

This interview will (most likely) be published in FlashArt in 2010. I don't feel entirely comfortable with this interview. Growing pains? Self-representation is exhausting and I get it wrong. I over-wrote this. Thinking too hard and trying to cover all my bases. Either its in the paintings or its not. Or I need to make totally different paintings. Which is probably true. The only consistently true thing is that I have an extremely short attention span (thanks Hamza), and that I am rarely convinced that I am doing or saying the right thing. And I would like that indecision (or even doubt) to be worth something, but I hate the tone – so heavy and grating not light and lilting like the tones of Frances Stark.

BRAND NEW

Molly Zuckerman-Hartung  
John McKinnon

JM: While abstract, your paintings do not conform to one style. Can you describe your approach to a single canvas?

MZ: Each painting has its own specific logic; created through a series of material questions with metaphysical implications. Is it too heavy? Does it need more paint? Once I tied a brick to a painting. The apparent dissimilarity between works reflects the underlying anxieties of overproduction. The paintings are the haunted unconscious of routine capitalism. I cultivate the conflict between my desire for meaning (which necessitates repetition) and the injunction to make it new.

JM: So, no portion of a painting is more important than another? It is the entire painting and the experience of it?

MZ: There is no focal point, but I strive for a disjunctive syntax: *Ugly* but *Moving*, or *this* yet *that*. I'm not aiming for a Modernist gestalt, nor for the postmodernity of Fiona Rae - a painter who places differing visual languages in proximity, to underscore their irreconcilability. By contrast, my paintings assert an ambivalent subjectivity – a conflicted whole.

JM: Do you hope to have an attractive quality to the work?

MZ: I want the paintings to look good. But my notion of beautiful is shifting all the time - due to fashion, taste, what I am reading. I seem unable to cease defying the dictate that less is more. But much of the work I admire is quite minimal.

JM: This shifting of taste seems to be reflected within our device-based culture. We are constantly channel-surfing or shuffling our iPods. Do you intend to elicit responses like this from your paintings?

MZ: I keep my studio walls as porous as I can. A few years ago, I made paintings with horizontal bands intended to be read as text. I was dealing with speed (reading), but a painting by Matisse at The Art Institute of Chicago called *Woman Before an Aquarium* began to seduce me. Increasingly, I'd like my paintings to captivate a viewer in a constricted reverie in order to engage the anxieties *behind* channel-surfing. Think of Freud's formulation of mania and melancholia. *That* mental space sans headphones.

JM: Your layers of paint seem to hang in a balance between thin and dense painterly information. How is this created within the studio? And when do you know a painting is finished?

MZ: For me, painting means queering and compressing a subjective history of painting. (A lineage of interiors, including Vermeer, Matisse, Klee) In the studio I move between the need for clarity and a desire to reveal the density of my process, which is self-critical and dialectical, not organic. I am influenced by the late novels of Henry James, where consciousness generates claustrophobic time-space. In this heavy atmosphere, characters attempt to act. Studio time is analogous, with intervals of slow accumulation punctuated by action. I think this has something to do with stopping...

Molly Zuckerman-Hartung was born in 1975 in Los Gatos, California. She lives and works in Chicago. She co-runs Julius Caesar with Dana DeGiulio, Diego Leclery, Colby Shaft and Hans Peter Sundquist. Selected

solo shows: 2010: Rowley Kennerk Gallery, Chicago. 2008: John Connelly Presents, NYC. Group shows:  
2009: Jacky Strenz, Frankfurt

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