

Catherine Decôme Artist statement

My practice exists at the threshold, between the visible and the unseen, the ancestral and the contemporary, the ether and the earth. I paint to bridge these worlds. Each canvas is an act of remembrance, a process of bringing what is felt, inherited, or forgotten into form.

Rooted in my French-Ghanaian heritage, my work emerges from a lifelong experience of navigating dualities: silence and story, discipline and intuition, structure and fluidity, shadow and light. These tensions are not contradictions to resolve; they are materials to work with. Painting allows me to hold them all at once.

I approach each piece intuitively. I begin by listening, before thought, before image, letting the hand move ahead of language. Layers accumulate like sedimented memories: gestures, pigments, fragments, erasures. Through this process, figures surface not as portraits but as presences. They are echoes of ancestors, archetypes, strangers, and versions of myself that live across time. I am not painting people, I am painting the moment a life, a memory, or an emotion becomes visible.

My palette is grounded in earth: reds reminiscent of soil and skin, deep blues that hold depth and distance, muted tones that speak in whispers. These colours evoke the land and the body, the places where history is carried quietly.

In my recent body of work, *From Ether to Earth*, I explore the passage from immaterial to material, what it means for spirit, memory, or lineage to choose from. These paintings examine the moment of incarnation, the instant where something invisible gathers weight and becomes human. I am drawn to the fragility and the strength embedded in this crossing.

Identity, for me, is not singular or fixed. It is layered, lived-in, fractured, re-formed. My figures often appear multiplied or overlapping, revealing the many selves we carry and the stories we inherit. Through texture and fragmentation, I explore how memory can both shape and distort us, and how beauty can emerge from complexity.

Painting is my way of listening to what has been silenced, forgotten, or hidden. It is a practice of grounding, of embodying what once felt distant or ethereal. Each canvas becomes a space of encounter, between myself and my lineage, between viewer and memory, between presence and the unknown.

I do not paint to answer questions.

I paint to open space: for reflection, for connection, for remembrance.

Ultimately, I hope my work invites viewers to step into their own crossings, to feel the bridges within themselves, to honour the stories they carry, and to recognise the beauty that emerges when shadow and light coexist.

Painting, for me, is not an escape from reality. It is a return.