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Cooper**

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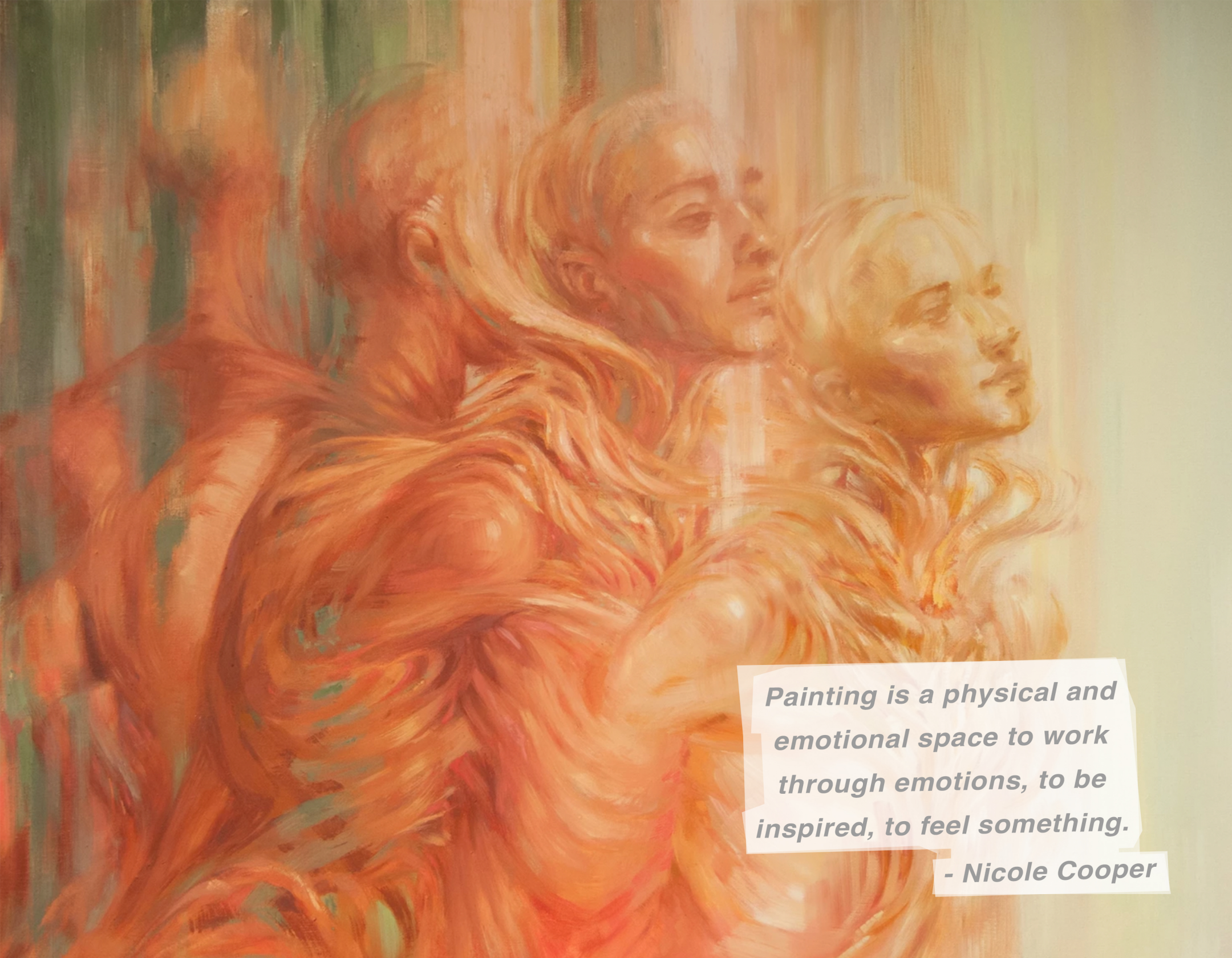
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Painting is a physical and emotional space to work through emotions, to be inspired, to feel something.

- Nicole Cooper

Topic: Process and Rhythm

Phil - How do you balance work and creativity?

Nicole - hahaha is that a thing? Maybe I should ask you that question! Haha -- I think you do it in batches. Like when I need to get a show put together I'm here working 10 hours a day sometimes more. I get off work, I don't sit down, I just come straight to the studio. I have a whole scheduling system so I know where I need to put my time. And that can be intense and you can get drained a little bit. But that's how I work! I can crank out some killer paintings in that time.

Before one of my shows I decided to take an online course with an art consultant. It was a 6 month class where I'd watch some videos, do some work, then get together and discuss things. Through that she helped me set a lot of stuff up to be prepared for the opening of a show. So now with a new show I have a process for getting the work done and for getting press and attention.





Topic: Selling

Nicole - When I sell something I used to have this fear of coming across as trying to push the artwork on someone. But now I've learned the question is "Do you like this painting? Does it inspire you? Is it something you would love to have in your home? Well I want you to have it because it makes me feel great that you love it that much!" It's about that connection. Because if you never ask for the sale, people might not feel outgoing enough to ask. I think a lot of artists are afraid to ask. I work in marketing for my day job and there's always a discussion about the call to action. Well the call to action here is "Do you want it? Make it yours!"



You'll see a lot of repetition in some of my work as I was thinking about lives being connected. I was thinking that if we remove the barriers between generations you can see the passage of life and flow.

- Nicole Cooper



**Topic: Continuing
to learn**

Nicole - I took this cool class with Steven Assael. Do you know him? (No.) So he's a painter, I guess you could call him a modern master, and he does a lot of vibrant and glowing figures. So he came to St. Louis and I just took a 5 day intensive workshop with him and I'm soooo glad I took it because I still feel like there are moments where I struggle with a certain part of a painting and I'm wondering what technique will get me there, how do I find it. So something about the workshop clicked for me and I thought "oooooh, this is how I need to be painting".



Is art enough to bring the change we need to make?

- Nicole Cooper

Topic: Climate change

Nicole - I had a specific oh wow moment. I was looking at a chart on NASA's website that showed our global temperature over thousands of years. It was so alarming to see how steady our planet's climate has been over time and where we are now. And as I dove into it more I was shocked at how much the oil industry has quieted the science and created a whole misinformation campaign. This was my oh wow moment, seeing the history leading up to this moment and thinking "we might not be okay".

Phil - Then you brought that into your work? And I'm going to interrupt for a moment and say that some people see what you saw and then they make happy stuff.

Nicole - So why did I go there? I think it's too easy to make happy stuff and be distracted. It's easy to scroll on our phones and ignore what's happening around us. ... I ... I just, it's too important, life is too important and that's why I have to pry at it a bit more because I might not be okay, my family might not be okay. We need to do something now.

My work is thinking about that. Thinking about being on the brink. And we can make the change but we just need to get on board. There's this emotional and psychological barrier in people to bring this change about and that's what my paintings are about. They are my own thought process of being incredibly alarmed and feeling this fear. I thought maybe I could make some paintings that help push through, help you feel vulnerable and feel strong at the same time.

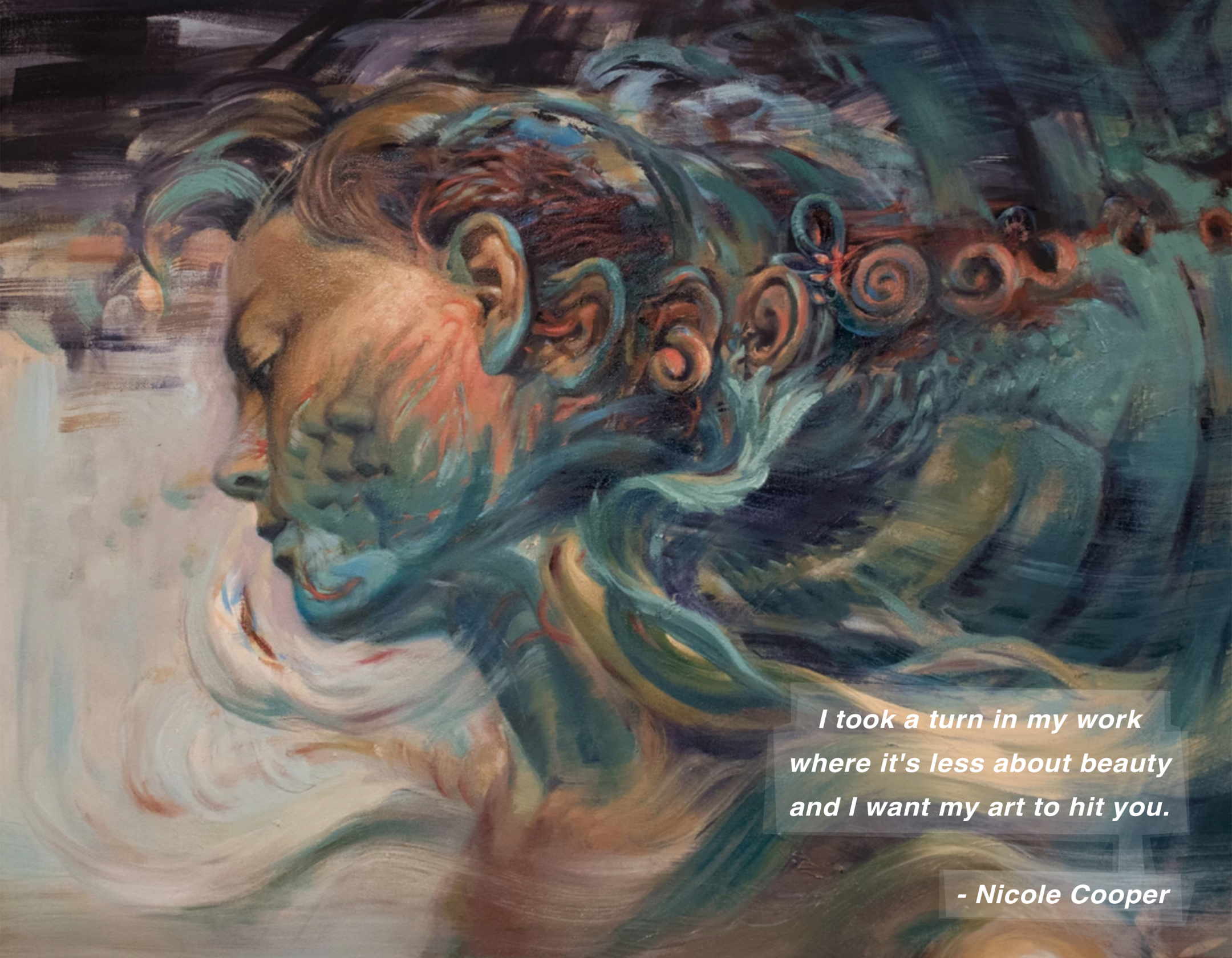
You gotta be real and you gotta get through it to find action. Distracting yourself is going to continue to hide the problem and you're never gonna get over it.

Topic: Changes

Phil - As you work has changed and as you say 'gotten darker' how has that shift been for your audience? Cause I know many artists can end up feeling pigeon holed by success, and worry that changing their work can alienate their audience.

Nicole - I'd say I'm still not sure how my audience is responding. The body of work isn't mature yet. I need to push it and that's okay. But I'm finding that I'm in a transitional space. The audience I had, loved the light, the movement, and the life. Those elements still exist in my work but it's certainly darker now. There's a darker tone now. So my audience is changing. So I'm searching for my space.





*I took a turn in my work
where it's less about beauty
and I want my art to hit you.*

- Nicole Cooper



What gifts were you given? What is your voice? How can you use it?

- Nicole Cooper

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