



Left: On way to Thomas's Fulham.

Right: 21 years old, at my first solo exhibition opening, in front of my oil painting 'Grandpa's Gucci loafers'.

THOMAS'S FULHAM

Emilia Momen

Class of 2012

I started Thomas's Fulham in 2005 in Reception, aged four, and stayed until Year 6, before moving on to Clapham until I was 13. I continued my studies at Bryanston College, but didn't like boarding and so moved back to London where I took my A Levels at Fine Arts, Hampstead. This is where I first learnt how to use oil paint, the art teachers and facilities were exceptional, and I was able to study Graphic Design, Photography, Fashion, Textiles and Fine Art. A foundation year at Camberwell followed, during lockdown. Then a year in Florence studying at both Polimoda and Charles. H. Cecil, a life drawing atelier.

In 2021 I submitted my first oil on canvas, painted when I was 17, into the Royal Academy Summer exhibition. I was honoured and delighted to be chosen by Yinka Shonibare, the curator that year, and my large painting titled 'The Pink Man' was hung in the main hall. I had no idea how many people would see it and contact me, all wanting Giclee prints, as the original was not for sale. The RA also wrote a piece about my work, and then the BBC came and filmed me as part of a documentary about the Summer Exhibition. A few art galleries who visited the RA also called asking if I'd be interested in a solo show. I chose to work with Roxanna Farbound at Ronchini Gallery in Mayfair. Roxanna was always at the end of the

phone nurturing me through the process. After six months of continuous painting I had enough paintings for my first solo exhibition, it ran for 7 weeks but most of the paintings sold to art investors before the opening night. It was one of the most surreal experiences I've ever had, with people wanting to hug me and even asking for autographs.

Two months later I was in a group show with incredible artists including Alighiero Boetti. I also have two paintings going to art fairs in Dallas and Miami this year, as well as private commissions. My next big aim is to be at Frieze, and I'd also love to do some paintings in New York. My first few years at Thomas's though, are so far, my fondest memories. My closest friend now is Millie, she was the first friend I made at Thomas's when she helped me with my puzzle on the first day. Thomas's really pushed me out my comfort zone which has helped me so much in my career, they showed me that if I worked hard I would succeed, and I think I am quite driven because of this belief. But most importantly it is a quote that I remember from Mr Wild, which was 'it's nice to be important but it's more important to be nice', I like to think that I've absorbed the Thomas's ethos and will carry it with me no matter where my life takes me.