

# THE OTHER STUDIO

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behind the scenes of emerging art and the people who make it

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## CURRENT EXHIBITION: ANATIDAEPHOBIA



Analogical Change (Self-Portrait with a Paper Boat), 2014

As her first solo show opens in London, I caught up with Martine Poppe about her new series of work. Bits of London have been heaving with arty buzz and Frieze Art Fair canvas bags. What used to be known as calm stretches of Sunday-strolling Regents Park became the epicentre of continuous human

stampedes fit to rival Oxford Street at lunch time. Yes this was the week when we welcomed Frieze 2014, and all of the nervous and uncontrollable excitement that comes with it, to the capital.

But Frieze is not just about the fairs that take place in Regents Park. Frieze is also an opportunity to show off the artistic talent that inhabits this great city. During Frieze, the independent galleries open their doors to host some of the most brilliant exhibitions of the year.

Anatidaephobia is one such exhibition. Opened mid-Frieze week, this first solo show of Martine Poppe is full of boldness. It is packed with questions about how we approach art and is not going to give any answers away for nothing. Be prepared to take your time to look closely at the works. I caught up with Martine for clues of where we should be looking.



Analogical Change (Venetian Blind), 2014

### **What is Anatidaephobia?**

It is the fictional fear that somewhere, somehow, a duck is watching you. So I have been painting invisible ducks on my paintings.

### **Why have you decided to make the ducks invisible?**

If the ducks are invisible, then the viewer has to inspect the whole painting to find them. The ducks then become a tool that I can use to make my point about paintings – that they are objects in themselves.



Analogical Change #27, 2014

I have had issues with literary narratives in paintings. This is when people look through the paintings for a story – for a “something else”. I don’t want people to do that with my work. I would like people to consider my paintings for the objects that they are, rather than just a window that you look through. My frustration with literary narrative is that people look at a painting and then dismiss it once they’ve “got” the story.

**You paint from photographs. How did you choose your source images for this series?**

I wanted them to be tropical, tacky and full of camera mistakes. I wanted to look at photos that accidentally included the photographer’s shadow, or funny instances where the photographer would take a photo of a figure, but not register that there was a foot poking out of the subject’s ear in the background.



Analogical Change (Bloopers #1), 2014

### **Why did you want to focus on photos with mistakes?**

I wanted to see whether transferring these images onto paintings would help people register these mistakes. It's funny that one doesn't notice these mistakes when taking the photo because, at that moment, it is all about looking *through* the image to the subject and the setting. So the mistakes are not immediately picked upon.

When you put this into a painting, the mistakes are emphasised further because paintings are traditionally composed from sketches and are carefully planned in advance.



Analogical Change (Somewhere, Somehow), 2014

### **And have viewers being registering these mistakes on paintings?**

No! They have been reading the paintings in the same way they read the photographs which is really interesting. So I have added interruptions such as folding, masking tape and even putting strips of white canvas on top of the image. I hope these interruptions would pull people back, at least a little bit, from their search for “the story”.



Analogical Change (Where Is My Mind), 2014

### **Many of the paintings have a holiday setting. Is there a particular reason for that?**

Yes the holiday setting gives the humorous fictional phobia a darker undertone. For instance, if you look at *Analogical Change (Bloopers #3)*, the setting has no clear focus – it’s just a white mattress by the pool side. But, if you look closely, you will see that I have painted an invisible human figure. This draws a parallel between the duck’s and the human’s presence. It suggests the idea of that somewhere, somehow, a person is watching you.



Analogue Change #26 (White Whale), 2014

Indeed, I cannot agree more. At art fairs and exhibitions, I feel like most people spend more time looking at other people looking at art than looking at art itself. And when we are *not* looking at other people looking at art, we are looking at our phones – checking what everyone else is doing on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. It's as exposing as standing in the middle of Regents Park during Frieze week. But as the last tent of the grand art fair is dismantled, hopefully we can really stop and look at the actual art in this very artistic city.



Analogical Change (Blooper #3), 2014

Anatidaephobia is at the Kristin Hjellegjerde gallery until 16th November:

**<http://www.kristinhjellegjerde.com/anatidaephobia.html>**

For more info and works by Martine Poppe, please visit: **<http://www.martinepoppe.com/>**