

Taste is fallible, trends change, but I'm pretty confident about what I like. At the same time, I'm deeply conscious that what I like is not universal, or even shared by some. I fear that what I like has an audience of one (and only until I change my mind). Right now, I like bold, bright colors, large blocks and bolts of luscious teals, deep sea blues that remind certain people of deep bright unnatural pinks (fluorescence is critical) and extreme escape into red. I like pattern. I like excess. I don't mind the Rococo like thinking in terms of secrets. I have no problem with chachki. I like objects that lie about how old they are and bright white porcelain portrait busts are nice too. I like mediums I can touch processes that get stuck in my nails and take time to wash off hands. I don't mind getting paint on my shoes, though I really like my shoes. I am a materialist. I am a maximalist. For me, more is more.

But I do know what I like. I like painting, and I like painters. Most especially, the serious play of Elizabeth Murray, the encoding of Robert Rauschenberg, the immediacy of Joan Mitchell (who sadly is not also Joni Mitchell) and the gestural comedy of Amy Sillman have been largely on my mind. Also, Botticelli and Mark Rothko are irresistibly seductive and perennially hanging around. I also like lots of other people who may never have painted, but I tend to think that naming them [Virginia Woolf, Meryl Streep, Woodrow Wilson] could look messy. I know that in many ways this is already messy, and I think I'm ok with that. I like messes. When I drop a pie on the floor, when the drain backs up, when someone cries in the middle of a party (someone always is crying). I think messes can be art. And by art, I mean something I want to look at, something that makes me think about things other than the things it means for me to think about, if it means to make me think at all. I think too much. We shouldn't always be thinking. We should be improvising. We should be making it up as we go along. We should be living.

I like going to museums, of which, I've found two kinds: those that make you want to run home to your imaginary studio (likely located in Europe) and exhaust yourself making 'art.' And then, those that convince you that all the art we really need has already been made (*at this late state of the world, we may as well move to the Arctic circle and watch things melt...*). Neither of these experiences, the compulsion to do nor the belief we are done, is definitively happier than the other. They are both valid. They are both traumatic. They can both be a struggle (anything can be a struggle). They are both honest moments.

I like honesty. I believe that someone, somewhere, is telling the truth. Art is a kind of truth. Picasso likely said that. Plato too. Somewhere, sometimes, art is telling a kind of truth. Oup, hold on. Here's what Picasso actually said: "Art is a lie that tells the truth." You know, Picasso also painted. Recently, I too have been painting. Also recently, I've felt both happy and sad, eaten eggs for breakfast, worn a turtleneck once or twice and sneezed more than a few times. I paint because I can, because I like it, because I find it thrilling. That is why I do it, not because I am sure I am good at it. I am not sure I am good at anything. I am not sure what good is.

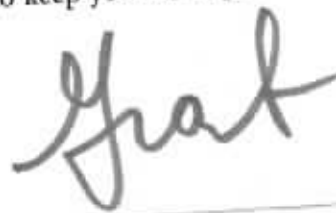
I'm painting because painting allows for all of this. I'm painting because I like saying "I'm painting," and then using feathers, because although painting implies paint, it tends to allow for quite a lot more. I like quite a lot more than paint, though I really do like paint. To me, a painting is like a memory, like a fever dream or a thought before there are words to say it. Paint may be pure thought in a tube. The kind of thoughts—a whole world of ideas—that exist outside language and elude its attempts to trace, to spell out, to read or to say. If my paintings are saying something, they are not speaking English. Paint is of this world when it is brown, but then, when it is fluorescent pink, it is a supreme abstraction, a tube of ridiculousness. It is a kind of alien, and a painting gives me a place to put my thoughts, which at times too seem foreign. A painting makes my life just a little bit easier, and just that much harder. A painting presents a kind of target. It indicates where there is work to be done, where there is life to be lived. So much is passing. Most of the time, all is lost. With a painting, I am a little less lost.

I like abstraction. Realism seems too ideal, too old. Haven't we spent plenty of time trying to get to it? Maybe we could spend a little bit more time trying to get away from it? You may look at abstraction and think, "I could do that." I like that. For when did good art become something that made you think about all the things you couldn't do? Art should be something for everyone; art should be something we all feel we can do. I like thinking that everything is a form of abstraction; that everything is, in some way abstracted and likewise, everything is a kind of realism. Think about it like this: *this is real life, we are living it.*

Abstraction isn't trying to be something, except for the fact that everything is trying to be some thing. Abstraction is trying less than other things; it is not trying to be something else, something other than what it is. Maybe abstraction is a kind of identity crisis, a very honest one where we're not lying to ourselves. I believe that we can see something in nothing and often that there is nothing to be seen in supposed somethings. Abstraction sets out to do something very simple. Good abstraction does something very complex. A good abstraction is one thing, but in it, one can see many things. I don't know where the jump occurs. I hope it does not depend on genius. I do not like the idea of genius. I hope it depends on the viewer. I hope that we can see it.

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Art should be fun. Art should wink. Art that takes itself too seriously deserves to be hung in a bathroom. Although don't get me wrong, there can be deep significance in jokes. There can be deep significance in everything (even in this cough I have right now). You just have to look at it the right way. I like it when you can see something though, even in abstraction. This is a sign to me that you are paying attention. It is important that we are paying attention. You may look at the shower drain everyday for three years, and then one day realize that you are in love with the shower drain. The next day, you may fall out of love with the shower drain, but for a moment, it was very important to you. It is important that we are paying attention. It is important we recognize these moments, before they are over. There are so many things to look at these days. I am no competition for streaming video, the weather or the human body descending a staircase (but maybe I am). So then, my first priority is to get you to look, and then to keep you looking for as long as possible.



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