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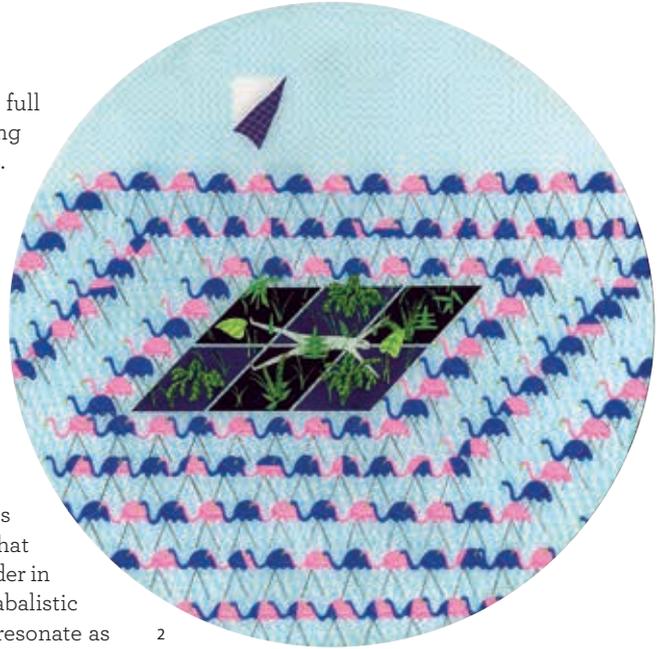


*Also Showcasing
Glass, Ceramics & Wood*



I turned away from the window and found myself in a gridlocked world full of daunting and somewhat sardonic happy faces, mystery clones having meaningless sex, lonely DIY glory holes and an abundance of potted plants. I step into the next painting: it's angled so I can only see the mystery clones facing forward but not facing me. They care about something to the left of me...something I'll never understand. I move a step to the side, and I'm in the next painting. There are hundreds of flamingos in this one, marching or doing some kind of synchronized swimming routine. It's hard to determine. In between the flamingos I catch a glimpse of a naked man sprawled out amongst some bushes, staring vacantly into the sky, somehow knowing that those bushes would protect him from being trampled or drowned.

Mark Whalen's art tells stories that are highly mathematical and vehemently personal. Abounding with open-ended questions, the unknowable and the undeniable duplicitous nature of our world, Whalen approaches his paintings with ambiguity and austere intent. His work creates illusions that rearrange the perceived notion of time and space, as well as disfiguring the order in which the circumstances in each work were possibly intended. Their semi-cabalistic vibe and look seeps into the back of your brain and lingers. The paintings resonate as a blighted truth staring us all in the face.



Interview with Artist Mark Whalen

By Sarah Elise Abramson



What are some of your favorite materials to use, and why?

I make all my pieces on wood panels. I use acrylics, gouache and radiograph pens. I generally use gouache for the fluorescent colors and they work well with my outlining techniques opposed to other paints.

What does "contemporary" mean to you?

Finding myself trapped in a grid of mayhem.

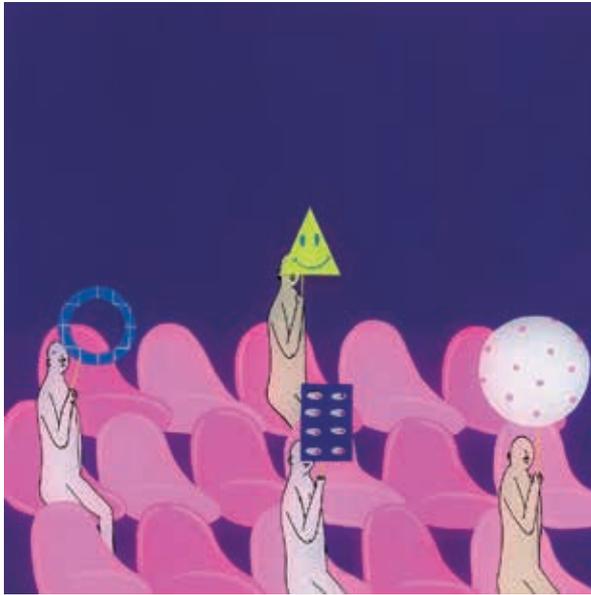
Can you talk a little about the separate narratives happening simultaneously throughout most of what you are currently creating?

There are always satirical social narratives taking place in each piece. It's an interpretation of events happening around us. The characters are caught in throes of ambiguous action. I like to really explore all aspects of human activity and behavior through the paintings, whether it's ideas of invention, science, sexual desire or oppression. They all take place simultaneously creating sly oppositions that reflect life's puzzling duality.

How does the way you install your exhibitions parallel the pieces?

I recently started to do wall installations that coincide with the works themselves. A lot of my work is very structural and almost a draftsman's-like approach into these worlds of architectural anomalies.

1
Artist Mark Whalen.



3

2
Flamingo Maze, acrylic, ink and gouache on panel with resin, 22" diameter

3
Spectators #1, acrylic, ink and gouache on panel with resin, 8 x 8"

4
Rug games, acrylic, ink and gouache on panel with resin, 22" diameter



4

I think it's really fun to add this to the room where it provides a more interactive experience directing people to specific areas to view the work.

Pets, kids, family?

I have a dog. He's an English bull terrier named Leon. He's a psychopath.

What makes him such a psychopath?

Oh, he's a psychopath in the best way possible, full of energy, crazy outbursts and always terrorizing the studio. Leon's current studio obsession is eating my erasers. I actually think he gets a kick out of it.

If you could make one wish...

I'd build a modern tree house and live 200 feet above ground. Either that or teleport back to the '90s for Game Two of the Playoffs, Chicago Bulls versus Los Angeles Lakers.

Do you have any rituals separate or connected to your work?

I follow the NBA really heavily; it's something I have done since I was a kid.

If I did have a ritual I would say it would be that, because when the season is on I definitely add the weekly games into the work schedule.

Biggest statement you're trying to communicate with your art?

My work is an interpretation of the modern era. First and foremost I like to use our current surroundings and challenge the viewer by providing alternative spaces for human existence.

There is a sort of chaotic minimalistic approach to most of what you create. What's at the root of that?

It's always interesting how people perceive my work because every piece is thought out in a way that is almost mathematical. There are definitely chaotic compositions in my work that careen out of control, but in an extremely controlled manner, it comes from a place of personal obsessions.

Who and/or what is currently inspiring you?

I'm always really inspired by structures,

architecture and geometry. My most current inspiration is the tile work on buildings in Israel. I've been doing a lot of research on it. Their architecture and tiled patterns are just incredible.

Who was the last stranger you met that you can't forget?

No real strangers come to mind, but now that you ask, there is this one guy named Ron on my block in Silver Lake, California. He lives on the street and is always at my coffee shop in the morning. He is about 70 years old and was a Black Panther back in the day. Over the years he has done about 15 years in prison. He's just one of those guys where you stop to give him time to tell you a story. The wisdom of an old man is never boring; on top of that, this guy is an incredible illustrator. He makes stipple drawings with a pen and has a huge back log of them that usually depict scenes of the darkness and greed in America. It's never a dull moment when he decides to shed light on the subject at hand. ●

Sarah Elise Abramson is a contemporary fine art photographer based in San Pedro, California—a mysterious post-industrial enclave whose offbeat countercultural history and proliferation of unusual sights, sounds and citizens is tailor-made for Abramson's obsession with everyday surrealism. In both her own photography and in her curatorial and editorial approach to exhibition projects and independent publications, her emphasis is on discovering the eccentric beauty in the things most people overlook. Found objects, hidden messages, secrets of the universe that hide in plain sight—throughout her studies at Parsons The New School for Design and Brooks Institute of Photography, and later at LaChapelle Studios, her work has evolved from finding to intuitively creating original daydreams and shared cosmologies.

