

Transcription of interview with Richard Francis Bellin.

Hi, my name's Richard. I'm an artist at The Base, a resident artist, as you probably know. I specialise in phosphorous pigment paintings, so paintings that glow in the dark. I've been practicing this particular art work for the last two years or so and it's been taking me to lots of different avenues which I'm thoroughly enjoying. I make my own paints so I buy phosphorous pigment which are literally pigments that absorb light and it radiates it. I mix it with concoctions of adhesives and spray paints. The reason I do this is because I found glow in the dark paints quite expensive so I found a way of making my own paints to keep the cost down, which was quite fun, being a scientist as well as an artist.

So what drew you to work with that artform, that medium?

So when I jumped into the art world I pretty much came from an illustration background so I was painting in oils, acrylics and what inspired me to do glow in the dark was actually travelling. So before I became an artist I was literally just working in a normal, mundane job and I was working and travelling and working and travelling so I travelled the world quite a bit. One particular moment which inspired me as such was when I was living on a boat in the Maldives and I saw fluorescent algae which was in the water and I really wanted to capture that. And, of course, being in the Maldives, there was no light pollution so you had the Milky Way crashing above as well so the two clashing together was amazing and something that I wanted to try and bring back into art. So that's what took me down that avenue.

You have a lot of natural forms in your paintings, seascapes, landscapes, so is that what inspires you?

Yes, I'd say so, but I mean portraits... ever since I was little I've wanted to paint and draw everything. So I love the sea. When I was younger, I think I secondary school, I said to my friend I really want to copy water. I want to be able to paint water exactly how it looks and so that's always stuck with me. That's what I try to incorporate with the fluorescents.

What advice would you have for emerging artists, whether that's in your own medium or more broadly?

It's difficult, you have to almost aim commercially, aim for what the public want to buy, but you also have to go down your own personal route so it's finding the balance between the two. On a personal note, have a backup plan, have something... I mean I have a 'side hustle' as they call it which is able to fund me in my journey because, as an artist, you don't particularly get paid monthly. It comes in waves so having a backup is always a good plan.

In that, why do you think visual arts is so important, especially at this time?

Visual art is so important. I was actually having a discussion with a friend of mine and we were talking about what's going on in the news and he said during the Renaissance period, nobody remembers the politicians. So, they remember the artists. That's the only thing I'm going to say about that!

So what do you have coming up next? What are you working on at the moment?

So, on the art side, I'm actually kind of focussing my stuff more on domestic. The niche market I have been working in, because of the current climate, has fallen in so I'm moving back to oils and painting more landscapes, seascapes just for the whole domestic market.

Thank you for talking to us today.

Thank you for having me.