

Interview of the artist by Hudson (Feature Inc.)

.sly; i hadn't thought of that before, but your paintings are sly, sly in a good way. can you see that in them?

Sly. I hadn't thought of that before either. I think sly might have a bit of a malevolent undertone to it. Maybe more slippery than sly?

.slippery, i'll agree with that. so what is it about slippery that you like?

I'm not sure that I like slippery as much as it likes me and is part of my nature. I have never been one to be too vociferous about my views and don't really see my work as vehicle for that. I guess I am thinking of sly or slippery as the outward voice of the paintings, ultimately their meaning. Were you thinking of sly/slippery in more of a reactionary manner? Like in a "what the hell am I looking at" kind of way? If that's the case, I can see that too...images dissolving, reappearing, coming out and into focus. I think that speaks to the images I choose to paint as well, not to mention the method, more often than not things which you can apply your own experience to and take it from there. Not quite Rorschachs, Bleigiessen interpreting or trying to find meaning in clouds passing overhead but still work which requires a bit of experiential input from those seeing the work.

.while i personally like not clearly knowing it all and working my way thru stuff to perhaps understand something, in the artworld's current aesthetic, social and political climate, slippery is good medicine, if not play. do you consider your layering playful, and as well the way you use color and shapes to punctuate your paintings?

Not knowing is half the fun (at least). Being here in Siberia it's sort of difficult to get a real gauge on the current social and political barometer but I wouldn't disagree with your assertion that slippery is a nice antidote to the rhetorical heat. I wouldn't say that the layering is intended to be playful as much as it's just a result of the process but having said that, the layered/organic paintings seem more lighthearted in relation to the geometric ones. I could elaborate more on color and shapes but am afraid of sounding too superfluous:)

.well having said color, the color in this batch of paintings seems divided. there is a group of paintings with color that seems more intense/brilliant than ever and there is another group of paintings having very limited palettes with extreme and complex variations in hue rather than shades and tints. obviously color has been on your mind.

There definitely is a division in the palettes I chose for this group of paintings. A couple of the paintings made mid-way through preparing for this show had a very narrow range of color which became really intriguing to me in both relationship to the other paintings and the fact that the picture, the image, the thing that I am painting from starts to fade out and the definition was becoming only just visible. I started to look for sources that seemed to be bled of their color. Pictures where the image was barely there seemed to provide a healthy counterbalance to the work which was more overt and recognizable as something. It's funny how you only start to see the bigger picture of the work that you have made after things are out of the studio. That idea of the afterimage, the thing which is scarcely there also provides a nice point of departure towards reflection.

A few of the paintings for this show were chosen as much for their color(s), if not more, than for the image itself. A certain greenish yellow and a yellowish green evoke a weird romantic memory of growing up listening to rock radio, campfires and being a lonely kid. Maybe there is a certain film stock that was used that captures that mood. I'm certain that it doesn't appear in things printed recently. Maybe something has to have some history to acquire its soul. Either that or be left in the sun for a while.

.you choose images of places and people, often blending one of each together, but almost never things. why not things?

Maybe things don't have as much of a feeling of time, place and emotion about them as people and places. Would you consider animals "things"? I think of them existing inbetween people and places. Maybe there is a clue to the answer in the last response, the part about trying to find images which have a soul. Do you see an inanimate object when you look at a Morandi painting or a crooked Cezanne still life? I usually think about the painter painting the thing and the single mindedness which might foster such an obsession. As for myself, I really don't try to over think my work. That's not to say I don't consider how things will look both as singular objects and as a body of work but there's a fine line between work which is considered and work which becomes something more analytical. It's sort of like that fuzzy line that I sometimes straddle between abstraction and representation, it's a real balancing act to make work clean and crisp while still maintaining a comfortable, not quite casual, presence emanating from the work.

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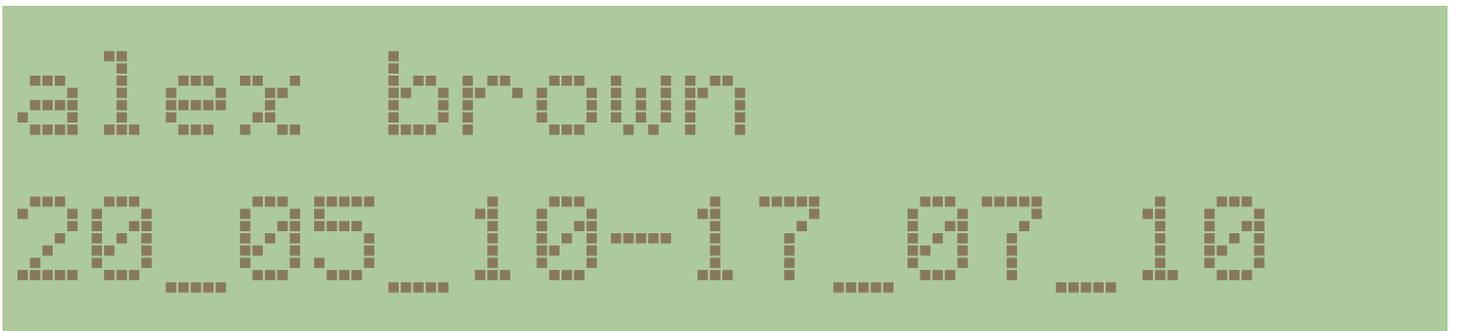
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. with some frequency you make a painting that despite having its origin in an image or images, always remains completely abstract. when you begin this type of painting, do you know that will occur?

I would say about half of the paintings from this show fall into the category of being difficult to understand or comprehend as a familiar, common object. I usually have an idea of what the work will look like beforehand but I certainly don't have it down to a science. I think it might be a real bore if I did. My intention at the initial stage is more often than not to try and paint something which is understandable as some thing. If it happens to not make sense to the recognition centers of my brain, that's fine as well, as long as the thing is tickling me in a good place. I never set out to confuse anyone intentionally nor would I make work which people couldn't see as something known by sight. The titles are an important and often underemphasized aspect of the work in that they do provide a little nudge into that perception of what it is that you are you looking at. I think it's a great question about my thoughts on the fact that you cannot ever see what is there in some of these paintings. I wish I had something really smart to add in retort but I honestly don't know what my thoughts are. I can't see or not see what other people see or don't see. It never fails to amaze me what people see in the work and spend time trying to find something as if it's some sort of parlor game. Some paintings which I think are really simple pictures of incredibly common things are sometimes completely elusive to people while at other times things I imagine no one could ever unlock are nailed right away.

.are most of your images found inadvertently, or do you consciously peruse books, mags, whatever looking for something that grabs your attention. is selecting images relatively ez or labored? do you crop? are you true to the existing colors? is there a particular reason why one image is chosen to layer with a modular system and another with second image?

My eyes are always open for things which might prove to be something that will end up in the work. The selection of what eventually ends up being used is sometimes more fluid and organic than others. I prefer to let things come to me image-wise but when I am feeling a bit stuck the used book or record store seem to have a constant stream of images, colors and configurations to keep the pump primed. I try to be as literal as possible when it comes to color. It's often the reason that I pick a particular thing to paint, so to divert from it would be kind of beside the point. That fidelity only goes so far though as I try to use a pretty limited and basic palette. Regarding why sometimes I use a hard-lined pattern and other times a second image, I like the variety and rhythm of the two playing off of each other. The actual process of making one vs. the other has a different tempo and method as well. I've learned that some images break down and are more effective when using the geometric filter while others seem to be happy and breath just fine with the organic one.

.so what do you think about people not seeing your intentions in a painting? regarding your images, in terms of communication, whats your goal?

I wasn't aware of the fact that people didn't see my intentions and I guess that's not even something I have ever considered. I am just putting work out there, trying to create my own little world. Maybe this is a cop-out but don't you think if my intent were crystal clear and my paintings in-focus blow ups of my source imagery that it might lose some it's fundamental mystery? I always feel like it would be a real bore to know exactly what it is I'm doing. I could answer the second part of that question along those same lines. What does a misty pixelated painting of a waterfall communicate? What does a painting of a backlit woman in silhouette communicate? I am painting people and places at a particular time in a particular place in a particular manner. Maybe it communicates that I like to be left alone in my studio to do all this busy work that people, including myself, may or may not understand in a literary sense but hopefully we can take away from the work some of my experience.

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