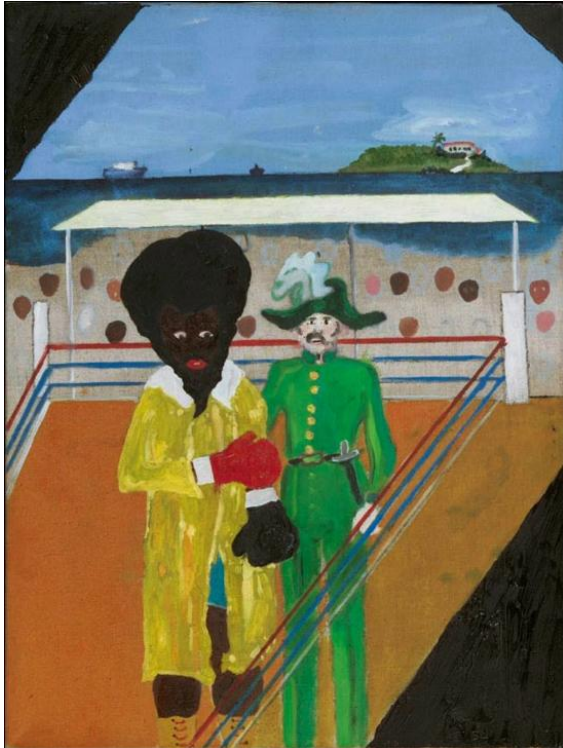


BOMB

Peter Doig and Chris Ofili

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Peter Doig and Chris Ofili, *Untitled*, 2000, oil on canvas, 16 1/4×12". Courtesy of Peter Doig and Chris Ofili/Afroco.

Chris Ofili and Peter Doig have lived and worked since the early 2000s on the Southern Caribbean island of Trinidad. For Doig the move from London was in fact a return: He had lived in Trinidad for several years with his parents as a child. In the Caribbean Ofili has embraced the "continual challenge," as he puts it, of practicing "close to the things that you're being inspired by." But on and off the island, both artists have met with a mixture of curiosity and suspicion about their break from the metropolitan art nexus. Here they swap thoughts on what has changed about their art making since finding themselves in the Caribbean, and why painting in unfamiliar territory should hold so much inspiration.

The relaxed humor and friendship of these artists might seem incongruous given the intensity and seriousness of their careers. They first found wide recognition in the early 1990s, and their

presence has by any account dominated the past two decades of art in Britain and drawn international accolades. Seeking subjects and viewpoints at the peripheries and confluences of built space and nature, Doig's experiments with photography in pursuit of painting mark an evolution in current studio practice. And Ofili's dense, intensely labored, highly decorated canvases, often sexually charged and always gracefully composed, have stood sometimes controversially at the center of debate over art, beauty, and religious argument.

Critics have either misunderstood Ofili and Doig's reasons for being based in Trinidad, or else misrecognized the influence it is having on their work. Some unfair comparisons between Doig and Gauguin in Tahiti have ignored the deep self-reflection in Doig's paintings. More reactionary critics have tried to police the boundaries of authenticity that dictate who should and who shouldn't go in search of distant places and subjects for making art. But ultimately Ofili and Doig have defended what Trinidad artist Christopher Cozier has called the need for vital "conversations" between Caribbean locations and their critical "outside."

*The artists showed their work together for the first time in Trinidad at "A Suitable Distance," a 2006 exhibition of five non-native artists' impressions of the country. Significantly, Ofili's *Iscariot Blues* and Doig's *Music of the Future* debuted not in Manhattan or London's *Bankside*, but to a small audience in the Trinidad capital, *Port of Spain*. This is art that provokes a more critical contemplation of older, intractable divisions of experiential insider and outsider; of imperial metropole and (post)colony; and the horror and sublime of the Caribbean cultural landscape. The picturesque cannot help us to remember the uneven adventure, labor, and trauma of trans-Atlantic travel. Ofili and Doig have entered Caribbean shores with a fresh imagination, painting and reshaping it as a suitable setting for art and experience.*

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Chris Ofili

How do you start? Do you see something and say, "I want to take a photo of that so I can paint it?"

Peter Doig

No, invariably there's a lot of editing. A snapshot camera is a way to record things that may one day become part of a painting. Do you think that as well?

CO I might be working on a subject—it can be made up, come from another painting of mine, or another artist's work. I find a way to translate it into my own experience. Often I look at my paintings and I don't know if they feel like the present day, if the time that I'm living in *now* is actually the time that I'm *painting*.

PD **I don't think of the present day as being that important to depict. A painting becomes interesting when it becomes *timeless*. Like in these photographs of the fishing boats I**

took through a telescope, stripped away of context, of shoreline, of city; the boat is a primal shape, a vessel that could be from long ago or right now.

CO The boat is a massive metaphor in this part of the world for arrival and all that implies, and as a means to flee. But at what point is the subject not the subject anymore? When does it stop being men in a boat?

PD **The photograph is a way of remembering shapes. It's not so much about the people in the boat, but what a strange phenomenon form is. It depends on what type of artist you are. As an artist you have been quite rigorous in some ways, but in other ways, there's room to drop something else in there.**

CO An exit.

PD **An entry point**

CO Yeah, funny. I think it's an exit point. When you feel everything starts to get a bit claustrophobic, as in life, you find ways for things to be exciting and not so predictable. Sometimes you just have to kick in the door and physically move the paint differently. I had to make that decision not so long ago in order to move forward. Essentially the problem wasn't with the work, if I may be the judge of that. The problem was more with me. I felt frustrated. Some people would say, "But everything was going so well."

PD **That's not really the point. I could make paintings a lot like others I've made, but I'd get bored quickly. I'm beginning to learn that it's important to have a lot of time to come to terms with a painting. It's not so much the hours making it, but the time allowing it to be ready.**

CO That's one of the most challenging things about art making: most of the activity goes on in the head, when you're actually looking at the thing and figuring out whether it can remain like that, or if it should be changed. And it can come down to a type of brushstroke, an impulsive act.

PD **When you first start out you make paintings by adding; you feel you have to build from start to finish, and it's finished when it's built. As time goes on, you realize that what you leave out is the important thing.**

CO but sometimes it's as if you allow something else to finish the paintings for you. The date of a show will stop the process. You decide that they've got to go because they've got to go.

PD **It's not only a deadline but that entry point into the world, saying, now this is complete. Having said this I did exhibit a painting recently that I decided was unfinished –**

CO So it returns to the studio, perhaps it need never have left the studio.

PD **Do they have to leave? I ask my students this: Do you have to exhibit or sell? When you and I were students, it was very difficult to sell a painting. Maybe artists nowadays show too much. Why not wait five or ten years? Like some musicians between albums. It's a trap that the system has imposed, and it takes a strong will or a fanatic to react against it if their work is desired.**

CO I like exhibiting just as much as I like not exhibiting.

PD **When I was going through a bit of a slow time and not making very much work, you said to me, "Remember, it's not a job!"**

CO Fortunately, you don't approach it like a job. Call them distractions, but you have juggled a lot of options in your day. Your work is like a metaphysical diary, all the stuff that you do when you're not painting. What you've seen, the experiences, the anecdotes-that's what drives the work. The formal changes-there was a point where the paint in your work was getting quite built up, as in *Pondlife*. Then you did that show in Germany where things got quite thin, almost airbrushed, like the ski jumper painting.

PD ***Olin MK IV.***

CO I wondered if it had something to do with the subjects that you depicting, nostalgic images that you were pulling from. Or was it to liberate yourself from a previous way of working?

PD ***Olin MK IV was the first painting where there was no screening. I was making paintings with devices, there was a methodology to the way I worked, and I wanted to make an open painting-not as open as, say, an Alex Katz painting, but up front like that. What have you found liberating since you left London for here, for Trinidad?***

CO What's been exciting is living in a place where you want to take photographs every day. That's something people normally do when they're on holiday. Changing locations heightens visual awareness; suddenly everything has different values. Since I left England, it's been a relief really; it's been like leaving behind what I was and restarting the engine. It felt as if I were going back in time to certain values I had in art school fifteen to twenty years ago. Then the approach to making art was much more ruthless. There was a hunger to make decisions, a hunger that was almost a slight disregard for the image, for the painting itself.

PD ***At art school, you have this incredible momentum that's fuelled by the other artists working around you. That energy is the first thing you miss when you leave. When I moved to London as a 19-year old, I constantly took photos. London was as exotic to me as Trinidad was when I first arrived.***

CO But after awhile the visual vocabulary becomes so familiar, like listening to the same record over and over again.

PD ***I started painting this idea of landscape in London via my memories of Canada, but that didn't happen for a long time, not until I'd been in London for almost ten years. And they were filtered through found images. It was an escape to make these paintings in London, because what was outside the door was so different. The work became a different world. I guess that's always the case, but this was the excitement, trying to find this other place in my head.***

In Trinidad, the landscape is so present and powerful; it's everywhere, even in Port of Spain. I'd experienced this growing up in Canada, and here it hit me again. Correct me if I'm wrong, but you've always lived in an urban place. You haven't had, other than on some school holidays, that type of experience with landscape.

CO We went on field trips to the country for the day. The smell of nature was overwhelming! No structure compared to what I was used to. The thing that surprised me was that I have come to like this way of life. Maybe the timing was right; I really wanted change, so I could see and absorb it rather than reject it. The continual challenge is trying to make art in this environment where you're quite close to the things that you're being inspired by.

- PD I question, all the time, what makes a legitimate subject. What can I use that I feel comfortable with?**
- CO Are some subjects here not subjects that you could make paintings from?
- PD Possibly. There is territory here that I don't feel is mine to use. If I were a local Trinidadian, painting a steel drummer, for instance, would be different. It's a strange thought when you come from a culture where all images are up for grabs, and irony and distance create all sorts of screens.
- CO We've discussed that image of the Caribbean that's historically been projected –
- PD Paintings in Port of Spain galleries and even murals – happy people working the land, happy people at their leisure. It's a view from outside, often painted from inside. You want to question this but however you do it, it can be construed as complicit.**
- CO Do you mean as a white foreigner painting images of Trinidad?
- PD Yes.**
- CO Because you do see those things. You do drive through Paramin, the countryside, and see people working the land.
- PD And you see it depicted in the paintings, the halcyon days of plantation life. They are not like the heroic paintings glorifying the Soviet worker or even Mexican murals, the socialist project. It's a naïve type of pastoral, harkening back to those made in France of similar subjects, like paintings by Millet or some Post-Impressionist.**
- CO It seems awkwardly appropriate then to talk about cultural difference. How culture functions in Trinidad, separate or not from what's considered dominant culture elsewhere. Like white culture is considered dominant in places where we grew up. In Trinidad white culture is quite marginalized.
- PD Local white people make up 0.67 percent of the population. Culturally they seem to have no power whatsoever, or at least no voice. There's very few writers, a few rock musicians, some artists. Naipaul wrote about this long ago-the white and French Creole classes having no locally developed culture.**
- CO People are quite curious as to why anyone would come here and settle.
- PD Anyone?**
- CO Why anyone would come here from a place that's considered better, like the US or the UK. Trinidad is still fairly raw, or in such a state that it can be "improved", let's say. But people fear that the character might be lost in favour of a Miami type of lifestyle. I think that's often why people in Trinidad get suspicious as to why you're here. You know, only on Friday I was asked that question: Why are you here? I didn't have an answer; I'm actually quite comfortable with not knowing.
- PD So you said, Sex, sea, and sand. (LAUGHTER)**
- CO No that was you! (LAUGHTER) We've spoken about subject matter and what to paint and what not to paint, and yesterday I was talking about-
- PD You were talking specifically about one painting, the hanged man, Judas. And that it's based in part on a mural at Lopinot.**
- CO Well, it's not a mural, it was plywood cut-outs of musicians playing instruments, as the area is still well known for the type of music called Parang. I took a few photos of these cut-outs. I liked the flatness of the figures, so simple, and they suggested a flatness that I was trying to achieve in my own work.

So I painted these musicians and combined them with an image of a naked, hanging man to represent Judas. An incongruous combination in some ways, but fitting. At that time you and I were talking about the nonchalant attitudes that one has toward death here. It's complicated.

PD I'm not sure if it's a nonchalant attitude, but here when someone has been gunned down and is lying on the pavement, or has been in a tragic car accident, you'll see it all quite starkly on the front page of the newspaper. There's a much more up-front attitude toward portraying the grim side of reality publicly. Either there's a fascination with it or it's just: this is what's happening. But it's almost a warning as well, like a WANTED poster.

CO It's always on the front page, though, isn't it, and often in color, so you get the brutal facts.

PD The Judas figure is stylized yet quite harrowing. Where did you find that figure? Why did you choose it?

CO I started the painting without any hanging figure. For some reason I kept cutting it back; I was more interested in the two figures that appear on the left-hand side. So I had this vague inactive area that I wanted to activate. It wasn't enough to leave it blank. They're under a wooden awning; it's made with a cross piece that forms the shape of a hanging stalk.

PD I think it's called a gibbet.

CO A what?

PD A gibbet.

CO I'm worried that you know that, and the way that you emphasize the word, and the way you look at me when you say it! (LAUGHTER) That gibbet sparked off biblical ideas, Judas's last moments and the two different accounts, one from the Acts of the Apostles and the other appears in Matthew, I think. One says that he hung himself and the other that he exploded. My reading is that they are the same account: He hung himself before or on the Sabbath, when people weren't allowed to perform any kind of labor, so his body would have been left hanging in the sun, making him inflated. Once he was cut down from the gibbet, he may have exploded upon hitting the ground.

PD Did the drawing come out of your head?

CO I did drawings out of my head but I couldn't get the neck and head-how a body looks when it's hanging. I researched it on the Internet and the only way in was through autoerotic asphyxiation instructions. The figure that I chose was clothed in a raggy-dress shirt or vest and quite loose pants. I made some sketches that didn't ring true. Remember when you first saw the painting and asked me why he was naked? Judas committed suicide as a result of his shame at having betrayed Christ. He tried to give the money back to the Romans. He scattered the money in the field where he hung himself; it's called Field of Money or Field of Shame. I thought, to further the feeling of shame, he needed to be exposed. His being naked held more resonance. Then there was the question of how to render a nude male figure, which I hadn't done before, how to actually paint it.

PD It's very flat.

- CO It's not as flat as you would think. In relation to the figures off to the left, he's got this much more brushy rendering.
- PD **Dark, blue and glowing.**
- CO Precisely, that moonlike glow, the feeling of night that you get here this time of month; it's not dark nor light, everything is reflecting back.
- PD **How did you decide on painting upon a silver ground?**
- CO Experiments in the studio, trying things out, putting washes on and seeing a useful effect, thinking it could be used on a bigger scale to convey a mood. That canvas is dark, dark blue; the imagery comes out slowly, maybe as a way to subvert the stark imagery.
- PD **It's like the light source is a fire, or candlelight.**
- CO You get that kind of light here when moving across a dark beach. You see shapes where you can't quite tell if you're seeing a figure or an animal or a leaf - leaves here can be larger than a man.
- PD **I tried to deal with a similar kind of light in *Music of the Future*, an unfinished painting. It's a river scene, at that dusky time of day with no illumination other than what comes from the sky or is reflected off the water. There's only shadow and traces of color.**
- CO It's a distant scene, an image taken from the view-point of someone who's not there.
- PD **A boat on a lake, looking onto the shore, or the other side of the river. It's hard to tell what it is. What separates you from the action is this body of water; the figures are a microscopic view of a Seurat-type scene, but far less –**
- CO The view that you use shows the whole scene. Distance from the subjects of the painting demands perspective, which I find too complicated, that feeling of foreground, mid-ground, distance. But those three horizontal planes come up a lot in your work.
- PD **I started that painting quite a few years ago, and I'm not happy with it yet; it's too much like a *picture*. I want it to become more abstract, like *Ski Jacket*, which dealt with a similar view of people from a distance going about some kind of activity.**
- CO That ski jacket painting is based on a photograph from a newspaper and it functions as a painting about dabs of color on a flat plane.
- PD **A flat, white plane. *Music of the Future* is almost a negative version of *Olin MK IV*. It's a difficult painting to resolve. The source of the image is a postcard I found in London; it's a river scene in southern India that very much reminded me of here.**
- CO Last night I drove up from downtown, up George Street I think, and there was this eerie feel of semi-clothed people in a state of delirium, drug-infused, hunger-infused, or just plain drunkenness. It felt like a film set just before the camera's rolling, people in mid-flow, not sure where they are-this darkness, punctuated by some working streetlights and some not, the light uneven. You drive up and see debris, people look unwashed, and it feels like a foul stench. You want to look at it but you don't; it's stark, it's present. We have 12 hours of day and 12 hours of darkness that here functions as a time when a new creature comes out; the island transforms.
- PD **Going back to legitimate subjects-in the West, in the cities, more is game as far as subject is concerned, because you have been bombarded with so many approaches. There's a culture of borrowing and collaging images, making comparisons, social commentaries.**

CO The way people here talk about who they are is in relation to who their parents and grandparents were. It's home grown. Relatively speaking, to branch out and take from other cultures is not done; people stay quite local in their attitudes. So to paint an image of *anything* here, people expect that there's a deeper meaning, and one must go through a complex narrative of explanation. That made me quite hesitant in juxtaposing two things that were apparently not related, people playing instruments and a dead, hanging figure. It's the only painting that I have shown here so far. I was excited about the painting, I thought it raised some of the questions I was interested in. People thought it was a comment on Trinidad's society.

PD **People are looking for what they can recognize of their place in the work we're making here. *Music of the Future*, which was in that exhibition, was misinterpreted by some people too. They thought it was a painting of the islands off of Port of Spain, where people have holiday homes.**

CO Particularly rich white people, isn't it?

PD **Maybe not so much now.**

CO Context is everything. I will show that painting elsewhere and completely different values will inform how it's read. I know this from paintings I've shown in the past – the painting stays the same, but the way people read it changes.

PD **Within the Canadian context, my paintings with the canoe, lake, and cabin motifs were interpreted differently. Canadians listen to Neil Young differently than Americans do.**

CO Is he Canadian?

PD **What?! (LAUGHTER)**

CO Everyone's Canadian to you.

How much of what you say about your work influences how that work is seen – forever? For instance, your canoe paintings; I know the imagery came from one of the last scenes in *Friday the 13th*.

PD **But if I *hadn't* told anyone that...**

CO If you hadn't told that lie the first time around, it wouldn't be perpetuated.

PD **People talk about me making paintings based on film stills as if that's all I did, but that's the only painting I ever made from a film still. (LAUGHTER) Well, maybe there are three paintings. Lies you tell tend to get repeated and quoted, like Chinese Whispers.**

CO There's nothing like walking into someone's studio and seeing a painting for the first time. You get that rush of information coming at you, unmediated. The less you know beforehand, the purer the read.

PD **Yesterday I was talking about the way people look at paintings in public spaces or even in studios, which is very different from the way they look at just about anything else. It's a kind of lost but scrutinizing gaze, focusing on a painting. It's not fixed, like a still photograph is.**

CO But isn't it a fixed image? Everything that's there, be it an image of a face or landscape, is completely still, but there's something about how a painting works optically.

PD **It's all illusion.**

CO It's still substance on a flat surface.

- PD** It's a form and illusion in space. That's what the illusion is. You can't go around the objects in a painting.
- CO You're talking about a certain type of painting, of image making.
- PD** No, I'm talking about abstract painting as well. Painting in general. The same type of illusion applies. There's only so much depth in a painting.
- CO The way I've approached painting recently is to keep the forms as simple as possible, working in a way that has no dressing.
- PD** No brushstrokes for you, sir, no fancy stuff.
- CO No pony tricks. It's a pared-down way of working, incredibly refreshing. At the same time highly reflective, in that you can't hide behind anything.
- PD** You're searching for a way to make pure painting. I think painting should evolve itself into a type of abstraction, to slowly dissipate into something else through time, through working and seeing things through. It becomes unnecessary to have narrative subjects.
- CO I was thinking this over last night. I can't imagine not ever having a subject. There's always going to be a driver, just not one necessarily that you're able to read. The process is one of distillation to the point where it's just essence, just itself. Maybe it's the ultimate freedom to do whatever you want. I don't think that art is hemmed in by subject. On the contrary, it is curiosity about subject, things of the world or otherworldly, that fuels art making. Yet in the process of making art the mind wanders and gives way to instinct, which feeds off areas the intellect doesn't. The type of subject-based painting that *doesn't* interest me is consolatory and merely illustration.
- PD** I was trying to find a way to interpret what we've been seeing in the boat: Trinidad's north coast and its incredible landscapes and caves, archaic spaces, natural cathedrals, and chasms, strange pelicans, and islands covered in their white shit. And trying to make paintings about this, this past year, just from my head without using any photographs; it was too wet to take a camera. I made a small painting that was shown at SITE Santa Fe that is much closer to what I want to make. The mood is very simple. Strange things happened when rubbing the color down or trying to correct it. It has representative elements, but it's more primal than that. It's getting away from the photograph. It's a big jump for me. The mood of the painting has always been important, but now to try to get the same mood with a different method –
- CO Liberating the works through actually working sums up what we're struggling to explain. Beginning a work, you have this freedom....Ten years ago we spoke about how the beginnings of your work were where the work could end. Tell me how you began making *Metropolitain (House of Pictures)*. In that painting the figure is looking at another painting of yours, of an image, a real situation that you and I saw on Yara Beach between a man and a pelican. I'd almost seen that painting as a portrait of the art world – this so-called rugged connoisseur viewing your work. I remember thinking that the painting is of a man observing images of a distant land that he can't comprehend, that is too far from his own reality. Tell me about the source material for that painting.
- PD** I was in Chicago for an exhibition, and I saw the Daumier painting *The Print Collector*, a male figure looking at prints. I was quite drawn to the figure looking, the expression on his face, lost and searching. There wasn't much detail; a lot of it had to do with

body language. I made a painting in London based on it called *House of Pictures*. It was a combination of having seen this old picture gallery in Vienna, called Haus der Bilder, that was full of different types of generic landscapes, genre scenes, portraits, and the Daumier painting, which reminded me of this place. So I tried to piece together my own version. It was, I suppose, a way of trying to question my own paintings. How does one interpret what you do? I was also thinking of the Fritz Lang film *The Women in the Window*, where Edward G. Robinson becomes obsessed with a woman via her portrait in a gallery window.

CO There's no reflection of the looker in the glass.

PD He's too far away to see his reflection. It was painted like a stage set. I was thinking of Hopper too. Then I went back to the original Daumier – this sounds convoluted – but in my subsequent, smaller versions, he has a red clownish nose. Shortly after I arrived in Trinidad, I was told about these particular carnival characters who painted their faces white and their noses and ears bright red to represent Europeans. So my bohemian Daumier figure has this pronounced red nose. That changed in the bigger paintings to something more subtle.

CO The second *Metropolitain* painting has the figure much closer.

PD I put him in a simplified version of the landscape that I see from my studio window.

CO The coat the guy is wearing is ragged, whereas in the Daumier it's the coat of a connoisseur.

PD I wanted him to be beatnik bourgeois, more of an artist than a collector.

CO Still potentially a connoisseur. Tell me about how you go about making a translation from another person's painting.

PD I started out by making etchings. The medium throws up a lot of surprises. I would make the etching, then I'd take photographs of the etchings, then blow the photographs up so that you could see the breakdown of what the acid had done the breakdown of what the acid had done, the breakdown of the drawing as it were. It would go from there to works on paper, small paintings, and then the bigger painting. I don't know if the figure in the bigger painting was the most successful of the figures.

CO Aren't there two big paintings, one on paper, then a fairly big painting on canvas?

PD The large painting on canvas, with the slightly dopey expression on the face, developed through painting and painting and changing, which I really enjoyed. It was quite strange, like making your own life-size person. I don't normally do the face. It was meant to be pathetic; and that's what it is in the end.

CO In that painting, there's a painting within a painting, which in fact is another painting of yours. Which painting was made first?

PD The *Pelican* painting.

CO There's more than one version of the pelican painting

PD There are two quite different ones, *Pelican* and *Pelican Stag*, which is about confrontation with the subject. There's a startled look on the man's face, and I assume on the face of the viewer as well. *Pelican* is more pastoral. They're reflections on that incident with the pelican that you and I witnessed when we first came to Trinidad. We were on a remote beach and we saw that guy in the sea, bobbing in this swell, quite far out, and clearly wasn't swimming. At first I thought he was rescuing

the pelican, that it had broken its wing. Then it became clear that he was trying to drown it. And then he came onto the beach and as he walked along the shore you could see that he was swinging the pelican around by its neck. The way that the pelican was looping and looping and looping, he was obviously wringing its neck.

CO He lived on the beach.

PD **He glared at us as if to say: You shouldn't be watching this. Don't take notice. Probably just getting something to eat. I felt watching him was voyeuristic but incredibly exciting as well. I was amazed at how he caught the pelican. I don't know if he used a hook, or lured it. I attempted to make paintings of this from my memory.**

CO Did either of us have a camera?

PD **I don't think we would have taken a photograph of it. It was too –**

CO Uncomfortable. I had never seen anything like that before. It was also strangely quiet.

My observation of how you work, Peter, is that at times it looks like paintings in the studio are just hanging around, almost discarded, as if there are lots of false starts. That state of being left could go on for a long period of time.

PD **Are you saying that my studio is like an elephant's graveyard?**

CO It's an artist's Oxfam. (LAUGHTER) It's a very particular approach to working because it seems that you tolerate that state where you're not happy with the way the paintings look for a long time.

PD **I don't know if that's so true. If I'm not happy with a painting I'd destroy it. The ones hanging around, for a long time, and incomplete, are the ones that I have hope for, there's still something about them that I very much like. Also I believe that sometimes you have to take paintings through bad stages to get to ones that you are happy with. But I need the vestiges of paintings around. It's almost having like starting points.**

CO what do you mean by starting points?

PD **Entry points.**

CO Like notation.

PD **Something to add on to. *Getting rid of* is always the hard thing for me.**

CO I'm interested in the long gestation period where very little is going on. You're walking in and out of the room and not doing anything to the painting. Would you consider that a period where the work's working?

PD **I would consider that a part of the working. It's not the case for every painting, but over time it's proven to be the way that I work.**

CO For example, the *Speaker* painting that you started ages ago-

PD **I'm actually working on that now, and it's starting to come together.**

CO But what is it, this ignoring it? Are you just leaving it to be? You said about its having a presence in the studio, that it's almost like a familiar companion.

PD **I'm thinking about it every day; it's not facing the wall. It's part of what I see in my studio. But I'm just not compelled at that point in time to finish it, whereas now I'm feeling like I can resolve the figure.**

CO So at times the action is taking place when nothing's taking place, that's just as vital a moment.

PD **I don't think that actual time on the canvas is necessarily time well spent –**

CO Or a way of measuring progress

PD **Or a way of seeing the results. Some passages in the painting took seconds. Others took a lot longer. Then with others it was kind of a wash or a combination of moments that speak of making or different places we've been. Is that a good place to end?**

CO Wherever it falls, it falls.