

Interview with **Ascent Contemporary**, New York, 2014

Can you tell us something about your background, your influences and your development as an artist?

Though I was born in the US, I spent most of my childhood in other countries. By the time I was 10, I had lived in Jamaica, Australia and Europe. French was the first language I learned and I came back to America with a strong Australian accent. I also lived in some interesting homes, including a modern house designed by Richard Neutra. The traveling and the extreme modernism shaped my aesthetic at an early age. In my work, I am continually absorbed with the idea of place and being able to extract the most essential elements from what I see and experience. As an artist I am most influenced by how we connect to a particular space and how our experiences influence our perception of that place.

With what media did you initially experiment in your artistic practice and how has that changed?

I initially experimented with clay and porcelain. But I was looking to make installations that were more ethereal in nature. I stumbled on silk and began to experiment from there. I find it interesting to learn how a material works, it's potential uses and limitations. The materials one chooses are an important contributing factor to how a piece is ultimately read.

Many of the pieces in your series Copenhagen 1940, feature extreme close-up views of everyday objects. Can you tell us a little about your interest in abstracting the everyday?

In my work, I am trying to tap into the emotive qualities of place. I seek out essential shapes and details that I can incorporate into the painting, thereby constructing a "landscape" of a particular experience. For the *Copenhagen* series, I wanted to make a series of paintings that portray a moment in time, drawing upon the details of ordinary objects loaded with history and meaning. However, I always want the paintings to move beyond their origin and really become something else altogether.

Organic materials and elements found in nature, be it cell clusters or pebbles, frequently serve as the starting point in your work. What would you say draws you to organic subject matter?

I am fascinated by the randomness of nature and the human propensity to organize what we see. I like to merge these two disparate modes together in various ways and see what turns up.

Although many of your works have a personal story behind them that in a sense can give the piece something of a biographical edge, your work is also highly experiential. How would you like for the viewers to approach your work? What do you want them to bring to the conversation?

I think a successful work is one that goes beyond the artist's original intentions and has the ability to make the viewer stop and look for awhile; to really be in that moment with the piece. That is becoming more and more challenging in our interconnected world. But it is what motivates me to keep going.

Your installations often use vibrant pigment, yet in other instances you opt for black and white. What do you consider when making these decisions?

I use color, or the lack of color, to help determine the experience I am trying to convey in each work. I love color, but I also love eliminating it altogether. My work is continually in conversation with itself. When I have been working on a really colorful installation for awhile, I tend to want to do just the opposite.

Are there any artists you admire and draw inspiration from?

The artists that inspire me the most are the ones that did their own thing for decades, constantly honing their practice undeterred by market conditions and the art world in general.

What text/publication can you recommend that has had an influence on your work?

Gerhard Richter Writings, 1961 - 2007 and Agnes Martin Writings are two I continually go back to. I also enjoy Robert Ryman - Used Paint. Two books I just recently purchased that are really wonderful are: Rethinking Landscape: Photography from the Collection of Allen G. Thomas, Jr. and Flare, a collection of Cole Swensen poems and Thomas Nozkowski images.