

ARTIST INTERVIEW - EMMANUEL MOORE

@emmanuel_moore

Written and Interviewed by Atorina Saliba

Speaking for myself, trains have always been symbols of mass industrialisation, a means to shovel human cattle towards factories of capitalism. There's a monotony that's attached to them, a sense of desperation because they seem to break down the human spirit. So it was a relief to see paintings by Emmanuel Moore, whose depiction of trains is anything but boring. Rather, he takes notes from the likes of Jeffrey Smart, Salvador Dali, and Giorgio de Chirico - just some of the masters of their field.

Moore's artistic endeavour began by copying drawings of eagles and living rooms in biro pens, to imagining New York City streets he witnessed in American films. For someone growing up in rural bushland, images of city streets were a dreamy way of exploring cities. We recently spoke with Moore about the trains that dominate his artworks and the spices of surrealism he's added to this industrial machines.

Your work is dominated by trains, and your depiction of them differs from what trains are considered. There's a heavy presence of industrialisation in your oeuvre, at the same time there's an absence of passengers and train conductors, like in *Nambour at Dusk with Dulux Spray Can* (2019) and *Busy Melbourne Street* (2020). These are post-industrial landscapes. What was the process behind this decision?

I've always loved trains, the mysteriousness of them taking people to places and operating whether or not people are on it. The train lines are also a mysterious, it is quiet and fenced off from the public, I like the emptiness and eerie ambiance. I guess the process comes from my interest in the desolation and eeriness of these not entirely by almost abandoned spaces. I try to focus solely on the simplest form of the subject without over complicating it.

Your paintings fixate on the shell of the train, not the interior. You strip away much of the detail and it reminds me of the early Metaphysical paintings of Giorgio de Chirico (his "Metaphysical Town Square" series). Your paintings *Chatswood Leaves* (2020) and *Green in Caracas* (2018) are dreamlike, haunting and evoke anonymity at the same time. Have you seen the work of de Chirico? If not, who have been some of your inspirations?

Yes, I love Giorgio de Chirico. When I really started getting into art history and all the classical artists, I enjoyed looking at these paintings which almost pin pointed objects and subjects in a symbolic way. I found this vastness and space in the works allowed the viewer to journey around the painting and ponder upon its meaning, if it had any. I have enjoyed the works of Yves Tanguy, Kay Sage and Salvador Dali. Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec and Max Ernst were later inspirations and now I'm becoming more interested in anti-style kind of works.

In your more recent paintings, you've notably moved away from trains. Perhaps not abandoned them entirely, but there's a new focus. Can you tell me about this new phase in your work: the depiction of flora, particularly the sunflowers?

I started exploring organic and natural forms because I felt I was avoiding them in a sense. At the time I assumed natural forms had complicated structures and would be really hard to recreate. Though after some practice, I realised this was mainly due to the way I was painting at the time. I was painting all the fine details and trying really hard to control the way I painted each subject. Thankfully the more I painted nature, the more I started to loosen up, it has helped me a lot with how I paint now. The sunflower has such powerful symbology, I just really enjoy painting it because of its positive qualities. The heaviness of the head sitting on a thin stem creates an interesting subject also. It's a popular flower amongst the art world, but I think everyone has their own way of creating it.

You once said, "in the future I would like to create more artworks that reflect human experiences and current community circumstances." Can you tell me more about this? When you approach a painting, do you have the audience in mind or is there an idea? Tell me about this process.

I don't always think about the audience when painting, but at times will have to because of where the artwork exists or will exist. I generally paint things that reflect my own experiences and that of those who are close to me. I know these people will relate and connect with the subjects that are painted. But that isn't always the case, I have recently been creating random stuff in the moment. I'm finding life a lot more enjoyable when inspiration comes from the moment rather than organising and predicting the outcome.

What work are you working on for the Nation exhibition?

For the Nation exhibition, I'm working on some pieces that are a bit bigger than usual. I've decided to create some new works that reflect what's closest to me at the moment. One of the pieces breaks down the train theme a bit more by adding objects from the train tracks like a lock, track pins and eucalyptus leaves. Another piece focuses on the Gold Coast, depicting the G:link tram amongst palm trees and a beach. For the final piece, I've recreated a painting I finished at the start of the year, incorporating both Moon and Sunflowers. This piece focuses on day and night and the natural cycle of the universe. I hope people will enjoy the artwork.

ARTIST BIO - EMMANUEL MOORE

Emmanuel Moore is an Australian artist based in Brisbane, Queensland. He focuses mostly on drawing and painting, exploring a variety of objects and themes from both nature and the modern world. In 2019, he completed a bachelor's degree in visual art at the University of Canberra where he focused mostly on painting and sculpture.