

*Bang!*

*A loud noise.*

*A sudden strike.*

*A resounding blow.*

*A physical act.*

*Energy.*

*Process.*

*The use of the body.*

by Lewis Dalton Gilbert

Go Bang! is the title of a song written and produced by the late great experimental musician Arthur Russell and was a departure for the composer at the time. The song features heavily on a rotation of ambient classical music to frantic jazz that soundtracks the studio practice of artist Max Wade. Inspired by Russell's ability and hunger to continually evolve and explore his own practice, Go Bang! by Wade sees the artist push himself further out of his comfort zone by working in a looser more abstract style.

Growing up Max experimented with expressing himself through music and photography but always returned to painting, using offcuts from his parent's picture framing business to make his earliest creations. His love of music continues to inspire his work and the skills he learnt as a child resulted in the artist starting his own successful framers after graduating with a BA in Fine Art Painting from Brighton University. Wade used this opportunity to further his understanding of image making, considering what resonated with him in the artworks he framed to further understand and develop his own style.

An early influence for Wade was Cy Twombly. A visit to Tate Modern and encountering a painting by the artist in real life legitimised how Max wanted to paint, freely and forcefully. Whilst he couldn't pinpoint what he felt at that time, he recalls feeling assured by this way of working and convinced of the creation and presence of something beautiful. This is the experience that Wade wishes to create for viewers of his exhibition, engaging in conversation with the canvases.

Wade's paintings often start from the drawings he makes in his sketchbooks, where he is developing his approach by now choosing to detail the shadows and spaces in between objects, as his focus as opposed to the scene directly in front of him. These snapshots become the basis of works, but the compositions are layered on top of one another. This layering is also applied to collaging, a process Wade described as a new exploration for him but is reminiscent of his practice of using offcuts as a child.

The drawings and collages provide freedom for the artist, acting as a vehicle to arrive at the process of creating work, it is in this space where Wade finds the joy; music playing, and arms outstretched.

Whilst Max's previous paintings may have had clear images outlined, his new explorations result in pieces that are rooted in reality but recognisable only to the artist himself. Now, choosing to reference a feeling or emotion, Wade creates new challenges for himself by not knowing what to expect from his work. Leaning toward collaborating with the materials he uses, reworking images by flooding them with painting and losing the images he has worked tirelessly to create. This results in a transformative experience for the viewer as we are transported through different portals in each final image. This creates depth, rhythm, and perspective to the work, suggesting Wade could have been just as successful as a photographer or musician.

Lewis Dalton Gilbert is a curator and the creative director of A Vibe Called Tech, a Black-owned creative agency dedicated to approaching creativity through an intersectional lens.