



In the Studio with Aaron Garber-Maikovska. Words By James Ambrose

Firstly, I want to talk about your recent show *4 from 3 dancers* with Blum & Poe which was the fourth in a series of recent exhibitions exploring notions of fatherhood and family. What was the concept of this show in particular, and do you see this as an evolving series continuing on into 2021? with Blum & Poe

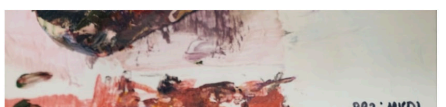
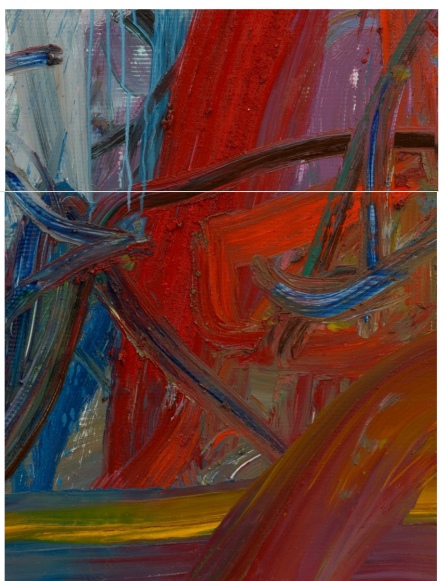
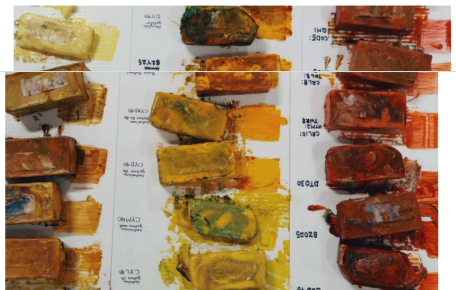
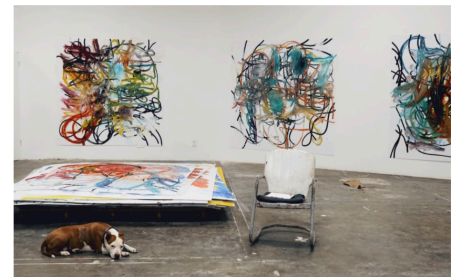
The concept is based on my obsession with being. It is simple and unrelenting. The ontology of being and collision of perceived dualities has been a singular theme for me for probably forever. The words "4 from 3" are a play on concepts such as becoming, evolving, constancy and change, basically any kind of movement, concrete or abstract. I often recite this tired expression, "We are here, and we don't know why we are here." For me, it is a source of empowerment, an exit, a zero place. Zones and spheres that overlap, overlay, drift apart, stand apart and buzz near and around each other are things that I think about. Then fatherhood is amazing because it is a bridge between the natural world and the patterned structured human world. Participation and observation of the fatherhood experience have been influential in how I think about ideas that I have always thought about. Fatherhood is like a singular multidimensional cluster quake of meandering points of elegance, shrapnel dedicated to opaque shapes and minivans. So, it's been a new experience, a lil inspiring.

When we first spoke, we discussed your formative years of skating and growing up in California, did art also play an important role in your life at this time?

Art always played an important role in my life, refuge (expression) identity x progression. However, I wasn't artful about skating, I wish I were. I was more stuck in posture. I would have been way fresher. It wasn't my power zone. However, to participate in it as a communal activity, moving on through around the urban built landscape as a giant found object, defining one's own movement against the delineated hardscape and repurposing it for another set of moves, looking for exits, alternative lines, repurposing transitions was foundational and would later inform a natural relationship in my interest in intervention. Intervention for the sake of an opening. If it's possible, to make a puncture at the same time as a healing; turning a hard surface into something sensual. The parallel being that something found is transformed, somehow elongated and curved, extended through a combo of balance and precision. The surface lines drawn, become a concrete metaphor for possibilities in movement in an emotional or psychological space (un-naming it). The method, a doubling, a repurposing of the structure and ultimately an affirmation of its existence, at the same time its obliteration of its conditioning. Moving through life, moving through the business park, moving through the "landscape" abstract or concrete. Let's call it the judo reversal upon the thing that is that thing, the attacking landscape.

At what point did know you wanted to be an artist?

I proclaimed myself an artist at a very early age, (maybe 4) it made school, or rather being a decent student, difficult.



4 from 3 dancers, Installation view, 2020, courtesy of the artist and Blum & Poe

Three red wax seals are shown, each with a small white label containing handwritten text. The labels are as follows:

- Top seal: "109 Cad Red Seal" (faint)
- Middle seal: "109 Cad Red Seal" (faint)
- Bottom seal: "109 Cad Red Seal" (faint)

Identification codes for each seal are listed to the right:

- Top seal: NAM10: QNS:TWED
- Middle seal: CRM20: AGE10: BVGMS
- Bottom seal: CRM20: QRB:DOS

The process is just having the materials ready and then improvising, I go out for a day with 1 other person. Performance day, car, cameras, tripod, co-pilot, nostalgia, enthusiasm, traveling meandering, passing, being willfully light, omnidirectional, jittery, skitter, leap flat axis play. The sites present themselves. Personally, I love vertices and horizons am/pm land, it's a rush to become absorbed into the light of sensual naiveté among a scattering of crazy-ass energy. I am looking for places that would be described as liminal, in between part open part closed, the edge of a newly developed subdivision. Suburban meets the country or desert; these sites are personally bound up in optimism the lines are very clearly delineated. These places are overtly repetitive, like fluted poly. They are places that are built to have the lowest common denominator. Someone said to me once that the most absurd thing is design, I think I understand. The reversal is affirmation, the game becomes a thank you and here I go. Thank you for the ledge, the curb, the surface, the sign, the stairs.

Well the innovation for me is to have the monitor displayed horizontally like a table, that they run off batteries so that they remain self-contained and that they are mobile. You could take them for a walk, like a companion, a dog maybe. I'm not sure why that took 20 years?

I've had monitors that would accompany my work many times, I was often put off thinking that they pushed against the exhibition not in an interesting way. I liked the idea more than the outcome. Thinking about them as stored energy, a looping horizontal diffuse energy. An index of propositions like a stored energy, twitch, glow, frosty glow--TVs not right—as documents they have been failures. What is interesting to me is the index of activity and self-contained ambiguity. The on-ness of them. Pragmatically Ya I think it took a long time due to technology and my ideas finding each other.



Photos by Angeline Shiley & Marten Elder

The performances most definitely inform the painting practice. They are a source material. I talk about them in different ways, think about them in different ways, there is a revolving entry point and exit point they remain somatic, open curious and a source whether it's enthusiasm or some kind of pulse radar fact simmer en fuego simmer check, they are ultimately subjugated into the paintings, here-in lays the axis, the art put the art into it, we established expanded field, draw the conditions within which we live, some kind of scanning and interpretation.

You have always described yourself as a painter primarily however, what is it about painting that you love?
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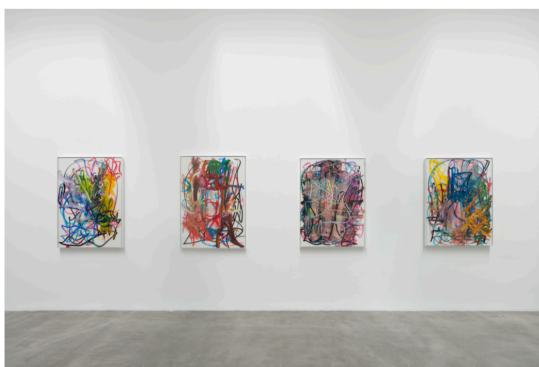
I love its ability to be a communicator. It is the language which feels connected to my kind of decision making. I love the ability to say so many things at once and its vulnerability, the distance between the act and outcome are simultaneous. I can put abstract unresolved ideas into a discrete form that is primed for engagement in that sense it feels human. And its capacity for spiritual dimension.

All of your recent series of paintings have been created primarily on fluted polypropylene. What has been your journey with this material? And what are its distinct qualities that intrigue you?

I had a vision of the material first, then I sat with it for a while. And we finally connected. The surface is supple, smooth but matte, it supports itself. There is a cushion of air sandwiched between front and back that lay in channels running parallel lengthwise. I like the way it catches the pigment. There is an agility to the material, a lightness. Fingerprint of industry, a metronome, a rhythm of the board vs rhythm of the bored. It is something that I can also handle myself in the studio at great sizes so that I do not have to have anyone around.

The oil sticks that you employ in your work are also formed by yourself from raw pigments, wax, and oil. Can you expand a little on the importance of your practice of creating these yourself? And the actual processes involved in their making?

Well, it allows me to access an infinite array of colors, and other variances like opacity, translucency, density, size weight. It's also a lot about intimacy and speed, getting to know them, if we are going on an adventure, it is important to know who is around. The innovation such as the oil bars have been important in facilitating the way in which I work so that it is as fluid as possible.



4 from 3 dancers, Installation view, 2020, courtesy of the artist and Blum & Poe

Talking a little around palette, what informs the colour choices you make in the work?

Colour is a very intuitive process for me. I index all the colours that I have made. So, I keep a robust library. I create groupings, working around colours creating variances and combinations. Flirting with some. But generally, the decisions start somewhere contrived and end up going somewhere else rather quickly. The studio is set up to maintain a certain clarity for the sake of spontaneous association.

When approaching a new work, will you have a composition in mind? Will a painting often go through numerous iterations before you are happy with it?

I always have a structure in mind and yes there are many iterations that happen through volume. My best asset is that I dedicated a large portion of my studio to storage so that I can marinate the paintings. It takes a lot of peeping and looking and thinking and choosing.

You also mentioned that routine is something that you appreciate and try to stick by, what does a normal studio day look like?

It's 5 days a week 8-12 hours a day.

Finally, I wanted to ask what are your upcoming plans for 2021?

I currently have a show at Massimo De Carlo in Milan. I'm preparing for exhibitions at High Art: Arles in the late summer and Clearing: Brussels at the end of this year.