? Always having a plan B in case we have to go online again. All this is adaptability for in the future, there will be challenges. I'm sure they're not going to be as big as covid, but there will be challenges where they have less time to work in the studio, or they go on a residency and stuff breaks down, and they've got two weeks - how are they going to make use of it? I'm not being positive for its own sake or putting a spin on it, it's trying to make use of this period. Maybe they'll suddenly realise, this is once in a lifetime, it's coronavirus, it's a pandemic. I'm going to make work about that, I'm going to use that as a site and a material, because I'm never going to live through this again. What about the life I'm in, that's my subject. Some students have focused on an area of their practice they can still do, it's not either or but some students have gone - right, I'm in my house, I can't leave except at certain times or for certain reasons. I'm going to use this as subject matter. I remember last year there were students who I think pulled off work they would have never done if they had the studios. And that's not for everyone, I'm not trying to put a positive coating on it completely. I think it really changed some people's practices forever. Going back to it, for students it has been - I just have to keep repeating - I can't imagine.

Definitely. I feel like that has brought us up to date with your practice. I encourage any listeners to go to your website and check out the images for themselves. But the images you make are so interesting, I think.

Thank you!

But I find it really difficult to put any words to them. How do you describe what you do?

It's tricky, now. I'm not saying I'm in a period of transition but I'm trying to... I don't know if you're referring to more recent works from my website, 2019, 2020. They're quite condensed, small paintings from postcard to a3 size. There's quite a lot of stuff in them, condensed. What am I doing in them? I'm compressing a lot of information. There's a connection to still life painting, I've realised. Not by design, but just- this thing I said earlier on. I make the paintings that I'm excited about, and then I get to a point where I go, what am I doing? I literally go, what's in them?

There's bits of twigs, there's little magical orbs, there's things hidden behind things. Everything is really tightly compressed like it's sitting on a scanner. There's something of the digital, but I'm not like, a digital painter. I don't make them on photoshop and then just paint them.

That was going to be my other question. Is it pre-visualised in any way? Do you plan it out?

No. I think of them as more gestational. They're not procedural, planned out. But then at the end, I have to realise that someone who looks at them at the end and sees those dense paintings, that they look like they've been designed on photoshop. They have this cut and paste, one thing layering over the other. But they start with, like when I was a student, I collect images from everywhere, newspapers, magazines, the internet. I sift through them and a lot of what I'm sifting through, I think, would this look good in paint? I'm thinking in the background about the meanings but knowing that I'm going to be putting so many things together that certain meanings might get cancelled out by others. They look very different from ten feet away - they have a haze, but then you get closer and realise there's a lot of different things. Then you realise there's too much to take in, in a glance, I hope there's a kind of getting lost. In the process I go through there's a reciprocal thing. I'm making paintings in a sense that are so influenced by other artists that I've looked at, that I really like, I've always liked dense, detailed paintings. Amongst lots of other kind of paintings and other kinds of art. But I like enigmatic, mysterious, but not for its own sake. There's always something that's a little more graspable but it keeps slipping away. I like that kind of imagery. I'm very careful about titles as well, you know, that's where the text comes in. I used to call things untitled but I realised you can temper or lead people a certain way, just gently, like the images, into certain kind of subject matter. I think there's something fantastical, the word cosmic is coming to mind, but I'll park that... maybe something slightly magical. I've got wizards wands and stuff hidden in paintings, but it's not just a wizard's wand. I love making them, and I think there's something about how long they take to make as well. I've spent six months or a year, a year and a half on paintings. I quite like that imagery will come in and influence it naturally, there isn't a forced thing for the paintings. But I've decided in the last year and a half to try and start airating them, and working on larger paintings. Mainly I kept some of that work going, so I'm on two or three ways of working. But that's fine, you don't have to work on one way of working. I talk to the students about that as well, I remember going to a Peter Davies exhibition back in 2009, as a student in the Approach Gallery in London. I walked in and there were three paintings, and that was it, and each painting was completely different. Very simple, but it really stuck with me. You don't have to do what Monet does, I don't have to always paint allegorical tales like Gentileschi or someone. I can work in lots of different ways and sometimes they can just be separate. I could do small touching squares, the next painting could have Cartman from South Park and another one could just be overlapping triangles, and I just thought... this is what he's doing, working on lots of different things and then they come together like songs on an album. There's a lovely simplicity to it. So I've been doing that, and some things have been going OK and some things I've realised it's going to take a longer

transition. But I realise that it's OK then to keep working on those denser things and it might be a really long-term... I've opened up something and I've only looked in seven or eight different directions in this world that you open up. There's a lot more to explore. I don't want to look back in 40 years time and wish I'd done some other things. When I went to students and would see them working in lots of different ways, I go- oh yeah, why haven't I, why am I not painting figures? So I started painting figures, which I haven't done for years. And then I realised by making that work, there's no figures in those dense paintings, it's just objects and stuff that's left around. So the figure has left, because it looks quite arranged. It doesn't feel natural - is this a weird still life, that's been composed? Then something's grown up through it, that's the narrative I think I've been exploring in those works. So then the viewer is someone that's stumbled across it, so you take the place of... I love that kind of stuff about painting in particular, because that's what I've been making a lot of. I quite like how a painting has a seeming simplicity but when you start to unpack it, it starts to move, it starts to move you as the viewer, and I've never gotten bored of it. Because there's so much I don't know, and there's always those texts out there, you read them, and it enlightens things for you. You go, oh my god, wow. It's not going to make me make different paintings, it just makes you so much more interested in it again.

Definitely.

I've lost the thread of what the question was again.

You've answered it very well! So, moving on then to the work that you're going to be putting out through OUTPUT, which is quite a step away from the condensed paintings. Where did that come from, and can you explain what it is to the listeners?

Yes, so. When I was first thinking about the show, pre-pandemic, I was thinking I'll show these large paintings that have got figures in, I'll show some of them and lots of quicker work I've been doing. I'd love to see that in your space, and it'd be a really good opportunity to get some feedback. Then the pandemic hit and we both started to talk about the idea of posting work out to people. I'd never worked in that way, I've always made stuff and then through discussions, shows and group shows come along, putting work into those shows. So this was like, how am I going to work counter-intuitively to how I usually work? How are you going to make work for this? It was fortuitous, about a year before I was commissioned for Hospital Rooms, a really great charity to do a wall painting, a mural in Rosewood ward. So I had- how am I going to do that? How am I going to make something in a hospital ward, in a limited time, because I usually take a year and a bit to do the work? So I began to look at the condensed paintings and reverse engineer them. This was just playing about in the studio, this wasn't by design or anything, it was just messing about. I thought, what if I was to take that small painting and then project it up large onto a wall? I've always wondered what they'd be like bigger. People have often said why is your work small? Could it be larger? I thought, if I could find an economy of line or a way of rendering that. I started playing around with paint pens, I'd seen my students use them quite a lot and I thought, I wonder

what they'd be like, so I bought a pack. I edited the painting, a very small painting, called Once Through. I edited it on photoshop to break it down to a series of colours, CYMK, cyan, magenta, yellow and black. I quite liked that and I thought, this could be the transition. I could try and paint it really fast but maybe turning it back into a drawing. It never came from a drawing, but it's almost like reversing the painting process. Actually reversing it but also making a really large drawing after the painting, I figured out a way to do something a bit quicker but also looser. I had that in my mind. I was thinking about posting out a print for this exhibition and I just thought, I've done a bit of printmaking before but I just thought, is there some way I could do something that would have something of the hand. And then I thought why don't I make a large drawing out of smaller pieces of paper? A similar process where I'm taking a smaller painting and putting it through some filters on photoshop and then drawing it with these markers. I thought, if I could do that with a hundred smaller sheets, which is what I did, and then that gets posted out. This was not by design - this was just from sitting round and thinking, pondering and day-dreaming. I'm not in the studio and I thought, there's something interesting about that, for me anyway. I've made one big large piece, it's about six feet tall, basically a big line drawing in four colours. There's little elements of the floral and tendrils and little bits of moss and crystals that are in this painting, but they get lost in a way, it's like a looser and bigger version of the work. I would do this on a load of A5 sheets and then each of these gets posted out to people. In a sense if that's posted out to a number of people, the piece becomes even bigger, in a sense. Everyone gets a fragment, and I'm quite interested in fragments anyway. I don't know, but for a viewer I can surmise that they get this fragment, like a seed. Knowing that there's 99 more of these... what's besides this one, what is this a section of? I'm thinking you have this funny connection to 99 other people. I've numbered them and mapped them so technically it could be assembled in the future. Not to say it would be, but that ties into this- you get the small little drawing and actually there's much more outside of the drawing that creates its meaning. I've been very conscious that each of these drawings, I want them to be good, on their own, from a formal point of view. I studied them all one after the other and went back into some of them, I quite liked it because it was daunting to do something postal but I like how it has allowed me to make the biggest work I've ever made. Maybe in more of a romantic sense. It's literally posted out to people, it's all over a region. There's this kind of romantic possibility that it could potentially come back together. So I've titled it Once Again. It's all a bit fresh and new for me, it's often easier to speak about stuff that's from years ago. That's where I'm at with it at the moment, it's been such a really unusual challenge, so thank you. I'm not just saying it but it's really made me think about future works, because I never would have done this otherwise.

Well, OUTPUT never would have gone postal without this happening as well. It's been really strange but also quite positive and it's nice that, normally our audience is people who are living in Liverpool or visiting and can come into the space. Now we can send the work wherever, and it is nice to blow that up a little bit.

It's going to take a while to process, probably for all the artists who've done that, and you putting it all together. But I think it's really brilliant. I think a lot of people have thought about postal art, and a lot of people have done digital stuff to get us through this pandemic. But the postal thing makes so much sense, how wonderful, to get something through the letterbox, and it's so personal.

It's great, it's great. Well, if you - the listener - are hearing this on the day the podcast comes out, it will also be the day that the form goes up for you to request one of these prints be posted out to you for free, so check OUTPUT's website, our social media @outputgallery, for the link in order to sign up for that. Is there anywhere people might follow you, or do you want to give people your website details?

Yeah, so my website is donalmoloney.net, and on instagram it's @donal_moloney_art, so people can take a look.

Fab. Thank you very much for listening, and we'll see you on the next podcast - bye bye!