



Endnotes

¹ Lyrics from the Tom Waits song “Time” off the 1985 album *Rain Dogs*. The lyrics were later adapted by the Worcester, Massachusetts hardcore/punk band Mountain Man in their song “Bargaining: I” off the 2011 album *Grief*. I was familiar with the Mountain Man song first, and wanted to use those lyrics (and the following lines) to title some paintings. The ensuing lyrics for each song are as follows:

“And the things you can't remember
Tell the things you can't forget
That history puts a saint in every dream.”
- Tom Waits

“How do you move in a world of fog turned to shit,
Turned to things we would never want?”
- Mountain Man

² I've been using disposable cameras since a pretty early age. My family has always taken a lot of photos, and my mom would give cameras to my brother and me on trips and vacations. She would later tell me that she was “curious to see what [we] would take [pictures] of” and “which “sights” were preserved as memories,” as well as the fact that she “used to buy a bunch of stuff to stick in [our] backpacks to occupy [us] while traveling.” Even now, photos I've taken on disposable cameras are the only images used as source material in my paintings. This medium of moment-preservation holds a lot of weight for me, not only because of its ties to my past (and a way to obtain a sort of sentimentality), but also because of the aesthetic quality of the photo. In addition to the fuzz and the grain, the color palette you most often achieve with these throw-away pieces of artistic machinery is a dulled-out version of reality.* I have a healthy appreciation for a muted palette. Color (or the lack thereof) is a

* Appendix - *fig. 1, 2, 3*

major factor in my work, and using these types of hues (off-grays) always achieves the mood I strive for.†

³ The last time my family was in Florida, my brother got a tattoo of an alligator and I made a point to get a photo of one.‡

⁴ Appendix - *fig. 5*

⁵ Appendix - *fig. 6*

⁶ Appendix - *fig. 7*

⁷ I actually thought it *was* a pigeon when I started writing this. I looked through stacks of photos for a while before I realized that the pigeon was either made up or simply not photographed. I only have concrete evidence of the duck.

⁸ If you've seen the 2004 film *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* you'll understand what I mean when I say that I like the idea of "Eternal Sunshine" being used as a verb, as in "I'd like to Eternal Sunshine that whole horrible experience." It's a dumb and esoteric way of saying one would like to forget something. I remember watching that movie in high school and really enjoying it, and often wonder if it would hold up for

† I'm not really a big fan of emotional extremes. When I feel overwhelmingly uplifted or profoundly upset, I also get super uncomfortable and frustrated. I'd rather just hang out in the middle of the emotional spectrum in perpetuity. This aversion is an important theme in my work. I want my paintings to illicit low-level emotional responses. A subtle sort of joy, or a quiet and far-off ennui.

‡ Appendix - *fig. 4*

me as an adult. I like to see Jim Carrey in a serious role. I'm hesitant to rewatch it as I remember it making me really sad.

⁹ Current contents: Hundreds of blank notecards in a variety of colors, one red clay skull, one ticket for the Loved Ones reunion show in Philly, several black pens of different brands and widths, one animal bone found in a dilapidated barn in Wisconsin, one broken wooden Japanese pen box, three charred incense holders, half of a phone charger, one (fake) gold chain, one half-empty (half full?) bottle of cologne, one broken eyeglasses case containing one obsolete pair of eyeglasses and one cleaning cloth, and a handful of photographs, Polaroid and disposable, of some close friends.

¹⁰ Collage has never really been my thing, but I do love Ray Johnson. I recently gave myself a tattoo of one of his bunny heads.

¹¹ Depending on where I get my disposables developed, I'll sometimes get prints of photos that really didn't come out at all. I often like these images quite a lot and I think there's something to be said about either barely being able to make out what the photo is of (despite having been the one taking it)[§] or having an image which isn't there at all, and being left with a 4" x 6" print of grain floating into a black void.**

¹² The first piece I made that started the series I'm currently working on was for a class I took during my senior year of undergrad (2012/2013). We were assigned to do a painting that used a grid system to construct a composition, and my familiarity with the microdigital image and the language of the pixel (through my deep interest in and devotion to the graphics of the low-bit video games of my youth) made me want to

§ Appendix - *fig. 8*

** Appendix - *fig. 9*

explore a low-resolution photography source as a reference. I thought that a cropped part of a face would be something potentially recognizable at a small resolution, and decided that a close-up of a mouth would make for an evocative portrait. I used a photo I had taken the previous summer of a good friend and co-worker^{††} to compose a triptych. This photo is one I'm very proud of, as it hits a pinnacle level of candidness in which the subject is unaware that the photo is being taken (resulting in a natural level of facial activity, rather than a reactionary level of facial activity), and yet is posed in a way that the features are captured at a flattering and well-composed angle. I think I got an A- or a B+ on the project, and it is currently hanging in my cousin Mike's Massachusetts apartment, above the living room couch.

¹³ There's an ongoing series of photos I take with the friends I made as a summer camp counselor, in which one person throws a handful of Fruity Pebbles at someone else's face, their mouth hanging open in an effort to catch as many pieces as possible, and I try to capture the moment of peak cereal-to-face contact.^{‡‡} We usually do it to celebrate the end of a period of time spent together, be it a summer at camp or a multi-day New Year's celebration.

The first time it happened was an organic byproduct of hanging out. Someone (I think Matt) was eating dry Fruity Pebbles out of a box on the last day of camp in 2014. Almost all of the campers had left so the cabins were quiet and we were sitting around, putting off the final bit of cleaning and packing and lugubrious good-byes. Another counselor (I think Ian) asked if he could have a handful of the snack. Rather than offering the box, Matt told Ian to open his mouth, and pitched a pile of cereal at his face. Everyone then took turns trying to catch as many pebbles on their tongue as possible, and at some point I decided the event

^{††} Appendix - *fig. 10*

^{‡‡} Appendix - *fig. 11, 12, 13*

was worth documenting. The ground outside Cabin 9 was covered in a dusting of rainbow pieces of sugary breakfast food. It was beautiful.^{§§}

¹⁴ Appendix - *fig. 15, 16*

¹⁵ Jim is the one who shot at Reilly's face, I was just holding the camera. It was my idea and everything, I just wanted to clarify.^{***}

¹⁶ I'm not really a big beach person. I like it every once in a while, when it's not crowded and maybe just a bit cloudy. Evening is the best time to go to the beach. People are clearing out, the air is cooling off but the sand is still warm, and the static drone of the waves drowns out the low murmur of the conversations of strangers.^{†††}

¹⁷ Appendix - *fig. 20*

¹⁸ A bat flew into and around my bedroom the night I wrote this, so I guess I had echolocation on the brain.

¹⁹ There's a funny thought which comes from an unknown original source that goes as follows: "Knowledge is knowing that Frankenstein wasn't the monster; wisdom is knowing that Frankenstein *was* the monster." If you're familiar with the story and the common misnaming phenomenon surrounding it, it's a clever and cute little sentence that you can throw out in an attempt to prove to your peers that you're capable of critical thinking. I was talking to my friend Matteo (who also has an

§§ Appendix - *fig. 14*

*** Appendix - *fig. 17, 18*

††† Appendix - *fig. 19*

affinity for disposable cameras^{###}) about Mary Shelly in the summer of 2016 and I mentioned this idea to him. He was pretty tickled by it and asked that I please write this thought down on a piece of paper that he could take with him back to Italy.

²⁰ Being a creative type means that it's **crucial** to be aware of one's trajectory; to cease any attempt at development and improvement is to resolve yourself to putrefaction. It can be a paralyzing prospect, to make steps forward at a point where you don't even know where you want to end up. When you're stuck, give yourself a low-pressure carte blanche to make something that you don't like.

I spent the first year of grad school reimagining and dissecting a series that I was, at one point, confident I had "figured out." The "pixel paintings" that I was doing were all made the same way. They were diptychs and triptychs (as well as one tetrptych) that used cropped close-ups of human facial features, pixelated to borderline recognizability and painted in linear gradient palettes. After many paintings done in this rigid style, I discovered that I can only alternate between painting a mouth and an eye for so long before I get bored. Upon further reflection and questioning of my practice, I decided to strip my concept of all but its most basic components (low resolution (the pixel), and the human figure).

To begin my process of experimentation, I branched out in several material directions, all stemming from that rigid concept. I did large pieces on unstretched canvas in which the border of the painted area became non-square and more organic. I painted on panels of raw wood and slabs of granite. I did paintings on plexiglass that floated off the wall on metal hooks. I did one painting on a discarded computer monitor. In all of these, I experimented with how low the resolution could get or how large the grid could get while still maintaining its

^{###} Appendix - *fig. 21*

tangibility as “figure.” These experiments forced me to wonder what it is I even want these pieces to *do*. I’ve since abandoned the grid altogether. Some things with this series have remained the same, however; I’m still painting from the figure and I’m still using low levels of detail.

²¹ When my friend Jesse took his life in 2009, I remember our friend John saying at the funeral, in an attempt to make himself or anyone smile, “I never thought *Amazing Grace* would make me cry.” I wish I took disposable photos of Jesse, but for the bulk of the time I knew him I was using a very basic digital camera (waste of time). Funny enough, that camera was borrowed by a girl I had a major crush on, and when she told me that she didn’t think it would work out between us, I was left with no good way to get it back from her. Jesse and John ended up getting her phone number and calling her, scolding her for being the girl who “broke Nick King’s heart” and demanding that she mail me my camera. Apparently they made her cry. I got my camera back in the mail shortly thereafter, no note or anything. I had mixed feelings about what Jesse and John did, considering that they were harassing someone I cared for, but ultimately saw it as being a gesture of their love and friendship towards me, and didn’t feel too badly about it.

²² The poet James Wright was the king of the closing line. He has a poem entitled *Lying In A Hammock At William Duffy’s Farm In Pine Island, Minnesota* that ends:

“A chicken hawk floats over, looking for home,
I have wasted my life.”

His poem *Northern Pike* ends:

“There must be something very beautiful in my body,
I am so happy.”

And In Response to a Rumor That the Oldest Whorehouse in Wheeling, West Virginia Has Been Condemned ends:

“And nobody would commit suicide, only
To find beyond death
Bridgeport, Ohio.”

²³ I’ve always been horrible at planning ahead, often to the great frustration of people close to me. When I was in high school, I would get annoyed with my parents for asking about my college plans. The more I got asked about life after graduating high school, the less I tried to think about it. Then, when I was getting ready to graduate college, I was frequently being confronted about my future once again. I subsequently shut down considering a future at all. I ended up taking the first job I could find, working as a nightshift janitor in the headquarters of a major wholesale grocer corporation. I was living in a four-bedroom house with five other people, sleeping through the day and spending my nights dusting the cabinets of the richest man in the state (with a special ostrich-feather duster, the only thing allowed to touch his imported wood standing-desk). Over the course of that year, my depression became exacerbated to a previously unfelt low, which worked as a great internal motivator to figure out my “next step.”

For as long as I’ve known that being a pirate wasn’t a legitimate career option^{§§§} I’ve wanted to work in a creative field. While contemplating my life after cleaning toilets for a living, I got in touch with my undergrad advisor Lynn Richardson, and asked her for advice. She told me I should “go to grad school and become a famous artist.” It was the most real-life, plan-ahead, grow-up-already step I could imagine taking.

^{§§§} One of my earliest memories is of being four years old or so, and having newly been introduced to the idea of prayer, kneeling at my open window and asking god that he please let me be a pirate when I grew up.

²⁴ From the Summer of 2011 to the Summer of 2013 I lived at a house in Keene, New Hampshire called Deth Haus.**** There was a room in Deth Haus that contained only a large table and six mismatched chairs. This was the “Magic Room” and “Magic Table,” not named because of any mystical or supernatural properties but because this was where myself, my housemates, and our other nerdy friends would sit and play Magic The Gathering, a competitive fantasy-based trading card game. The table was an offering from my housemate Joe, under the pretense that its surface would be regularly carved into, written on, and otherwise defaced for the duration of its stay in our lives. I can’t recall all of the writing that we imbued the table with, but I do remember there was a Van Halen, Slayer, and AC/DC logo, a fake phone number (something along the lines of “FOR A GOOD TIME CALL 666-420-6969” or whatever, you get the idea), probably a smattering of profanity, upside-down crosses and pentagrams... Ultimately this piece of furniture that was supposed to be a sponge for so much of our destructive energy (as well as a perfect surface for a multiplayer card game) proved to not be quite enough, and

**** It’s common practice in subculture communities to name the place you live. It started because of house shows, where bands come and play sets in basements or cleared-out living rooms. These events are under constant threat of being shut down by the cops, and making flyers listing your address only makes it easier for the pigs to put the kibosh on your good time. By replacing the street address with a made-up house name, people in the know are still be able to get to the right spot, and it becomes be more likely that all the bands get to play before the law comes pounding on your door. Anyone who’s unclear on where the Cootie Cave, the Terrordome, Box Fort, King House Of Gin, Crucial Fun House, the Tight House, Mojo Dojo, etc. are located, might be instructed by the flyer to “ask a punk.” Occasionally the cops catch on to a name and it has to be changed, which means someone has to paint a new backdrop on a bedsheet to nail up in the basement. Luckily, Deth Haus was called Deth Haus for as long as I lived there.

the walls of the Magic Room ended up with a couple fist-sized holes, lazily covered by posters and screenprints. I also remember carving “SLAYER” into the door of the first-floor bathroom. Implausibly I still received my full security deposit.

²⁵ A man named Michael Myers was famously filmed getting “SLAYER” cut into his forearm, and running the bleeding letters under a faucet. The image of the trickling wound dripping dark red into a sink was used in the liner artwork for Slayer’s 1994 album *Divine Intervention*. The footage was also used in the Harmony Korine film *Gummo* (1997) (which I watched for the first time in Deth Haus).

²⁶ For three years (two years at Deth Haus and one year at my next house, Crime City) I lived with a handsome Maine Coon cat named Ezra. Joe got Ezra when he was just a potato-sized ball of fuzz, and I got to watch him grow into a big beautiful animal with all kinds of personality. He used to take naps in my bed with me. I miss that cat a great deal. I don’t miss having his litter box right outside my bedroom door.

²⁷ I didn’t take many photos that year, probably because things were bleak and depression is often accompanied by a lack of interest in the otherwise habitual passions of day-to-day life. I was able to find one photo I tried to take of a scene outside the window of my bedroom, but I had accidentally left the flash on.††† This photo survives as an excellent metaphor for the overall tone of my life at that moment.

²⁸ Nostalgia is a real mixed bag for me. I typically don’t get much joy out of going through childhood photos or home videos, and find it difficult sometimes to listen to music or watch movies from earlier times of my life. It’s something about the tightening in my chest, like a hole opens up

and gets squeezed gently as a way to let me know “You don’t live then anymore.” I try to keep my thoughts about “the good old days” vague. Anything too sharp and specific just hits me in a real strange way, and the longing tends to outweigh the fondness. The past and the future are two things that just keep me distracted from the present. It’s unavoidable though, reliving old experiences; so many of the things you do now are continuations of something you were doing then. So for me, there has to be a way to reconcile that dissonance, the push between the need to remember-and-be-grateful and move-on-it’s-over.

²⁹ Appendix - *fig 23*

³⁰ I’ve inherited my dad’s anal retentiveness. It’s something to do with the genetics of my paternal family. All of the men on my dad’s side are real systematic and particular. I’m actually on the mid-to-lower end of that spectrum^{****} and I still find myself imposing order in many aspects of my life, creative processes included. The body of work I spent the past couple years expanding upon relies on a series of systems working in tandem to produce a finished image. It starts with the aforementioned photographs, most oftentimes spontaneous candid shots, but sometimes more posed (and *composed*) when the lighting/setting/subject calls for it.

When the camera is spent and ready to be disposed of, I get the film developed and then scan the prints digitally. I sometimes use image-editing software on my computer to crop the scanned photos into a more

^{****} Appendix, *fig. 24* (It should be noted that I drew and re-drew this graph several times on paper to get it to look just right, finally realizing it needed to exist in a more impactful and physical form, at which point I drew it on my studio wall in charcoal, then re-drew it on a separate wall because I didn’t get it quite right again and didn’t want too many erasure smudges. It should also be noted that I made those erasures by spitting on the wall and scrubbing it with a sock I found on the sidewalk last year, so I guess it all evens out)

desirable composition, focusing on the features or arrangements of the light and figures that I think produce the most visually and narratively engaging image. My goal is to have recognizable human traits without giving too much detail and information as to exactly what was going on at the time the photo was taken. In my earlier works, I would reduce the resolution of the image into a highly pixelated grid, but I've found that I can achieve the same level of information loss in the way I handle the paint. The amount of distortion serves to move the paint between recognizable image and areas of almost pure abstraction. The aim of the image disruption is to create two distinct viewing experiences: A vignette of a clear-enough figurative portrait when viewed from across the room, and an experiential field of color and material when viewed up close.

Once the image is prepped I use another process in my editing software called "threshold." This filter breaks down each pixel of the image into stark black or white, and the line between the two can be shifted by adjusting numerical values. When the dividing line is set all the way to the right, the image is fully black, and as the line moves left, the image begins to fill in with white, small increments at a time. I mirror this digital process on the canvas to achieve my image; I start with an off-white blob of paint as the screen starts black (with the line at the far right). The first areas to appear as the line moves left is painted in with this base color. As the line moves further and the screen fills with more white, I mix in a second color, slowly darkening the blob of paint with each successive decrease in lightness. The result is a gradient that occurs throughout the painting which uses light as its catalyst and map. When the line has been moved all the way to the left, the whole canvas has been filled in.

At first, this was where I would end the paintings. However, after doing these for many months, I realized that further manipulating the paint once the canvas is full can add a great deal to the sense of depth and distortion that I want these works to achieve. Oftentimes, this whole process would take place over the course of a day. I would hole myself

up in my studio and “bust out a painting,” so I wouldn't have to worry about my paints drying on the palette or becoming too closed-up to work back into on the canvas. In some ways my work suffered from this approach, and I found that adding poppyseed oil to my paints and taking more time with each piece gave me a lot more breathing room, and more of an ability to really step back and figure out how each piece could be activated by slowing down or speeding up the tempo of the brushstrokes or the strength of the contrast throughout the composition. Sometimes I'll still do a whole painting in a day, but only if I don't feel rushed.

³¹ I remember one such song being the twice-Grammy-nominated “Mercy” by Kanye West featuring Big Sean, Pusha T, and 2 Chainz, off the compilation album *Cruel Summer*. The opening verse, performed by Big Sean, goes as follows:

“Okay, drop it to the floor, make that ass shake.
Whoa, make the ground move, that's an ass quake.
Built a house up on that ass, that's an ass-tate.
Roll my weed on it, that's an ass tray.”

³² I love taking a nap in a moving car during the day.§§§§ The light and the sound keep me at this kind of half-awake, so that I hear the noises happening around me, but they're brought to life in a surreal other context in these warm and confusing dreams. Then, when I wake up, I'm somewhere else. When I wake up, I'm not alone. It's nice to wake up and not be alone.

³³ Appendix - *fig. 27*

§§§§ Appendix - *fig. 25, 26*

³⁴ The “river of light” reference comes from a cartoon called Mushi-shi, which is an anime adaptation of a manga by the same name. It’s a wholly pleasant show to watch - the music is quiet and minimal, the characters all speak in very even tones, and the plot is never overwhelming. It’s almost like ambient television.

I’m interested in ways that art outside of music can obtain this quality, from cartoons (like Mushi-shi), to films (like, perhaps, Denis Villeneuve’s *Enemy*), to video games (consider Nintendo’s Animal Crossing franchise). I’d like to think that my paintings have the art attribute of ambient-ness.

³⁵ My favorite thing about Sappho is how she repeatedly described the Earth as being “black.” Also, “Black Earth” is the name of a great Weekend Nachos song, off the 2011 album *Worthless*.

³⁶ So far in my life, I’ve only ever been sober. I wonder sometimes to what degree, if any, it has an impact on my ability to take in and, more pointedly, produce information. I don’t feel like it makes me any better at absorbing and retaining knowledge, fiends and family members will attest to the fact that I’m as much of an absent-minded space-case as many users. Knowing this, I guess sometimes I use sobriety as a tool to keep me as grounded as possible in my immediate environment in an effort to most accurately understand things exactly as they are. I would like to add that I don’t view sobriety as a tool that everyone should necessarily utilize as much as I do. Many artists do great work under the influence of mind-altering substances, some would even swear they’d be creatively useless without it, and I have no interest in taking that away from anyone. People have told me that drugs and alcohol could actually make my paintings better, and that I’m robbing myself of a potentially more expansive visual language by staying dry. Maybe that’s true! But at least right now, I’m not interested in the potential products of my brain functioning at an elevated (or lowered) state. On top of that, I know that

I'm a person with tendencies that lean towards addictive personality behaviors, (I've had issues in the past with compulsions/addictions involving food, video games, and orgasms) so substance abuse is a very real possibility. Plus all beer smells like piss to me and breathing smoke seems like it would hurt my lungs.

³⁷ If we understand that the information we take in as a constant stream during all of our conscious moments as being what shapes our points-of-view, we can also assume that our output as human beings (artistic or otherwise) is most likely a direct reaction to the way the world has treated us. The difficult part of being a creative person is trying to make this reaction translate itself into a painting, performance, comic strip, fictional alphabet, antler-handle bottle opener, ceramic cup, etc. that reflects the inner affected self in a satisfactory-enough way. We're oftentimes limited by our proficiencies, material availability, time availability, work ethic, etc.

³⁸ At the very least, I'm out to make art that I *like*. I ask myself, "What's a painting I'd like to see?" Shouldn't this be why any artist makes work? I'm not sure, I haven't asked them all, but I can't imagine looking at a piece and comfortably thinking "Well it's not for me, but I'll make more like it." Ultimately, if it fills a need for me, however highly personal and easily misunderstood, ***** that's all I can really ask of myself.

***** I lifted the phrase "highly personal and easily misunderstood" from the band Self Defense Family (written, at the time, under the name End Of A Year). The phrase appears in the song "Composite Character" off the 2010 album *You Are Beneath Me*, the lyrics of which are a long list of things you have to do to "best enjoy this album" and "best understand the material." The line commands the listener to "have highly personal and easily misunderstood goals," which is good advice for any creative-type.

³⁹ No art-practicing individual is immune to artist block. Sometimes your spirit seizes up and it seems like there's nothing you can do to shake the juice loose from your fingertips. Luckily, there's always a course of action. Here's what I do combat the stoppage:

a. Talk to someone. Your community (however you define it, however artistic it may or may not be) is one of the most useful resources at your disposal. Sit down and chat with a fellow artist, whether in your studio or their living room or a public park. Ask your square-ass normie friend what they think of your newest work. Getting a fresh perspective can sometimes be just the thing to spark your next step. If it sounds cliché, it's cliché for a reason.

b. Indulge in other art forms. Music, movies, comic books, whatever else you're into, really get into it. I've had paintings come directly from films, where I had to scramble for the remote and rewind and move frame-by-frame until I hit the image that struck me exactly, for documentation and note-taking. And what type of person can't be moved into some sort of momentum through music? If you think you're that type of person, I'm sure you just haven't found the type of song that gets you going. I've found that longer, more repetitive songs (usually, but not always, with some amount of reverb and distortion^{††††} in the instrumentals) give me the best dose of creative mojo (which makes sense considering my painting process, the endurance-style run at an image, the often repetitive nature of the mark-making, and the fuzzed-out

†††† I often like to think of my paintings as looking like a they've been plugged in to a reverb pedal. I like shoegaze well enough. I wouldn't say it's my favorite music, but my work almost reads to me as the visual equivalent of the genre. I mean, they certainly don't move enough to be punk. Definitely not metal. Almost, but thankfully not quite, emo. The level of fuzz, emotional sincerity (as well as subduction), and slow-to-mid tempo reads Nothing's *Tired of Tomorrow* to me.

aesthetic quality of the finished product). Either that, or I'll listen to an improv comedy podcast. Some songs I'd recommend:

1. "Like A Shadow, Like Shackles"
by Sabertooth Zombie
2. "Night Loner" by Destruction Unit
3. "I Believe" by the Buzzcocks^{####}
4. "Dingo Fence" by Self Defense Family
5. "Doom" by Bongripper
6. "Guitar Trio" - Rhys Chatham
7. "Deathface" by Some Girls
8. "Apology" by Weekend Nachos
9. "Burden" by Old Man Gloom
10. "Music for 18 Musicians" by Steve Reich

c. Make bad art. So much of an artist's inability to move forward with work stems from the belief that they're not ready to meet their own wants and expectations. If you disregard expectations and kick your standards through the basement and just *produce* something, after enough of an effort you'll make something worthwhile that acts as a jumping-off point. Time can't be wasted if you're creating.

⁴⁰ Appendix - *fig. 28*

⁴¹ Appendix - *fig. 29*

This was the song that made me realize how much I like repetition in music. The first time I heard it was on the XM radio of the large empty main hall of Jackson's Lodge, the campground my family spent most of our summers at in my youth. The line "There is no love in this world any more" repeats at the end for several minutes, and I remember sitting dumbfounded with my sketchbook, hoping desperately that the song would never end.

⁴² Appendix - *fig. 30*

⁴³ When I was getting my BFA, I wasn't a painter; my focus was in sculpture. In fact, the "3D Kids" and the "2D Kids" had a fun fake rivalry with one another (which even the respective faculty played along with). For my senior show, I did a three-part sculpture series about animal worship. The largest piece, and one that took me the whole academic year to complete, was a faux-bronze sculpture of an ouroboros (a snake eating its own tail) that stood (on its own) just over five feet tall (on its wooden stand it reached roughly seven feet in height). Without going too deep into the process, I built the sculpture first in plaster and then made a two-piece mold of it, which I cast in a fiberglass-reinforced two-part liquid plastic mixed with bronze dust. When the whole thing was fixed together, I painted it with an additional coat of bronze-infused paint, and then rained an oxidizing liquid over it to make it look like it had been dripped on in a cave for centuries. I was *very* proud of the piece, and it secured me an A+ for the year in my studio practice.

After graduation, I had this massive cumbersome sculpture that I ended up stuffing in the basement of Crime City. When I moved out of that house, having no use (or maybe more importantly, no space) for the piece, I left it in that basement to pay tribute to the next group of residents. I later learned that one of those people was an acquaintance of my friend (and fellow former Crime City resident) Katelyn. Katelyn informed me that between the giant metal snake idol and the altar of animal bones that Joe had arranged down there, one of the more Christ-friendly of the new tenants was at least a little off-put, and wanted to bless the house with holy water and maybe get it exorcised.

⁴⁴ Shedding the expectations I had of my own work allowed me to use my academic year of 2015/2016 as a time of material exploration. I was low on funds, low on direction, and ended up having to improvise with some of my materials, both out of necessity and out of artistic curiosity. I

had no idea what would work, what would fail, or if any of it could be the key to unlocking my goals and process. What I ended up learning through all of these non-traditional painting avenues was that traditional painting is what satisfies me the most. I want to make paintings on stretched canvas, with clean edges, to be hung on a white wall and looked at with a slow and evaluative eye. My panels tend to be three inches or so thick, to elevate the sense of the painting as a gallery object. The canvas that is stretched around the wood is dyed gray to neutralize the color, and the sides are left unprimed to emphasize the materiality of the linen. The word “austere” comes to mind, thanks to a conversation I had with painter Lance Winn.

⁴⁵ In the summer of 2016, I went white water rafting for the first time, and was shoved out of the raft by a teenager. It was great. I was on the trip as a supervisor from Camp Birch Hill, the summer camp that I attended when I was a teenage boy and returned to as a young adult to work as a counselor. It can be hard to explain just how important summer camp is to me. It’s a part of my life that’s deeply rooted in the core of who I am, like a berry bush sprouting out of my skin, lush with ripe red fruit, roots weaving in and out of muscle tissue and around bone, sustaining me from within and without.

Before I ever went to camp, I had a feeling it was a beautiful thing. There was a reality show on the Disney channel that aired between 1998 and 2001 called Bug Juice. It followed the lives of a group of adolescents who went to an overnight camp, became close friends, and learned lessons about teamwork and growing up and probably like archery or bracelet weaving or whatever. I would watch the show and imagine what my life would be like if I could be friends with those kids. They seemed to have a very particular type of friendship, a hyper-specific camaraderie that I could observe but not necessarily relate to. I wanted to feel that way, so wholeheartedly united in both their shared freedoms and their strife.

In 2005 I was struck with great fortune, and my parents got me into Camp Birch Hill for my Christmas present. I had found this camp by searching online, and decided on this one as being my top choice because they had a rock wall, water trampoline, and paintball course. When summer finally came, I got dropped off, not knowing anyone, and was quickly greeted by my bunkmate Alec, who recognized me as a first-timer and put forth a special effort to warmly welcome me to camp. He also went on to become a counselor there, although we never lucky enough to be working there concurrently. I received a letter from him just this past summer. Halfway through my second week there, I called my parents for the first time (we were only allowed contact with home upon special request) just so I could ask them if I could stay for another two weeks (I couldn't). My brother would later tell me that when I came home, I was a completely different person. I used to be a shy kid. I kept to myself, didn't crack jokes, and stuck to my Game Boy§§§§§§ or spent time alone outside. After only one summer at Birch Hill, I bloomed into the truly self-celebrating weirdo that I am. I remain very close with many of the people I went to camp with.

§§§§§ It's obvious to me that I've gotten a great deal of aesthetic inspiration from the video games I grew up with. Not as much the console games on the Playstation and N64, but the handheld ones. December 25th, 1998, I received a Game Boy pocket with a copy of Pokemon Blue and Super Mario Land. I have since been fascinated with 2- to-16-bit graphics, particularly employed by various Game Boy systems, but also the NES, SNES, and Neo Geo Pocket consoles. I used to hold magnifying glasses up to the screens of these devices, and recreate the graphics in Microsoft Paint, combining images in different ways or altering the colors. Although retro video game graphics don't have much (if anything) to do with my studio practice, it's very definitely what got me interested in the microdigital image, and continues to be a source of artistic stimulus.

Summer 2016 was the first time in my six summers at that camp that I went on the white water rafting trip, which happens several times over the course of the season. One of the boys from my cabin, a 15-year-old kid from Ireland, discreetly asked our river guide if it was safe to push me off the raft, and gave me a solid shove when I wasn't looking. The water of the Kennebec River was refreshing and clear, winding swiftly through beautiful green mountains in a section of Maine rural enough to make the act of grocery shopping a day-long expedition. I laid back in my life vest and tried to soak in as much color as I could. A thought ran through my head that I've had more times than I can count or remember: "I'd like to paint this."

⁴⁶ I've done a lot of peeing outside. I grew up in northern New Hampshire, in a town called Colebrook. I lived on a dirt road, I couldn't see my neighbors' houses from my yard, and my graduating class in high school was 34 students, all of whom I knew well, having been in school with most of them since Kindergarten. The nearest fast food was 45 minutes outside town, and the nearest movie theater was about an hour. There were pros and cons to living in such a rural area, but overall I'm grateful for the environment I spent my formative years in. It's hard for me to be away from a rural setting for too long, and oftentimes the thing that motivates me to work on art is the presence of a wild landscape or other natural splendor. I can't help but want to pick up a paintbrush whenever I see a good sunset or a fat stack of clouds. Still bodies of water, foggy mountains^{*****}, a rotting fence on a low hill, all these things drive me straight into the work-making mood, despite the fact that the majority of my work is figurative. I just get stirred by such a beguiling lack of humanity, and I become driven to somehow attempt to

^{*****} "Foggy Mountain" is a great Algernon Cadwallader song, off their 2011 album *Fun*.

embody that quietly thrumming+++++ awe in my bones. I think someday when I get tired of painting people I'll end up doing a lot of landscapes.+++++

⁴⁷ Petrichor (n.) the smell that accompanies rain, especially after a period of hot, dry weather.§§§§§§

⁴⁸ Do you think cavemen picked at scabs? Would they volunteer that bloodshed, dismiss a survival instinct when the primal titan tightens its grip, scratch that itch and drip that crimson nectar? You'd better believe it, because to yearn is to yearn and insects that molt their skin came before and will stay long after. But It's a real pain in the ass, if you ask me, to have to scratch it off and cast it off and never even get to eat your past and drain every mineral from the marrow. Your dead cells are a buffet, so consume yourself ad nauseum and in perpetuity or until the teeth rot and the wheels fall off and the bedrock gives way to a pit so deep you starve before you hit the bottom. You need to adapt. You need to telescope those limbs, sprout legs from heels and arms from palms, chutes down to hell and ladders up to heaven so you can kick the devil in the ass and slap god across the face. While you wait, get a big metal pot. Wring the sweat out of your skin. Drop in your scabs, collect the dust from your apartment, pick the dead hairs off your pillow and find the toenails left under the sink. Build a fire and boil it all down. What's left but salt, iron, and carbon? What signals can be found in the smoke? What is gained? Survival is a contract your parents forged your signature on.

+++++ "Thrum(ming)" is probably my favorite word. Some other notable favorites include: corporeal, terminus, umbra, crux, crestfallen, iniquity, squall, godforsaken, noncore, nonesuch, ire, dearth, dross, and ichor.

+++++ Appendix - *fig. 31, 32, 33, 34*

§§§§§§ Appendix - *fig. 35, 36*

⁴⁹ I'm really not a fan of New York City.***** People have told me that it's the best place for an artist to really make a go at their craft. That may be so, but I need something more than career incentives to survive for more than a few months in a giant concrete tomb full of noise and garbage. To be fair, it's not just New York. Most major American cities are places I've only been able to tolerate for short periods of time. I like to see wild animals and thickets of green and a goddamn natural horizon line to feel comfortable in a living situation. I bet if I lived full-time in New York, all of my creative energy would just trickle out of my nose onto the hot wet asphalt and evaporate into the screaming air. If those streets could talk they'd probably never stop complaining, crying themselves to sleep on smoggy afternoons while broke young romantics step on each other's shins racing to be first in line to shout into a gutter. The land of opportunity for those of you who drink black coffee or find other ways to reject pleasure, choosing misery in hopes of company. The Big Apple, where worms can expect to be bit in half.

The best part of the city is the giant white flag that Jasper Johns painted.†††††† I can stand in front of it all day, investigating the layers of pallid gesture. Was he waving this flag to surrender to the steel and concrete? Was his will spent, squeezed out like a tube of titanium white by the wheel of a subway? Or am *I* surrendering to the *paint*, a role

***** See "New York's Alright If You Like Saxophones" by Fear off the 1982 album "The Record" for a humorous take on what it means to enjoy life in NYC. It's a pretty rad song as well.

†††††† Jasper Johns has been one of my favorite painters for a number of years. Seeing *White Flag* at the Met(ropolitan Museum of Art) was a big moment for me in deciding what kind of painting I wanted to do. My work isn't tied to the ideas of symbols and icons like a lot of his, but the treatment of material and of a painting as an art object really struck a chord with me.

reversal allowing me to rest, forget the din of the Great White Grid, and breathe as if I sat, artless and alone, by a still pond in New Hampshire?

⁵⁰ The idea of open or negative space, the lack-of-form-as-form in a piece of visual art, has always been a major inspiration in my own work. Why is it that I'm drawn to this method of occupying a picture plane? I imagine it has at least a little to do with my being a bit of a contrarian. There must be part of me that gets a kick out of liking something for how much of it is nothing. Aesthetically, there's so much weight acted on both the form in the space and the viewer when formlessness takes over a composition. Even beyond that though, is the implication of a mostly-empty image. I think in painting this concept carries even more meaning, due to the deliberate nature of constructing a complete image from scratch, and in this case dedicating time and material and space to constructing the *lack* of an image.

What is it that motivates someone to give their audience so much vacancy to deal with? I like to think of it as a bit of a challenge set by the artist. Whenever I'm faced with a creative person who makes it clear in their work that the satisfaction of the viewer means very little to them, or better yet, that the satisfaction of the viewer is a *nuisance* to them, I'm filled with joy. I don't know why, but few things thrill me more than an artist who hates their fans, striving for audience alienation.#####

This past September I was able to see one of my all-time favorite bands, Pissed Jeans, for the first time. The Pennsylvania-based punk outfit aims to make music that's off-putting for the listener. Their singer Matt Korvette said in an interview with Tony Rettman for Blastitude, "...we just wanted to bludgeon the listener will dull, monotonous droning rock music that just sucks the energy out of you, the musical equivalent

At the bottom of the liner notes of Drug Church's 2015 LP *Hit Your Head*, there is a message that reads "If you weren't completely happy with your purchase of Hit Your Head by Drug Church, please let us know. Your unhappiness gets us off."

to watching a toilet flush.” When I saw them at the Brooklyn Bazaar, he opened the set by declaring (twice) that Brooklyn is the “playground of the rich,” and later in the set said that the dudes in the mosh pit were available in case any ladies wanted some company, that these guys were all certainly single, and would otherwise be “going home alone tonight.” He wore a football jersey (team sports are a big no-no for punkers) and when his microphone cut out during “False Jesii Part II” (one of their most popular songs, and my personal favorite\$\$\$\$\$\$), made no attempt to fix the problem. All in all, it was one of the best sets I’ve ever seen, and totally reinigorated my faith in live music.*****

\$\$\$\$\$\$ If I had to pick any one song to be my “theme song,” it would be this one. Lyrically, it’s from the perspective of a person who recognizes a myriad list of things they could do in order to improve their social standing and be more likable, but even though it’s an achievable goal, they opt out (the repeating line throughout being “But I don’t bother”). Then the chorus, rather than having lyrics at all, is a string of animalistic snarls. Musically, it kind of epitomizes my taste - noisy, mid-tempo, groovy, and pleasantly aggressive.

***** Going to shows has been a major part of my life since I was 13 and my parents took my brother and I to see No Doubt open for Blink 182. Since then, I’ve attended hundreds of live music events, most often accompanied by my brother. He and I have bonded over music more deeply than probably anything else, and many of my fondest adolescent memories involve he and I driving hours in his shitty Pontiac Sunfire, making jokes and listening to an iPod through an FM radio transmitter, on our way to stand in a hot crowded room with a bunch of other weirdos, watching still more weirdos sweat and perform and make our lives that much more worth living. Sadly, being in a touring band can take a little of the shine off the concert experience, spending night after night watching the same type of people watching the same type of people. For a while, and still now sometimes, going to a show can even seem like a chore. Like, do I really need to watch another d-beat crustpunk band? However deep down, the answer is, eternally, yes.

I'm not saying that Pissed Jeans and Robert Ryman are a one-to-one comparison, but there's something to be said about the way they both seem to cater (at least a little bit) to those who "get it" and hock a bit of a proverbial loogie in the eyes of those who "don't." Even in a situation where I'm the latter, if I get the sense that I have the *potential* to be the former, I'm in. Of course much of this work is genuine as well; there's something legitimately beautiful about the way an all-white painting radiates off the wall and into the air, and Pissed Jeans has written some really catchy hooks and compelling riffs. Know that if you see a large section of one of my paintings filled with color but without form, it's mostly an aesthetic choice made to emphasize weight and evoke a sense of lack. But also it's a little bit of spit.

⁵¹ I've never been one to place much weight on how "important" a piece of artwork is. And I apologize in advance, because I'm about to spout some pretty uninspired takes on pop culture in an effort to draw a larger conclusion. Let's talk specifically about music for now, as it's maybe the easiest art form in which to find a universal narrative. There are a lot of people who have questionable taste in music^{††††††††} and Imagine Dragons is proof of that. They're one of the most empirically uninteresting bands

^{††††††††} We can define "taste" as it applies to art as something more concrete for the sake of creative discussion, an otherwise typically subjective conversation. Just like with food, art has attributes that comprise an experience greater than the sum of its parts. In order to have a "good" taste in music, it helps to be exposed to a lot of it, and to have actively listened to it in an effort to absorb and understand what it is that makes music complex, to know when something sounds tinny (or tastes acerbic) or when the percussion clashes with the synth atmosphere (or when the sweetness of the citrus overpowers the earthy fragrance of the lentils). If someone has heard very little variety of music, and doesn't have the language necessary to discuss or identify musical properties, we can ascribe to them the quality of having objectively bad taste.

currently making music and they're a household name. Again, I recognize how I sound right now, like some sort of adolescent try-hard who wants everyone to know just how "alternative" they are. Shitting on pop music isn't edgy. I get that. And I don't disparage someone for being into it! The crux of this train of thought is, how can we trust something based solely on influence, when that influence exists because of a response from a majority group of people, whose tastes and preferences we can observe to be oftentimes categorically "iffy?" If everyone loves something, it certainly can't be challenging, but that's not the end of the world; art doesn't necessarily have to be challenging to be "good." However, the almost ubiquitous appeal of contemporary pop music *relies* on an audience's inability to feel a real way about it, that is to say, it's successful in the way it *fails to succeed* in important ways: provocation of new thought, of **conflict**, etc. Lots of people like accessible art and some like to dance, and that's cool! And for all those people, there are the artists who would rather crank out studio hits than work in a cubicle or on a construction site (and who can blame them, really?*****).

Try not to feel like I'm casting aspersions from an ivory tower here, this series of thoughts isn't so much meant to serve as judgement on the tastes of others as it is meant to serve as justification for my own tastes which have historically come under fire with some frequency. Ultimately, what I'm trying to get across with this tirade is this: No one has any *obligation* to enjoy art that is of great historical and/or social significance, because there's a good chance that the people who determine this level of significance *didn't/don't have good taste*, in either an objective sense or, admittedly more likely, a subjective sense (they're just not thrilled by the same types of art as historical tastemakers). But what's more, art history (like human history) has been written and

***** I would much rather make art I didn't really care about than be a custodian again. Sadly I'm not trained enough to get work as a studio musician. I begrudge no artist for "selling out." It beats a desk job.

maintained by the ruling class, and almost exclusively serves its own type. This means that people of color, women, the uneducated, and other underrepresented groups are absent in the annals of Western Art History as we understand it. Obviously, this is a sad, sad heap of bullshit. Think of all the great art we aren't taught because old white dudes have always loved themselves too much.

⁵² Appendix - *fig. 37, 38*

⁵³ My interests in terms of my paintings lie in memory, as a documentation system as well as a lens through which we can view and understand our thoughts and feelings about ourselves and the world around us. More specifically, I'm interested in exploring and exploiting the way images and memories deteriorate and shift, becoming changed from the original happening, and creating a unique new internal instance, another lens on a stack that keeps getting higher as time passes. These experiences and the memories created by them are like fruit. While we're living in a moment, our feelings about it are sharp and fresh, tart like a crabapple - unripe and unobserved. After the moment is over, we're given time to reflect and gain a deeper understanding of how we were impacted. Keep moving forward and we can identify lasting effects and lingering feelings that we might never have predicted. The moment is ripening, swelling with an understanding and appreciation, the sharpness of our emotions rounding out and becoming more palatable. We reach a pinnacle, a point of full emotional maturity, be it appreciation or disapproval but always coupled with an objective understanding achieved through time. This moment happens at different times for everyone; some people will prefer the earlier epoch of heightened emotional involvement, whereas others (like myself) seek a more soft drone in their guts. On a long enough timeline however, all fruit must rot. The more distance we put between ourselves and a moment, the more detail we lose, and the less we feel. Eventually, we might forget it ever

happened, although important things tend to stick with you and leave at least a seed or root system. With my paintings, I try to embody the peak ripeness as I feel it, a low-level state of comfort or a faint case blues, an image not fully gone but not quite there, something that takes a moment to gel^{§§§§§§§§} and another to slip away again.

⁵⁴ I don't know what it is about old stuff (I apologize for the broad and reductive term (kind of)), but I really have a hard time getting into it. History class, classic rock, Renaissance painting... I would rather experience something that I feel is relevant to *my* life and the world around *me* and the context in which *I* exist (which of course reads as criminally self-important but we're talking about the art that *I'm* experiencing with *my* senses so of course it is). I recognize that so much artwork from every era of recorded history deals with themes that are timeless and relevant to me and very possibly everyone, but the distance created by time is a gap that my interest has a hard time bridging.

The most egregious (according to others) example of this is my dislike of the Beatles. I've listened to their music extensively (I even took a class in undergrad called Avant Rock, about a third of which was dedicated to listening to and studying their catalog and progression) and for me, a lot of their output is tolerable at best, often going full-on boring. The most logical comparison I can make is to Superman.

Superman was the first comic book superhero, introduced during depression-era America. He's strong and can fly and is very handsome,

^{§§§§§§§§} You know how when you're lying down unmoving and in the dark for long enough, parts of your body will melt together and you can no longer tell where one extremity ends and the other begins? So you lie there, trying to guess where the line between your legs is exactly, and when you're finally confident with your guess, you move your muscles just a little bit and the full awareness of your body snaps back into focus, and you realize that you were wrong about the borders of your own thighs? That's how I want my paintings to feel.

and he represented an ideal for the country that was much-needed during a time of such economic strife. The Beatles were the first British rock-and-roll band to have major television appearances in the States, and they came into popularity during another period of socioeconomic turmoil, the 1960s. Their music was catchy and they had edgy (for the time) personas and were all very boyishly charming, and their lyrical messages reflected a type of love and positivity that young people in America couldn't help but soak up. Just as Superman would forever change the face of comic books as a medium, the Beatles would forever change the face of music as a medium. They would both go through several iterations, and both still carry on today, finding new ways to produce fresh on-brand content.

Of course Superman wasn't a completely original concept; the hyper-idealized humanoid was also seen in the form of Nietzsche's Übermensch, the Beatles' equivalent being some combination of Elvis and Buddy Holly. But do I really need to read a comic about some strong, handsome, white dude? Do really I need to listen to a safe pop song about hand-holding?***** I'd rather read Mike Mignola's *Hellboy* (a beautifully-illustrated and dark comic series about a demon who was raised by humans and regularly combats mythical creatures and deities from around the globe) or listen to the new Show Me The Body album (*Body War*, a sludgy hardcore punk record with a shouty, almost East Coast hip-hop vocal style). I'm not diminishing Superman or the Beatles' level of influence on their respective mediums. But like I mentioned, being popular and being interesting are not mutually inclusive. I understand that a lot of this has to do with preference rather than (objective) taste, but I can't help it. I like what I like. That being said, *Snow Storm: Steam-Boat off a Harbor's Mouth* by J.M.W. Turner is one of the most beautiful paintings I've seen. And that dude's dead as fuck.

***** Let's face it, the lyrics to the Beatles' "I Want To Hold Your Hand" off the 1964 album *Meet The Beatles!* are laughably whack.

⁵⁵ Allegedly.

⁵⁶ Allegedly.

⁵⁷ As much as I enjoy talking shit about tradition and history as it applies to visual art, the fact of the matter is that my main gripe with the Western Art History Institution is the way it's all formatted to dictate how I'm supposed to think and feel. Putting aside the didactic row of pedestals that all of the big names have been placed on, I actually am interested, on a different sort of level, about how one school of thinking bleeds into a puddle and materializes into a new "-ism," and understanding this kind of context enriches my personal museum/gallery experience. All art has these types of contexts; none of it was made in a vacuum, and influences/ environments can be an interesting part of understanding the "why" of art that doesn't rely on technical proficiency (that is to say, things that are more "conceptual").

Honestly, I'm pleased by the thought of considering my work as a piece of a larger lineage, complete with context and influences. Painting as a medium is important to me, and there are of course painters whose work has inspired and impacted my own. The paintings that I do now are about image degradation (see Gerhard Richter and J.M.W. Turner), neutrality, material, and slowness (see Ad Reinhardt, Kazimir Malevich, and Robert Ryman), color (see Helen Frankenthaler, Mark Rothko, Ellsworth Kelly), to a certain extent the portrait in a technological era, (see Chuck Close), and materiality as integral to the product (see Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns).†††††††† Despite having a clear-enough grasp on my influences and preferences when it

†††††††† Here's what just happened: Earlier in this body of text I disavowed the structure of Western Art History for revolving so heavily around white men. Then, while listing the artists who have influenced my own work, I gave names almost exclusively of that aforementioned demographic. I don't really have a resolution, just wanted to point it out.

comes to painting, I don't think I'll be able to know until decades from now if my art was part of some sort of contemporary zeitgeist, as it's impossible to tell what's going on within the Cosmic Hive Mind *in medias res*.

⁵⁸ When I was somewhere in the neighborhood of eight years old, I was at my maternal grandfather's annual pig roast. I was sitting around the campfire with some friends, including the girl I had a crush on at the time. We decided it was a good point in the evening to roast marshmallows, but we didn't have adequate sticks. In an effort to impress the object of my young infatuation, I volunteered to be the one to go into the woods and find the perfect mallow-roasting branch. At one point during my search, distracted by the thought of being the Herald of the Golden Age of S'mores, I felt a sharp pain shoot into an extremity. Then another. A buzzing sound began swelling in my ears as more stings continued to pepper my body. I screamed but didn't know what to do. I couldn't run. I couldn't see. I didn't understand what was happening. Two family friends ran into the woods and grabbed me, carrying my wailing body out of the cloud of angry wasps and into the cabin of the camp, where I was laid down on a couch and stripped of my clothes. I had yellow jackets inside my shirt and my pants and my underwear, stabbing me again and again to avenge their home which I had accidentally destroyed. Laying on that couch in my Ninja Turtles skivvies, crying, I looked up and saw my crush peeking in to see what was the matter. I had never felt so mortified in my life. I don't know if she ended up making her s'mores.

⁵⁹ There's a dissonance between who I am (or at least how I present myself) and the art I produce. If you know me well, you might know that

I've used shampoo three times over the past five or so years.*****
Many of my shirts have holes or stains or patches and all of my shorts are cut-offs. I'm barefoot a lot. Showers are a twice-weekly occurrence (once-weekly if I'm too busy, thrice-weekly if there's a special occasion). Some of my numerous tattoos exist because "I thought it would be funny." I've had a mother on a sidewalk pull her child away from me, and I've been stopped by a cop because I was called in from a library as a "suspicious character." I do like to yell. I'm not the slobbiest dude that I know but I definitely don't understand exactly what kind of clothes you go to Banana Republic for.

My recent paintings on the other hand are prim and proper pieces of work. They're very slow, soft, and subdued, and they're presented on carefully-constructed wooden stretchers, with their neutral gray raw canvas sides and the paint plane taped off in smooth straight lines. I've been told they're "gallery paintings." I've been told they're "painters' paintings."***** Does this make me an Art Asshole? I can't really say. Not everything can be made with everyone in mind, although I think my work has the advantage of baseline visual gratification. But I'm not here to tell you what to think because I'm not a cop.

⁶⁰ Van Gogh's *Starry Night* is a lot like a rock and roll song that might be good if you didn't have to listen to it in truck commercials all the time. My work has been compared to impressionist and post-impressionist painting pretty frequently. I think it must have to do with the dual viewing modes. I've always resented this comparison, primarily because I arrived at this image-making mode through a completely different catalyst (microdigital imaging, film grain), so the context and processes

***** Once for my brother's wedding, once to remove an unthinkable amount of hair gel after a Halloween party, and once as I was dying my hair an iridescent teal.

***** Appendix - fig. 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45

are quite dissimilar. Maybe I'm bitter because I didn't do it first (not by a long shot) and I feel like I'd be doing these paintings whether I had ever seen a Monet or not. Maybe I'm threatened by the comparison because I don't think I could paint what they did as well as they did. More likely I just want to distance myself from all that dusty old-hat textbook gilded-frame dead-guy masterwork stuff.

⁶¹ Nicholas "Nick King" King***** was born September 17th, 1990 to parents David and Vickie King. He has one older brother, Benjamin King, born November 11th 1988. He graduated from Colebrook Academy in Colebrook, New Hampshire in 2009, from Keene State College in Keene, New Hampshire in 2013 with a BFA in Studio Art (focus in sculpture), and from the University of Delaware in 2017 with an MFA (focus in painting). He's showed paintings nationally and internationally. He's had comics and poems featured in various small-press publications. He's played bass in Young Mountain, Blood Uncle, and other projects, and has performed lead vocals in Cold Sneer, Blood Uncle, and other projects. He's also released solo projects under the name Endling, Power Word Kill as well as others. He's seen all of the continental United States. He loves (non-human) animals (his favorite being the raccoon), spicy food, air conditioning, the smell of wood smoke, and driving. He hates reality television, coffee culture, NPR, multiple myeloma, jam bands (although he loves it when a band jams), when people refer to his tattoos as "ink," and sports bars. His favorite Goosebumps book is *The Beast From The East*.

