



INTERVIEW

ELISABETH CONDON

PULSE PRIZE WINNER 2015 | NEW YORK



Elisabeth Condon, *Maple Leaf Season*, 2018, Ink, acrylic and glitter on linen, 30 x 40 in.

COULD YOU GIVE US A BIT OF BACKGROUND ABOUT YOURSELF AND WHAT BROUGHT YOU TO ART-MAKING?

I moved from Los Angeles to Chicago to Brooklyn to Florida, and now live in Manhattan. Landscape in all of its variety is a primary aesthetic influence along with décor, scrolls, and abstract painting. Reared in a religious family in a film industry town, I found art making ideal to express the inner world behind appearances, the inchoate forces that scramble a pattern.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE BODY OF WORK THAT AWARDED YOU THE PULSE PRIZE IN 2015?

The work was made on a six-month residency at Swatch Art Peace Hotel, Shanghai. Poured paint was a perfect metaphor for Shanghai's reflective, watery nature. Adding calligraphy ink, glitter, and pumice to the paint shored up the liquid flow and balanced thinly applied color. Drawing from the window and tracing photos taken around the city, plus looking at a lot of scroll painting, inspired an atmosphere somewhere between image and gesture. In the Emerson-Dorsch booth at PULSE the paintings were installed on a toile pattern designed from drawings of Shanghai, layering sensory impression of place with details like tourist boats and the LED designs on the surface of buildings.



Elisabeth Condon, *Electric Lotusland*, 2014, ink, glitter, acrylic on linen, 78 x 98 in. Courtesy the artist

YOU'VE DESCRIBED THE SERIES OF WALLPAPER PAINTINGS, AS "A COLLISION OF LANGUAGES HAPPENING...A HUGE OPPORTUNITY TO BUILD ON THAT ANCIENT ASIAN DESIRE FOR CALM AND HARMONY." COULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR RESIDENCY IN SHANGHAI AND HOW IT CAME TO INFLUENCE YOUR WORK?

The work in Shanghai was a slow migration from a more abstract approach to the patterns I am working with now. I began to notice re-imaginings of nature in Shanghai's neon signage, street planters, and building facades. The seemingly bland motifs I found soothing and restful, in contrast with the confrontation or didacticism in Western Art. I saw how harmony can challenge or surprise expectations in subtle variations on natural forms, such as flowers, the choice of a color or placement of a line. When I returned to New York, I began to paint my mother's wallpapers and textiles as a form of artificial nature. The repeating patterns form a grid softer than an urban plan. Rather than resist the kitsch or feminine implications of the source material I turned straight into it, hand-painting birds, flowers, and lattice both echoing and re-imagining daily life.



Elisabeth Condon, *Maple Leaf Season*, 2018, Ink, acrylic and glitter on linen, 30 x 40 in. Courtesy the artist.

DO YOU FEEL THAT THE ACCESS TO THE INTERNET AND VARIOUS SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS HAS AFFECTED THAT WAY THAT YOU CREATE ART AND HOW YOU VIEW ART?

Definitely. In the simultaneous exposure of images, time tiles laterally across the surface of consciousness. A sense of history and consequence collapses. Physical space, once marked by turning pages, shrinks to pecks, taps, and swipes. The compression and spread make wonderful structural models for painting: multiple applications, layers, a collage sensibility with sudden transitions and random sequences generate a new kind of logic. The abundance can make it harder for thought and action to unite. By nature restless, my remedy is the physicality of making.

WHAT IS THE BEST PIECE OF ADVICE YOU'VE EVER RECEIVED?

That brush painting is a matter of ink load and brush pressure.



Elisabeth Condon, *Late Spring Blossoms*, 2019, Ink and acrylic on linen, 40 x 52 in. Courtesy the artist.

WHAT'S COMING UP NEXT FOR YOU?

Current recipient of the Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters and Sculptors Program Grant.

Solo exhibition, Emerson Dorsch, Miami, FL. Opens October 12, 2019.

MacDowell Fellow, Peterborough, NH, September 24 – October 23, 2019.

Completing MTA commission.

First trip to Mexico City, January 2020.

Solo exhibition, Lesley Heller, New York, NY fall 2020.

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