

Sam Rankin

Key works - Traditional

My Practice

I am a student of the human form, both as a thing to be drawn and a thing to be thought about. I am deeply interested in the philosophy and art of the turn of the 20th century, a time of great upheaval that introduced a new sense of subjectivity. Myth, history, and Judeo-Christian stories are at the center of my artistic lexicon.

Some artists who have directly influenced my work are: Otto Dix, Balthus, and Paula Rego.

From left: Paula Rego, [Dog Woman](#);
Otto Dix, [Reclining Woman on a
Leopard Skin](#).



Heiresses - Process

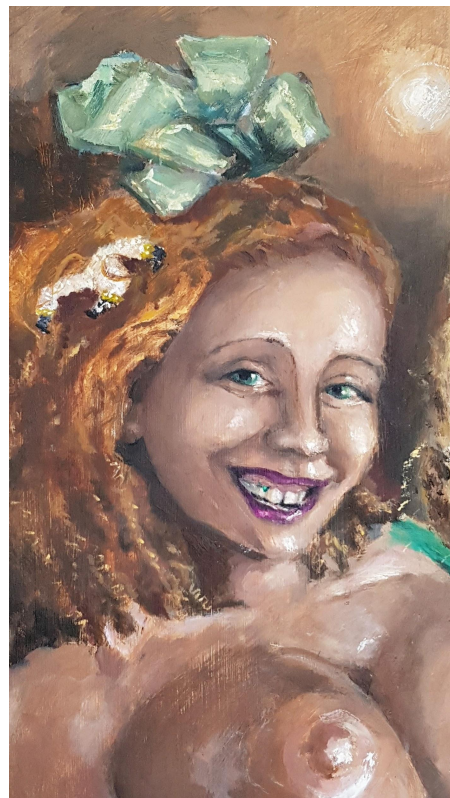
Heiresses is a painting that I went through many steps to make. First, I created a drawing of the two characters in the painting and sculpted models to use as reference.



After that, I painted a 5"x7" study, working out the details of color and composition.



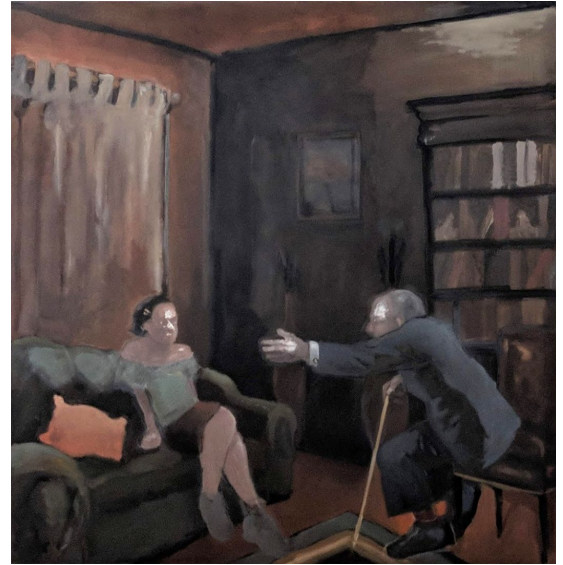
For the final painting (unfinished due to extenuating circumstances), I worked from my models to create the final image of the two characters.



Missy and the Shrink

On the right, I envisioned a painting of a young, nervous girl confronting her therapist. The sketch is 6" square.

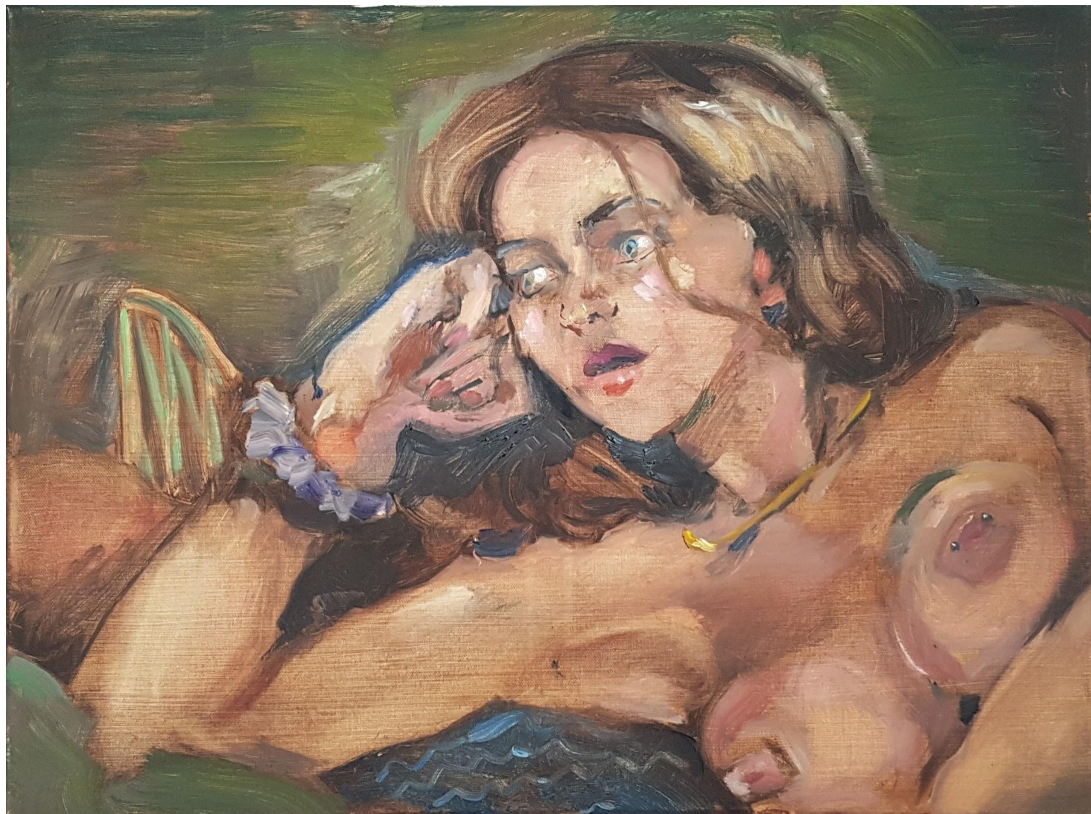
The image on the left is an in-progress photo of the final 5'x5' painting.

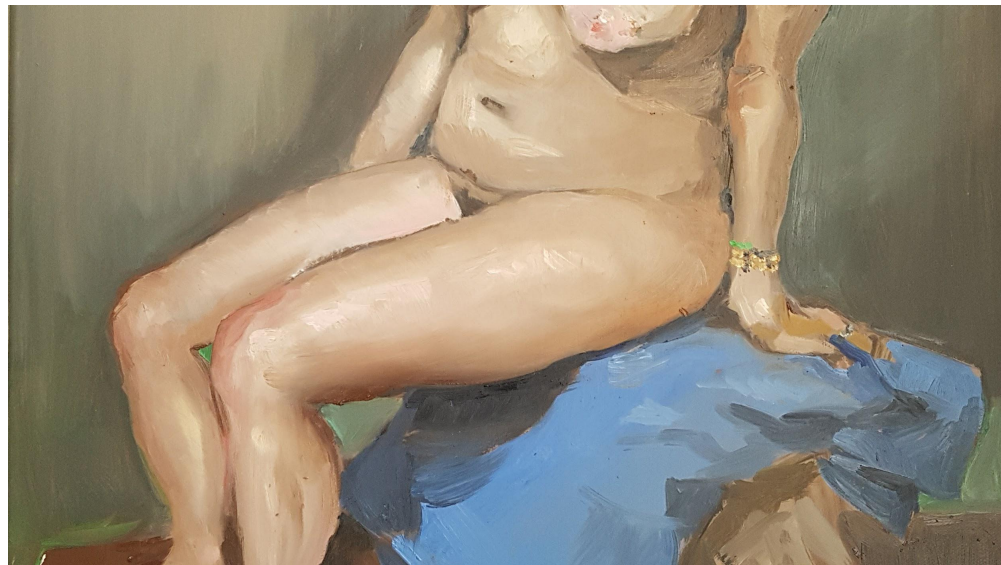
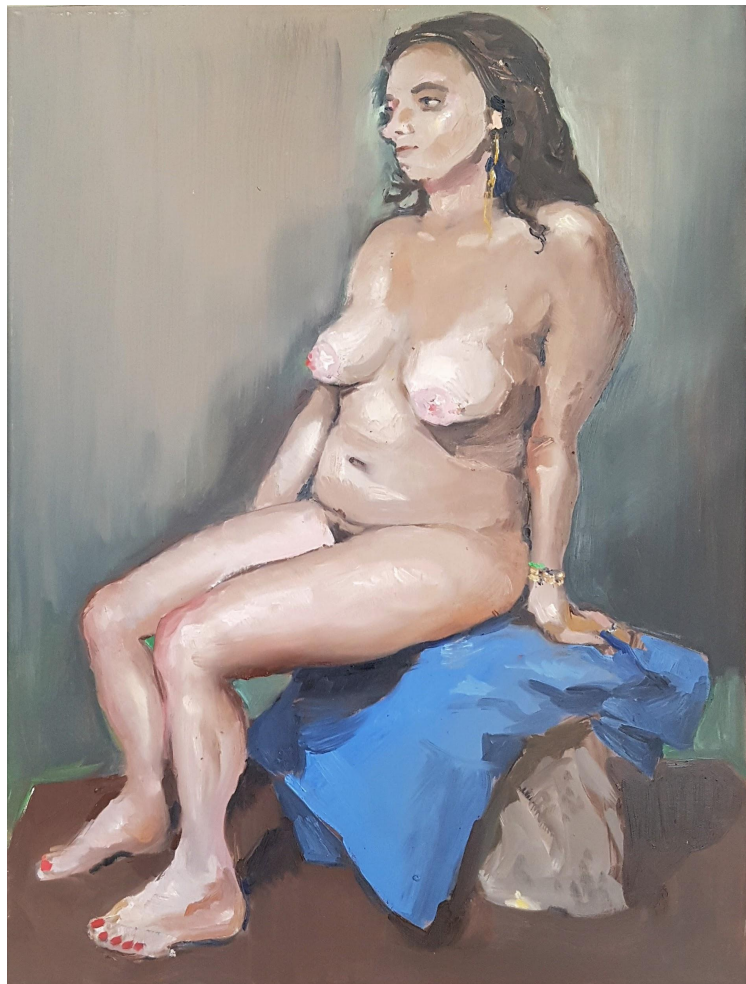


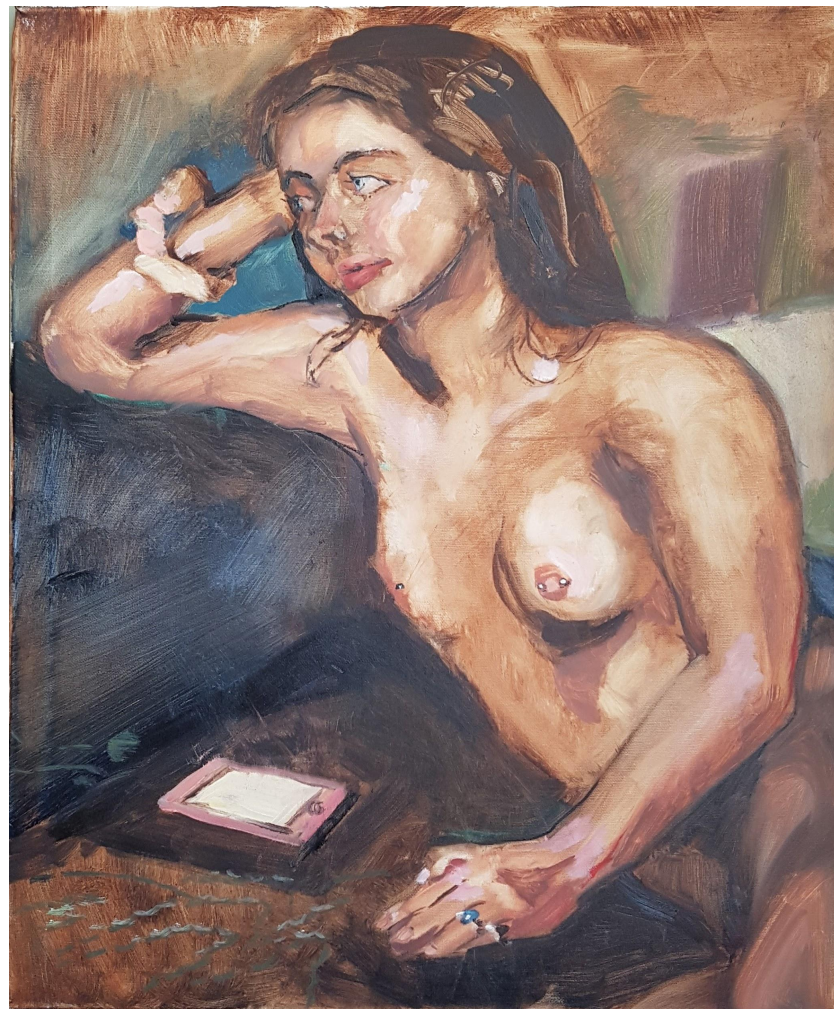
Life Painting

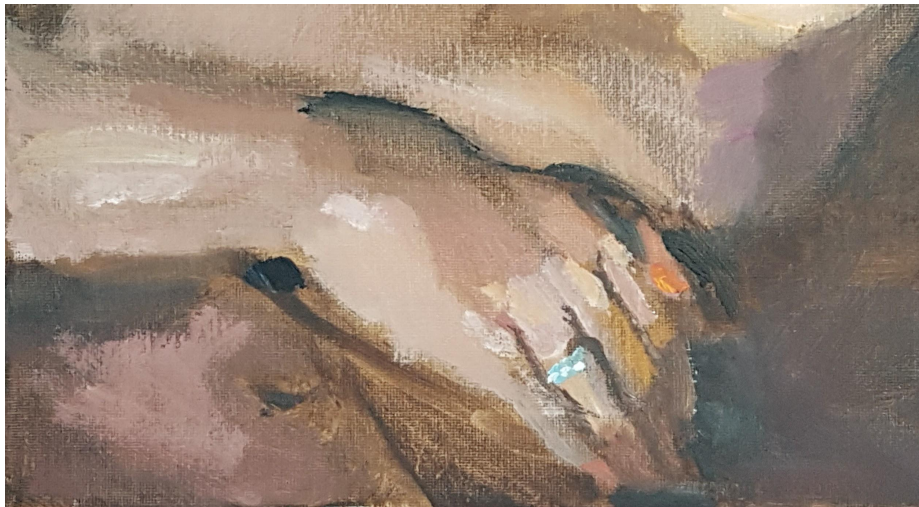
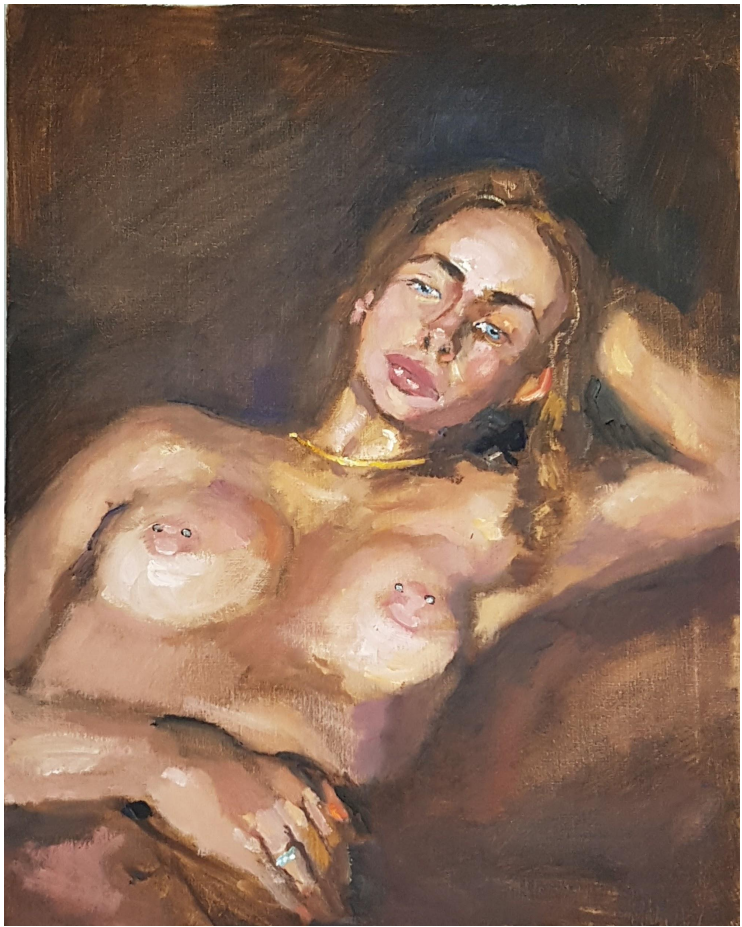
Working from life is an important part of my practice. During a session, I work quickly, blocking in the most essential parts of a scene. Each painting was created in the space of three hours.











Small Portraits

These portrait studies, roughly 5"x7", were quick (1-2 hour) studies in value and composition. The top left self-portrait is a study for a larger self-portrait (unfinished, EC), and the bottom right portrait is painted from a model.

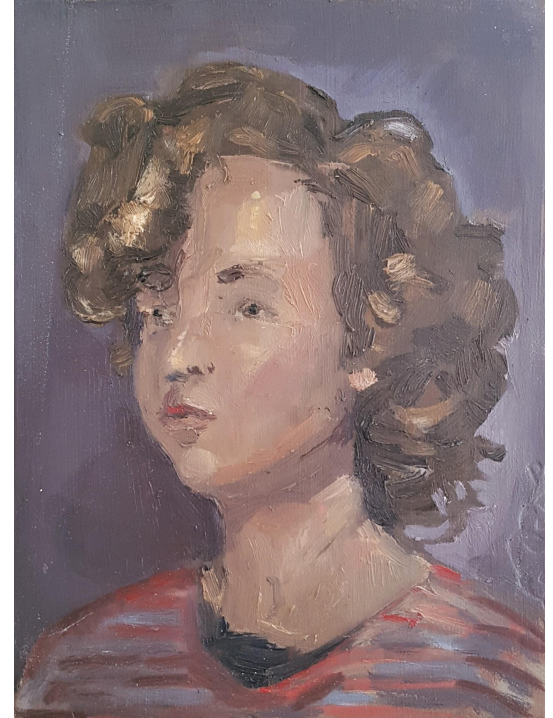
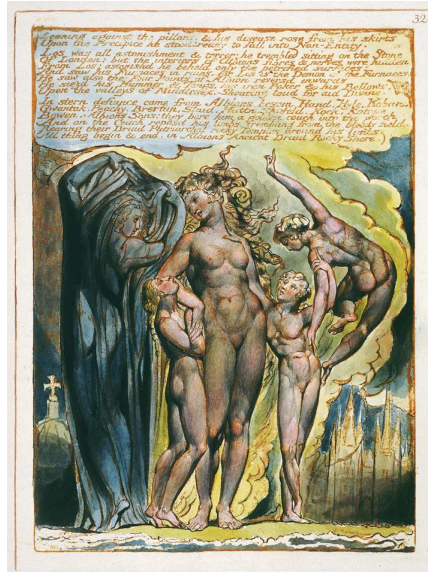


Illustration - Text and Image

The tradition of handmade books fascinates me, particularly for their ability to create intensely personal and self-contained narratives. The works of William Blake and Henry Darger are particularly impressive; they are studies of meaning-making and the ways in which experience can be transformed through craft. Following in the tradition of Blake in particular, I have begun a series of written and illustrated poems.

From left: William Blake, [Jerusalem, plate 32](#); Henry Darger, [Untitled \(Two Girls and a Dog Sitting in a Garden\)](#)





This tree between us,
Tree benign,
It grows between us
By design.

Young friends, we lived
To laugh and chat,
Until this branch
Split off from that.

Until this tree
Grew deep and high,
You knew my mind
As well as I.

This tree between us,
Tree benign,
It grows between us
By design.



The GENIE

I got so high a genie came
In wishes he was rather poor
He chuckled, "I am not the same
As I once was. One wish, no more."

He offered wealth, my own command—
I told him, "I would much prefer
"If you could help me understand
Why things can't be the way they were."

He gripped my hand, my mind flew back—
Into a chasm it unfurled
A brood of creatures hugged the crack
A whisper said, "This is the world."

Some beings perched where others fell—
Some arms stretched free, with others pinioned
No broker here of magic spells
Only the dream of sweet dominion.

With quiet eyes, the genie left
I had come down from any dream
I felt my very soul was cleft
And sorry beings tugged the seam.

I got so high a genie came
In wishes he was rather poor
He chuckled, "I am not the same
As I once was. One wish, no more."

He offered wealth, my own command—
I told him, "I would much prefer
"If you could help me understand
Why things can't be the way they were".

He gripped my hand, my mind jumped back
Into a chasm it unfurled
A brood of creatures hugged the crack
A whisper said, "This is the world."

Some beings perched where others fell
Some arms stretched free, with others pinioned
No brokers here of magic spells
Only the dream of sweet dominion.

With quiet eyes, the genie left
I had come down from any dream
I felt my very soul was cleft
And sorry beings tugged the seam.

