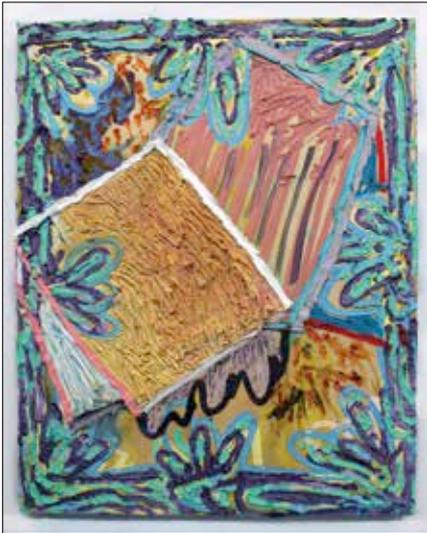


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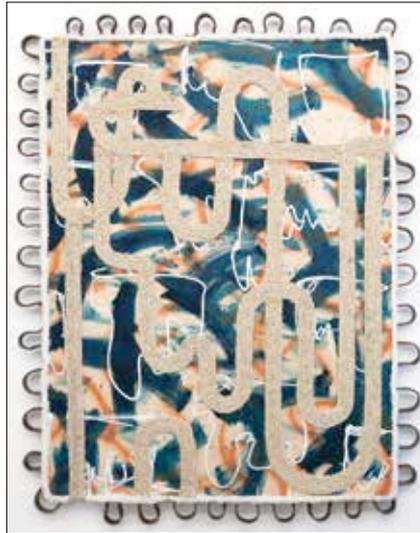
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# Interview with Artist Easton Miller

By Sarah Elise Abramson

As your eyes travel over each bump and ridge in the paint it becomes clear that there's something very refined about Easton Miller's texture packed paintings. Each work, its own combination of wit and whimsy. Miller's practice is heavily reliant on geometric shapes, found objects and the way elements such as color and stratification associate. He ties his art together with repetitive patterns and color palettes creating cohesive bodies of work whose end result is nothing short of a satiating feast for your senses. Humor and the comprehension of human emotions are defining characteristics of these contradictory pieces. Reconditely constructed and composed, his paintings embody something similar to contemporary abstract expressionism.

Miller got his start at an early age, and after attending art school in Chicago, moved to Los Angeles to pursue a career in fine art. He refers to his paintings as "portraits of circumstance," and while his style unceasingly evolves, his early desire to paint what he loves, injected with life experiences and satire, still reigns true. Every painting is a pleasure of patterns to absorb.

## What kind of artist do you call yourself?

I'm not usually in the habit of calling myself an artist unless I'm making a self-deprecating remark about myself in that role. I work in a variety of mediums, but I think most people would call me a painter.

## What's your background as an artist?

I've essentially been involved with art since I was old enough to pick up a crayon. When I was a little kid I wanted to be an animator for Disney, and I would spend hours drawing all the characters (Lumiere from

*Beauty and the Beast* was my favorite) in these elaborate scenes. Once I reached 12 or 13, I focused all my efforts into becoming a comic book artist, and as I continually got older my focus shifted toward an interest in fine art. The whole process has really been an organic evolution—I've always known what I wanted to do relative to the age I was. I feel very fortunate to have had a sense of purpose since I was a lil' guy.

## How has your aesthetic and style developed over the last 10 years?

During my final year at the School of the

Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) I spent a lot of time creating these hyper-detailed wood burnings of different receding hairlines on men. The series was titled *Recession Obsession*, and I felt the images had to be rendered obsessively in order to convey how much men obsess over losing their hair. I also thought that using the seemingly masculine medium of wood burning would be a perfect aesthetic consideration for the ideology behind the series. I bring this series up because it ended up being a major catalyst for the progression of my practice. I realized that material, color and texture have a huge aesthetic/conceptual impact on me, and that recognition opened up the doors to explore art making in a very different way. It's not as though I was unaware of these factors as inherent elements of art, but that series was the first time where everything came together for me. Since that catalytic moment my practice has become increasingly materially oriented, and relies heavily on shifting the original intention of said materials.

## Where do the colors, shapes, form and titles to work come from? What inspires these things?

All of the work from the last few years follows the same ideological method, but varies greatly in the aesthetic execution. I carry a small notebook with me everywhere that I go. Whenever I hear something interesting, hilarious, upsetting, etc., I write the quote



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**1**  
*Trying To Stay Focused On One Thing At a Time Seems Impossible Time*, acrylic paint, flocking and oil paint on birch panel, 20 x 16"

**2**  
*So Rugged*, acrylic paint, faux shearling, indigo dye, leather, natural fiber rope, oil paint and upholstery tacks on birch panel, 53 x 42"

**3**  
*Pathologically Thoughtful*, acrylic paint, gold leaf, oil paint on birch panel, 10 x 8"

**4**  
*Apparently This Is Happening*, acrylic paint, flocking and oil paint on birch panel, 20 x 16"

Photos courtesy the artist and Carl E. Smith Gallery.

Every single color, mark, material or process has the possibility of conveying an idea, and I can elicit a wide variety of emotional responses by selecting specific combinations of the aforementioned elements. All aspects of life are defined by pattern even down to a genetic level, and that plays a large role in my work. Something as simple as the addition of one chromosome in the patterned makeup of our bodies can have huge ramifications. For instance, the condition of trisomy 21 (an additional 21<sup>st</sup> chromosome) results in Down syndrome. If I were to have two X chromosomes as opposed to an X and a Y, then I would be a woman, and my entire perception of the world/the way the world perceives me would be different. Why are we told not to wear red to a job interview? Because the color conveys certain aggressive attitudes that aren't always appropriate in that type of environment. The aforementioned examples are just a few of the countless ways in which pattern defines our lives, and I seek out ways to use these associations in a meaningful way.

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down in my book. I then use various materials to create a visual representation of these phrases/quotes. There are also aesthetic and material nods to artists and designers that I feel embody the sentiments I've chosen to portray.

**Do you feel that your childhood had any impact on the art you create today? If so how?**

How can it not?! Every experience I've had up until now has had some impact on the

art I create, but it would be impossible for me to be sure exactly how—it's just too broad a well to draw from.

**What are some things you'd claim to be obsessed with?**

Patterns, my two French bulldogs (Beak and Noodle), pizza and the podcast *Uhh Yeah Dude*.

**Talk about texture. What significance does texture play in your paintings?**

**Contact at**  
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*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.*

