Ben Lincoln

Ben Lincoln was born in Anchorage, Alaska and grew up on the coast of Maine. He earned a diploma from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston where he studied painting in the studio Domingo Barreres. He continued his studies at the SMFA with a year of independent study as part of the school’s Fifth Year Program. For that work, he was awarded a prestigious traveling fellowship and accompanying exhibition of work at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston.

Embracing a variety of subject matter, from representation to abstraction, Lincoln’s work rests somewhere between the real and the imagined, but is always anchored in his devotion to the craft of painting:

"Historically, the definitions of Representational and Abstract painting developed during periods in which a separation was broadly assumed to exist between an internal self experienced in the mind and an external “otherness” of reality. In the present, digitally networked environment however the mind extends into an endless boundary, interpenetrating space in which the division between “self” and “other” is more blurred. My interest is in reimagining representation and abstraction in light of this change.

In the new hybrid reality of networked space, the act of seeing no longer forms the psychological basis of objective truth, but is instead to immerse oneself in a stream of visual rhetoric that replaces the “real” with what I think of as “real enough”. In my representational work my desire is to explore this new real enough category of seeing.

Where classically representational painting sought to mimic the appearance of the material world, the term "abstract painting" generally refers to a genre that emerged a little over a century ago with a group of modernist practitioners who rejected what they saw as the illusionistic practices of painting’s past, favoring instead a variety of strategies they felt led them to deeper personal and spiritual truths. I believe the “illusionistic practice” of our time is to maintain that our concepts of “self” and “other” retain the same basic characteristics and functionality they once did. In my abstract work I dispense with the anti-materialist prohibition against illusionism upon which the modernist formulation of abstract painting stands, and embrace instead a language of form rooted in materiality."