

Specially Normal

29 Mar – 28 Apr 2018 at the Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery in London, United Kingdom

21 APRIL 2018



Specially Normal. Courtesy of Kristin Hjellegjerde

Two painters, two complimentary styles, yet two very different lenses onto the world around us. In Specially Normal (29th of March–28th of April 2018), Kristin Hjellegjerde will present new works by Norwegian Audun Alvestad and Spanish Cristina BanBan. While their painterly portraits of people may at first glance appear similar in their depiction of the everyday, these two oeuvres embody distinctly different approaches.

What unites Alvestad and BanBan is an interest in everyday life. They each depict “normal people doing normal things”, as BanBan explains. However, what at first glance appears quite similar, upon further examination reveals quite stark differences – and not just in aesthetic style alone. Indeed, Alvestad and BanBan’s approaches appear almost inversely complementary to each other – for where Alvestad focuses on the painting process itself, with the narrative providing a secondary, not primary function, for BanBan, the painting begins with the narrative, which then unfolds through the process of paint.

As such, Cristina BanBan’s paintings are characterised by a fleshiness, a sensuality evident in the bulkiness of thighs and arms balanced out by serene and delicate rosebud mouths and dainty faces, the eroticism of large, pendulous breasts juxtaposed with the serenity of quiet moments. Placing characters in intriguing quotidian situations – going for a run with a friend, taking a bath with a lover, a bowl of carbonara interrupted by a flashing phone – allows the viewer a snapshot of an everyday moment in time. Yet there is the ever-pervading sense of a wider backstory at play. BanBan focuses on feelings, individual stories and relationships, representing emotions and a subject’s environment. This is enhanced through a clever interplay of texture and colour. “Instead of a realistic colour representation, in these new works I’m putting an emphasis on the way each colour works independently outside the figure,” she explains. In this new series, we also witness BanBan move through a process of experimentation, her figurative paintings taking on subtler abstract elements, while maintaining their characteristic realism.

Audun Alvestad also focuses on banal, everyday situations, but for him, it is the process of painting that forms the core, rather than the story. He begins with a visual hook that then allows him to formulate further ideas during the action of painting the work. For Alvestad, the key is exploring the possibilities of the medium, or what makes a painting ‘work’, per se, a sort of ungraspable language. However, that is not to say that narrative is absent from his paintings, far from it, as new works in

particular reveal the same figure over and over again, whether lifting weights in a gym, cooking, smoking, taking a shower, or even a languid post-coital cigarette. “At the moment, I have a notion that these paintings are about some sort of struggling, modern man,” he explains. “The guy who just doesn’t seem to get things right, who feels left behind, or who doesn’t understand all these new rules. He might be that part of us that struggles to keep up with life, and sees the world develop at an ever accelerating speed when he himself just feels so stuck. Maybe this man is longing to go back to a simpler time.”

It is this sense of simplicity that, ultimately, provides the true common ground in which Alvestad and BanBan meet. For it is in this arena, where both painters allow the viewer a snapshot into a tantalising world in which the banal is celebrated, the everyday alludes to exciting possibilities, and the stories we are inspired to investigate in our heads provide countless narratives.

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Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery quickly gained recognition in the contemporary art world for showing a roster of innovative, international artists, both emerging and established, with strong theoretical and aesthetic bases.

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Location

London, United Kingdom

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2012







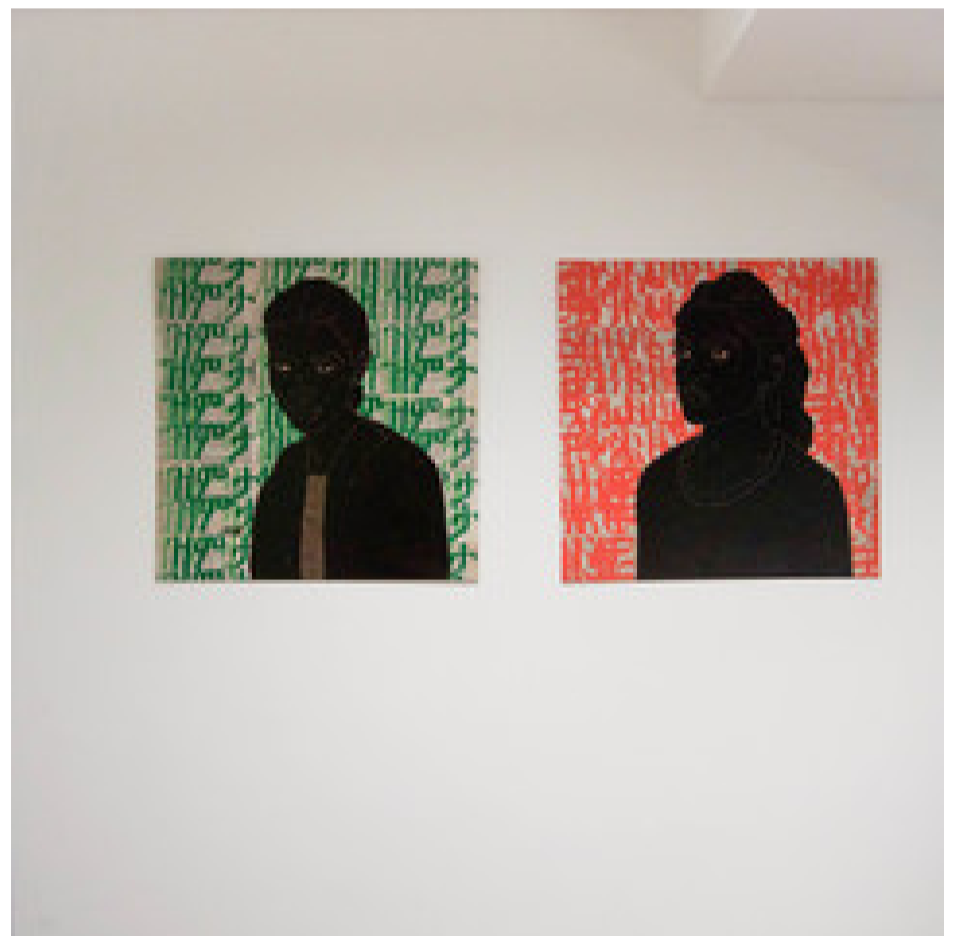


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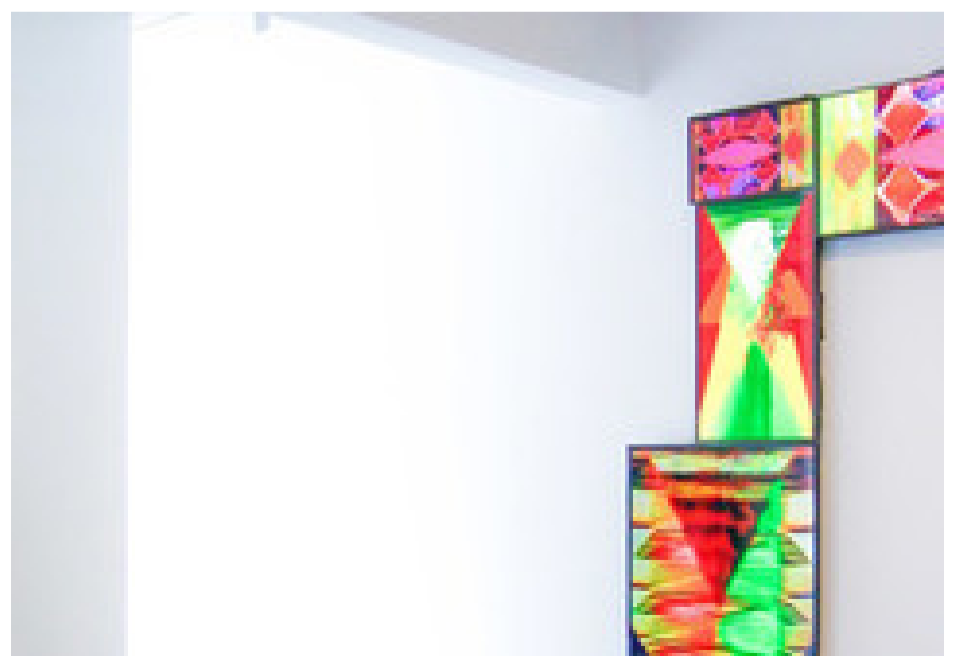
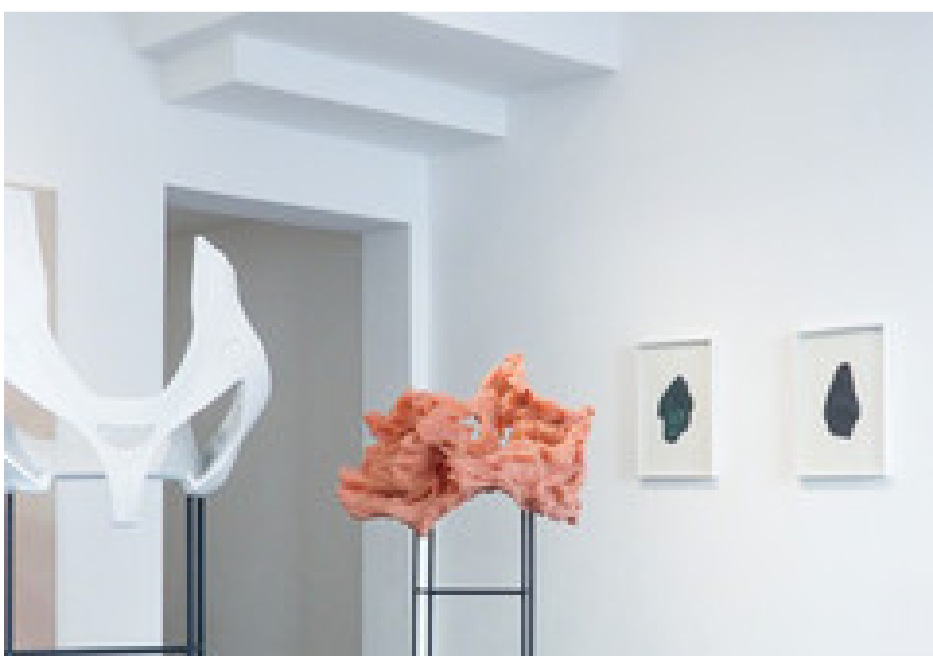
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