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Questions... about painting

Is painting still vital, or is it a dead language?
We asked the following questions of several
young painters working today

1. What is painting?
2. What is your favorite color?
3. Which artist or painter has influenced you?
4. Is there a work of art you would like to have in your home next to your own work?
5. What is the best way to exhibit a painting?
6. What are the limits of painting?
7. How do you start a work — do you have any rituals?
8. Is there a future for painting or you are one of the last survivors?
9. If you were about to be reborn, what would you like to be — still a painter?
10. Do you think painting is underappreciated today?

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Alika Cooper

1. For me painting usually has a depth of field.
2. Blood rust and red orange.
3. Christina Ramberg.
4. *Interior Monument* (1980) by Christina Ramberg.
5. In a way that allows its expression of tension.
6. The limits have to be invented, construed and broken.
7. I take a moment to sit in my chair and meditate on the first actions to take; I make a quick game plan and try to get to work as quickly as possible, to get in the zone.
8. There is a future for painting, and it will continue to be fixated on death and death rites.
9. This is a difficult question that I do ask myself.
10. Yes, I think painting is underappreciated today. It is an important place for contemplation, subversion and assessment of visual history.

Ryan Sullivan

2. Acrid greenish-yellow.
3. Ellsworth Kelly — particularly in view of a statement he made in 1969 describing his transition from figurative painting to object-orientated works. His idea of the primacy of the object "as itself" ("In my painting, the painting is the subject") is an idea that resonates closely with my work.
4. My work was recently installed in a room with Uri Aran's table sculptures — in the exhibition "Empire State" at the Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Rome. This was an interesting pairing.
5. I like to show a body of work together. My works are made simultaneously and so it makes sense initially to display them as a group, in a dialogue with each another.
7. Yes I do. Every day is different, but work-days generally begin with me setting down layers of paint on a canvas and allowing them to accumulate on top of each other. Some of

*Alistair Frost, "Out of Office Auto Reply," 2012.
Exhibition view at Christian Andersen, Copenhagen.
Courtesy Christian Andersen, Copenhagen and
Mary Mary, Glasgow*

these layers remain liquid while others might be more viscous or dry, and the point of this is to create a volatile surface to develop upon. Despite starting with a routine structure, external elements inevitably (and necessarily) creep in and create unpredictability. These include factors such as temperature, whether I have thinned the enamels too much or too little, or have left a fan on near a painting. Almost anything can give rise to unpredictability, and fortunately something always does.

8. Yes, there's a future for painting.

10. Painting isn't underappreciated in general, but it isn't always considered or analyzed in an interesting or meaningful way. Evidence of this is the way that painting has a tendency to be overshadowed in major biennials, or

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Paul Heyer, *Snow and grass, evening*, 2013.
Oil on canvas, 76.2 x 61 cm. Courtesy Night Gallery, Los Angeles

not included at all. In a number of recent survey shows, painting has seemed like an afterthought. This is only one aspect, but I think its conspicuous absence isn't doing anything to help painters be contextualized among their peers.

Greg Parma Smith

1. My first instinct is to answer in a friendly, literal way, as if helping a lost tourist...
2. Purple.
3. I just saw a Roy Lichtenstein show and realized he has been a reference in my work for some time, although I thought I'd hated it. I guess I like it!
4. A Delacroix with tigers or lions or both.
5. In public.

6. I like to do almost everything by hand and use conventional art-store materials. I like to play by unsophisticated rules and color inside the lines. Those are my own limits, more or less. I can't say that I consciously chose them. I think personal limits lead an artist to his/her subjects.
7. I intend to draw a series of miniature sketches for several months to a year in my notebook before I actually begin a particular painting.
8. Surely there are exponentially more human beings making paintings now than in any prior epoch of human history.
9. I don't know, but I do feel very lucky that I'm able to proceed through life with some conviction. I don't know what I'd do without painting/art as a focus — just work on music I guess.
10. Not at all, maybe the opposite.

Matteo Callegari

1. Painting is a space for the mind. It starts with your understanding of reality, and develops as a proposition. Painting is about generosity.
3. Leonardo da Vinci.
4. A small saddle-shaped canvas by Ron Gorchov. Those are truly amazing pieces.
5. It's great when you can do an install that responds to the architecture of the space, still allowing an individual experience with each single painting.
6. The limits of painting coincide with the limits of our minds.
7. I don't have any ritual. I just start each work with a pre-determined structure, created by applying rules, filters, ideas, etc. It gives a sense of purpose to the work, also something to work against; tension is a necessary element in every good painting.
8. Of course there is a future for painting, and I'm very excited to see what the young bloods are going to come up with.
9. Sure.
10. Not at all, there is a lot of interest in painting at the moment.

Jonathan Binet

1. *¡Ah, la pintura!*
2. The one that, at the right moment, seems to be necessary. It can be purple, it can be black, it can be either green or gray... The thing is that I always had a hard time choosing a color.
3. I would prefer to mention the polish writer Witold Gombrowicz.
4. I don't have any of my works at home. But I would love to have a drawing by Martin Laborde.
5. The highway.
6. This is a real question for me. Since the very beginning of my work, I tried to answer this question. I have no answer, but I can say that during my first years of studying in the École des Beaux-Arts de Saint-Étienne, I observed that people called drawing something made on paper, even with paint on it. On the other hand, we can say a canvas with some lines drawn on can be a painting, so...
7. No ritual. I try to be attentive of what happens in front of me. I stand up or I sit on a chair and I wait. Usually, I fiddle with something in the studio and let things happen; after a proposal for a show I try to fix those experimentations in order to make the pieces.
8. Painting is always put in a difficult position — such a strange thing! We never said that sculpture is dead. A lot of new proposals in

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painting say that there is definitely a future for painting.

9. I would love to be a soccer player.

10. I know that painting is not underappreciated even if it can (wrongly) be considered an old-school medium. One of my friends — who is a famous young video/sculptor/contemporary artist — always says that curators don't often offer solo shows to painters. I don't know if he's right, or even what it means, but he knows the contemporary art world better than I do.

Sarah Cain

1. In my world painting is transforming the individual experience into a universal poetry.

2. This morning it is sea foam green.

3. I reference Guston's independence; his abandonment of what was known and easy, for something difficult and much better.

4. *Hand Piece* (1961) by Yoko Ono: "Raise your hand in the evening light and watch it until it becomes transparent and you see the sky and trees through it."

5. To let the artists figure it out based on the individual needs of their work.

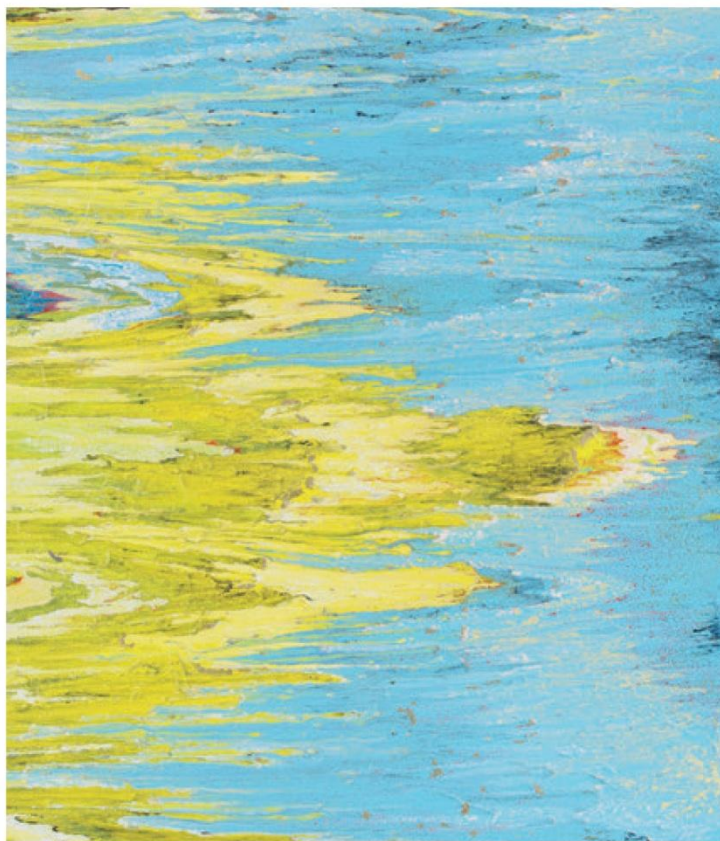
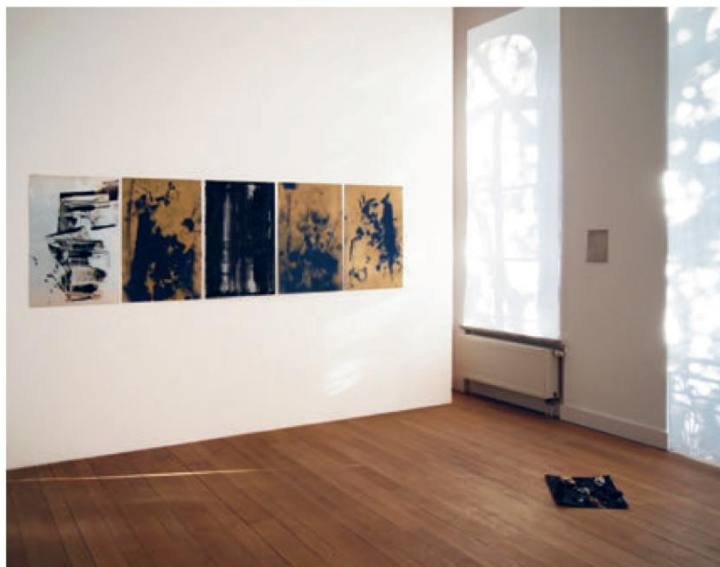
6. The translation into spoken language and the relationship to the physical body are difficult boundaries, but not limits. At first it feels like there are so many limits, but I don't think any actually exist.

7. I drink a lot of green tea. I paint much better when my studio is organized. The deeper I get into the work the more this sense of organization disappears. It's like the starting chaos of the painting and the organization of the studio flip by the end of a resolved work.

8. I like to think the future is one of the only certain things we have, in life and/or painting.

9. I'd rather be a mountain range, somewhere protected from humans.

10. Appreciation comes in many forms. In monetary appreciation, the work of women artists is still sometimes underappreciated, but that way of thinking is becoming obsolete fast. I also don't think money really means anything as far as real value goes. Real value to me is a depth of understanding larger-than-life questions. I think the average experience of viewing painting is underappreciated. Painting takes time and an emotional as well as intellectual openness. It is a language that keeps referencing, bending back and breaking free of itself. When you look at a body of work created over time the meaning of a specific artist's work becomes clearer.



Ryan Foerster, *The Sky is Falling* 2012. View of the exhibition view at C L E A R I N G, Brussels. Courtesy the artist and C L E A R I N G, New York/Brussels
Ryan Sullivan, December 28, 2011 – January 13, 2012, 2011-12. Oil, enamel and latex on canvas, 213.4 x 182.9 cm. Courtesy the artist and Maccarone, New York

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Parker Ito

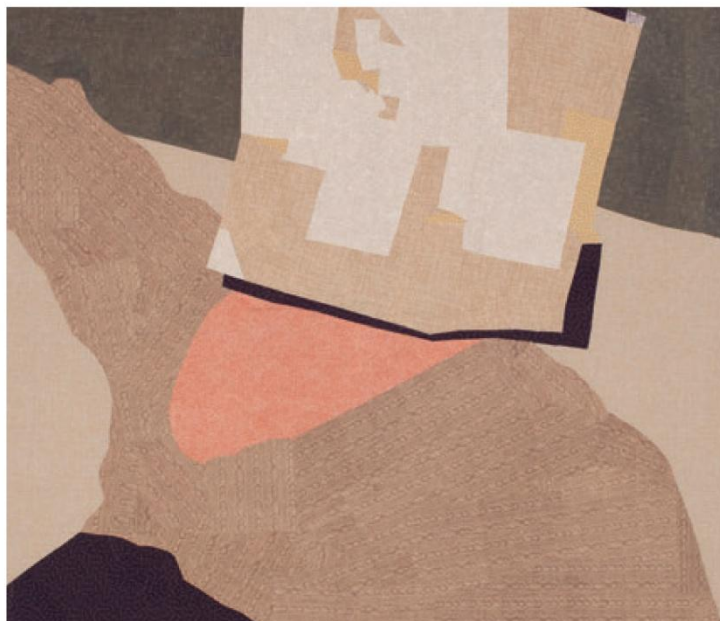
1. A form that people liked and then didn't like and now like again (sorta).
2. Red — I really like red shoes and red lingerie.
3. Cy Twombly.
4. Andy Warhol's *Last Supper* paintings.
5. Take photos of it and put it on the Internet.
6. That if you make too many paintings you become a painter.
7. I can't remember. Usually it has to do with online shopping.
8. Painting will always be a nice thing to look at.
9. I don't consider myself a painter. Maybe I'd like to be reborn as a painter.
10. Do you think that today the Internet is underappreciated?

Alistair Frost

1. A wonderful way to relax on the weekend.
2. Lavender: This is often chosen by a person who lives "on a higher plane," who never notices anything sordid and who is always impeccably and beautifully dressed. Lavender people may be on a continual quest for culture and the refined things of life, high and noble causes but without the necessity of getting their hands dirty. A Lavender person is usually creative, charming, witty and civilized.
3. Pierce Brosnan (gritted teeth/wry smile/arched eyebrows).
4. *Guernica* in the guest bedroom.
5. Well, it helps if it matches the sofa.
6. <http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/2unlimited/nolimit.html>
7. Ten to twenty cute animal lists on BuzzFeed and then I'm down to party.
8. I've been bow hunting for years in preparation for the end times.
9. Dolphin every time.
10. NO.

Paul Heyer

1. Paintings are little lies or magic that make it possible to frame part of lived experience.
2. Blue!
3. Pier Paolo Calzolari.
4. A Basquiat.
5. A good painting can handle a lot of pressure and outside noise, but I like a painting's confrontation with the viewer to be as intense as possible. Good light. And it varies depending on what the painting needs. I remember see-



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Opposite:

Alika Cooper, *Magazine*, 2013. Fabric, adhesive, wood stretcher, 106.68 x 121.92 cm. Courtesy the artist and Tracy Williams, Ltd., New York.
Photo: Lee Thompson

Greg Parma Smith, *Vibrant Colored Pencil Techniques #4*, 2012. Oil, acrylic and canvas on canvas, 81.28 cm x 116.84 cm.
Courtesy BaliceHertling, Paris

ing an Odilon Redon show in middle school and being really excited about how dark it was in there.

6. I don't know!!!

7. I used to start with a brushy monochrome, but I've gotten kind of sick of starting things that way. It got to the point where I couldn't see them very clearly, so now I try to leave things really open and just start any way that I can. But I still start with a color idea.

8. There will always be painting, even when we're colonizing the rest of space.

9. Assuming I'd be reborn as a human I'd like to be either a painter or someone who is working to communicate with bonobos.

10. No, but I think a lot of painting is about avoiding painting.

Valerie Snobeck

1. A unit of measure.

2. CMYK 0, 0, 0, 0.

3. Gilles Deleuze.

4. *Le Consortium*, Dijon, France, June 7 - June 27, 1991.

5. Within limits.

6. As one describes them.

7. I wake up, drink a glass of water, use the toilet, wash my face, brush my teeth, put on clothes, make coffee.

8. The Oxford English Dictionary publishes four updates a year. The next update will be added to the dictionary in June 2013.

9. I would still let you call me that.

10. No.

Ryan Foerster

1. When a man loves a woman.

2. Black and blue.

3. Robert Frank and Bruce Nauman.

4. More stuff from friends.

5. Outside.

6. Your imagination.

7. Running and gardening.

8. Yes.

9. Myself or a social worker.

10. Yes.



Matteo Callegari, *East*, 2013. Acrylic and transfer on canvas, 188 x 142 cm.
Courtesy the artist and Ramiken Crucible, New York
Parker Ito, *"The Agony and the Ecstasy"*, 2012. View of the exhibition at Stadium, New York