UNTITLED

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UNTITLED

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts at Virginia Commonwealth University.

By

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Abstract

The following is an exploration of ideas and themes related to my studio work, past and present, concrete and aspirational. I approach painting as an experience of pleasure and as a mode of resistance and critique. I will discuss how my work is aligned with many of the themes found in the Pattern and Decoration movement of the 1970s. I will also identify alliances that my work has with DIY, networks, and the contemporary art scene as discussed in Lane Relyea’s *Your Everyday Art World*. I describe my mode of working in the context of "workable resistance," which Jan Verwoert defines in his essay “Exhaustion and Exuberance: Ways to Defy the Pressure to Perform” (Verwoert, 19). And lastly, I detail how my recent work embodies the concept of the singular multitude as outlined in *Being Singular Plural* by Jean-Luc Nancy.
The Pattern and Decoration movement from the 1970s was made up of a small group of artists who used décor as a critical practice, appearing right off the heels of 60s minimalism. Visually the work borrows from interior decoration, wallpaper, quilts and tiled walls and floors. Historically it is indebted to many non-western artistic traditions from places like Morocco, Turkey and Iran. Artists like Kim MacConnel and Miriam Schapiro used patterned fabrics and collaged textiles to create wild, colorful abstract forms. The work is rooted in pleasure, enjoyment, optimism, and play yet also embodies a feminist critique of painting through its elevation of décor and ornamentation, both previous targets of critical disparagement in the art world.¹ P + D, as it is also known, was a resistant practice in opposition to the machismo and rigidity of the painting movements which preceded it, Abstract Expressionism, Minimalism and High Formalism.² “[Its] artists embraced the joyful, pleasurable, optimistic and inclusive aspects of feminism, a fascinating kind of dissent in a different kind of package than most other feminist art of the day.”³ P+D came up alongside of the women’s movement, the sexual revolution, and burgeoning political activism at that time, it positioned itself between the hierarchy of high-modernism and the casualness of a decorated living room.

¹ (Swartz, 8)
² (Swartz, 12).
³ (Swartz, 30)
My own work takes cues from the formal themes present in P+D and it’s critical position. For instance, my newest paintings could be seen formally as presenting themselves as a kind of décor not unlike wallpaper. The ubiquitous image of a floral motif is derived from a commercially produced fabric print. Each painting contains its own unique entity, yet as a whole they are a quiet force harkening back to the pursuit of pleasure at work in P+D. As a group this spirit of celebration is reinforced through play with color and repetition not unlike a chant or a chorus of voices, much in the same way that P+D utilizes repeating pattern and elaborate enveloping surfaces. Scanning them quickly one can enjoy their similarity as they bleed into one another. A slower read reveals that each one is not a copy but a quotation of the others around it.

Figure 2: Untitled, crayon on unprimed canvas, 16”x20” 2013
This mirrors the way artist Joyce Kozloff meant a viewer to experience her work, like “walking through a bazaar or the streets of an unfamiliar city.”

Critically my work utilizes a form of resistance. Resistance in this sense is not in opposition to a singular entity but is a conceptual resistance, resisting pointed positioning. This hesitancy to stake a firm claim is a feminist critique of painting as it positions itself in opposition to the gendered associations in which much art historical abstract painting movements are based. This kind of reluctance can be found in many contemporary painting practices, Laura Owens, Charline Von Heyl, Jaquilne Humphries and Amy Silman are given as examples of painters who have, “in their different ways, departed from the authentic gesture of mid-century and the emptied postmodern gesture. Instead, their canvases are populated by uncertain, fake or unlocatable gestures ... their decisions around paint handling [have] become indeterminate and unknowable.” This mode of resistance at once embraces the pleasure of painting and the thinking and working through ideas with openness; it embraces adaptability and opens the work to availability and the unknown. It is with these artistic practices in mind that I want to look at my work as intertwined with the themes of adaptation, resistance and relationality.

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4 (Swartz, 21)
5 (Godfrey, 298).
Figure 3: Untitled, Crayon on Unprimed Canvas on Panel, 64"x48", 2014
In his book, *Your Everyday Art World*, Lane Relyea describes what he sees as some of the contemporary conditions of art making. He points to the rise of artists who are less inclined to be labeled by medium specificity, more apt to lay claim to “just doing stuff”.

The abandonment or blending/bending of genres is in keeping with many institutional trends of multi/inter disciplinary art schools but is also indicative of a more global phenomenon of networked availability.

Relyea describes this sort of networked availability as “all verb, no predicate. All open ended adaptability and responsiveness, no set vocation.”

Being adaptable as a painter is a sign of willingness, the thrill of the chase, following something through to its end not dragging it with you or worse behind you. While I would not categorize the work of Owens, Von Heyl, Humphries, or Sillman as “DIY” they are contemporary abstract painters who work with agency as one primary concern. Agency is a philosophical/sociological term used to describe the human capacity to make decisions, to act, to move. By this definition it could be argued that making any kind of art is the manifestation of agency performed. While that would encompass basically anything ever made (because everything involves a decision) agency as a subject is generally applied to work in which decision-making is a core idea. Painting

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6 (Relyea, 5).
7 (Relyea, 4)
8 (Relyea, 5).
and drawing are by nature extremely receptive to the concerns of agency because by their most basic definition they are receptacles of mark making, containers of applied action. In our contemporary moment abstract painting is overwhelmed with questions of action and agency. My first attempts at paintings were conceived by wrestling with the question of the initial confrontation in painting at the forefront of my mind - where to begin? Where? / How? to begin became impossible for me to answer, the solution I found was a kind of non-confrontational resistance. Beginning with a found object, like a shirt or a found fabric I allowed the object (in a sense) to exercise it’s own agency and use the information embedded in it to speak for me. Charline Von Heyl describes this well when she says, “I don’t want to make the painting, I want the painting to invent itself and surprise me.” I am still exercising this kind of non-confrontational approach in my newest work, which involves culling imagery from patterned fabric. Copying it by hand I rely on the ready-made decisions embedded in its printed surface. Persisting in this and replicating the image again and again each one becoming a quotation of the next is yet another claim to agency.

Agency, doing stuff and doing-it-yourself are all parts of a fluctuating mode of art making which follow the thinking of a Post-Fordist model of production. Post-Fordism is an economic term used to describe active working, not passive or suppressed for the sake of getting the work done but rather networked and engaged. Where under a Fordist model we were put to work, “now

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9 (Godfrey, 299)
communicating and performing of subjectivity is itself put to work.”\textsuperscript{10} These modes turn away from the factory model to champion a more hands on, small batch, “just in time” way of doing it.\textsuperscript{11} It is a mode of working which re-emphasizes the presence of the individual and expresses reluctance to being nailed down. This is expressed through re-use and ready-made materiality, the presence of the artists hand and a resistance to perfection. My own practice exercises this form of expression and operates with the kind of intentional open-endedness that Relyea describes.

The spirit of my practice allows for accumulation, spontaneity, elasticity, and embracing “mistakes,” which aligns with Relyea’s observations of the contemporary moment’s open-ended availability.Keeping myself attuned to objects and materials outside of the studio, my work employs the re-use of fabrics and found objects accumulated over time. A specific piece from 2007 entitled, \textit{Jock Rock}, made from a silk shirt, a found rug, and a rock, was one of the first paintings that I made with this kind of adaptability of material and subject in mind. Similar to many paintings I made at that time, this painting started with a shirt that I found at a second hand store. The stripes on it became the underlying structure and the first decisions in the composition. Onto the shirt I adhered a small spray painted drawing. A few days later I found a dirty rag rug outside of an auto repair shop. Even though it was filthy, I picked it up impulsively and put it in my car. In this case I was interested in going against

\textsuperscript{10} (Relyea, 5)
\textsuperscript{11} (Relyea, 9).
my better judgment of what might be considered useful and remaining open to something even disgusting. The piece sat for a few weeks as a dirty rug half stretched over a shirt. I let the work sit and allowed things to slowly accumulate before finding it’s missing piece weeks later, a chunk of concrete rock.

![Figure 4: Jock Rock, Fabric, Paper, Spray Paint, Concrete and Rug, 20”x24”, 2007](image)

My experience finding the rock was similar to the rug; I located it on a walk one day around my neighborhood. Once I had it I remember walking straight to my studio and putting it directly into the painting. It had reached an accumulative point where it was balanced and also funny, somewhere between
crotch and landscape. I value working in this way as keeps me attentive to looking and actively engaged in a continuous generative process.

In my first year at VCU I rummaged in thrift stores and created arrangements, collages and paintings with materials I found there. Many of things I made were experimental and temporary which allowed me to stretch the bounds of my practice. I made a lot of work and didn’t worry about what would become of it, simply letting things develop in a free form manner. Pieces would come and go and sometimes no one would know, it was a very elastic way of working.

Following the metaphor of elasticity, if a practice can be stretched, it can also snap or break. The parts have to be re-assembled into something new and there exists the potential for a previously unknown or unexpected thing to be created. Some of the video work I was making in my first semester at VCU was a response to being stretched in this way. I began filming myself in the act of making arrangements in the studio while systematically destroying them on camera. The build up and take down was live, a naked vantage point of spontaneity and adaptability through performance. Very few aspects of these videos were prearranged. I had a basic set-up readily available to cull ‘props’ from but there was no script and no plan. Once I turned the camera on I was performing in the moment much like improv comedy. If it were a live television broadcast it might be called “Making Mistakes LIVE!” Things would misfire, sometimes literally, like when a bag I tried to light on fire wouldn’t light, or when
I accidentally dropped an entire can of paint onto the floor, or the moment in which the arrangement totally collapsed due to tenuous structural integrity.

Figure 5: Video Excerpt, 'Still Life', 2012

Figure 6: Video Excerpt, 'Still Life', 2012
The appropriation of mistakes reminds me of a video interview where Daniel Richter is asked to talk about Tal R’s work opposite his own. In the video he is pointing to a few green marks at the bottom of one of R’s paintings. It looks as if R has tried to cover something up with these marks but has ultimately failed to do so. The marks bleed through and the color is mismatched at the bottom of the canvas; no blending-in is achieved. In the interview Richter refers
to these marks as coming from a place of “laziness and improvisation,” but goes on to say that the marks are the correct impulse because they are aware of the “intelligence of the accident.”

Richter explains that how something is achieved in painting is as important as what is achieved and that the how in painting becomes an accurate reflection of the artist’s worldview. This intuitive awareness is a perfect example of the kind of adaptability I’m seeking in my own work.

Another such instance in my own work involved a video performance where I set up drywall boards in the studio and attempted to hammer through them in order to reach a painting tacked beneath. Shoving my hands through the

12 (Tal R on Daniel Richter Daniel Richter on Tal R)
holes in the drywall I reached for the canvas and painted it blindly with Gesso and spray paint. The video did not work out because the lighting was poorly considered and the camera was positioned badly, but I did end up making a painting through the failed process of making a video.

In nature an adaptation often improves upon characteristics for evolutionary survival while in art adaptation usually involves the movement from one form to another, from a book to a movie, from a comic book to a Broadway production, etc. Improvement in the artistic sense is purely subjective and in most cases the use of adaptation is mostly experimental. In recent paintings I have been experimenting with text and letterform. These works can be seen as a way of working within this system of adaptability, unhinging known forms such as words or phrases and allowing them to become unfamiliar. With the text works, the phrase giving way comes to mind; to give way is often used to reference the collapse of something, to make a space for, to open up. But collapse is not always destructive; things collapse into one another and create new, previously unknown things. I think about writing in this instance as giving way to gesture and gestures giving way to spaces and the spaces giving way to other yet-to-be-known forms. The dead air that is created around a letterform is supportive and also defining. The marks, which fill in the forms in these works, emulate short hand gestures repeating themselves over and over, filling in space and time. Letters merge and collapse into new words and new forms. They are returned to the symbolic and build up into new structures. Language in this way
both loosens and loses meaning. They urge sound, which is itself an abstract
effort. The sound of these text works is slowed and stuttered in a movement
towards the unknown in an effort to un-know. It is in this way that they are
adaptive, they have become something that they were not before.

Figure 10: digital text drawings, 2013
Figure 11: 'Painting', acrylic and crayon on canvas on panel, 2013
Figure 12: 'Leisure Painting', crayon on unprimed canvas on panel, 2014
Figure 13: Untitled, Crayon on Unprimed Canvas on Panel, 64”x48”, 2014
As a mode of working, DIY methods can be used as tangible forms of retreat. Relyea describes these DIY forms of working as small acts of resistance, arguing that DIY, “can provide relief from the many alienations and social divisions of large scale industry, technology, professionalization, and bureaucracy.”\(^{13}\) DIY agency creates active engagement in these processes, not “passive workers.”\(^{14}\) The relief that DIY provides is akin to taking back power through taking things into your own hands. Relyea uses apartment galleries as an example of spaces that cannot be rescinded where as a government grant can be taken away.\(^{15}\) Doing it yourself relieves you and also empowers you. Engaging with leisure is not a refusal to working or thinking but is rather a critique of work, another way of working which makes use of casual and relaxed modes of being and in turn puts them to work.

The spirit of leisure is present in my thesis work, which features a body of paintings that employ a repetitive floral pattern. The beachy floral imagery conjures a leisurely state of mind, a warm cloak of vacation, an endless summer. The paintings embody the mood or vibe of leisurely-ness in both subject and materiality. My use of crayons as a primary material for these works is also a gesture of implied leisure. At the store they sit alongside colored chalk and

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13 (Relyea, 9)
14 (Relyea, 4)
15 (Relyea, 9)
markers intended for audiences at play. The crayons themselves come in a set of twenty-four so I am limited to a predetermined color palette and must play by their rules, in a sense. In many ways the use of crayons as a material is a relief; I can relax into their set of standards. Found color is then a relief from the burden of choice. My use of found shirts and fabrics in previous work can be described in light of agency but also an expression of relief. The found color of shirts and other materials provided an escape from overly complicating the initial decisions.

Some of my recent text work can also be framed in this context of relief, leisure, and play. I began with the word paintings. By removing the vowels and rearranging the letters I began to form new words. By substituting just one letter I was visually and sometimes audibly able to change the entire meaning, for instance, Paainting (two un-capitalized a’s but a capital P – infer hi to low), Paenting (art history), gnitniaP (contemporary art), Panoting (comedy), and Paunting (pretentiousness or hierarchy). I then made quite a few small drawings on paper that also played with this technique. Rearranging the text gave way to new meanings for some of the words and also created structural text mazes akin to concrete poetry that were then translated into larger paintings. The first drawing that I scaled up into a larger painting used the words Leisure Painting. The use of leisure as text in this case points directly to my desire for work to be adaptable and free. It was a pleasant surprise then, when the words leisure and
painting mixed together and words like pleasure and rising, arose from the pairing.

Figure 14: Untitled, crayon on unprimed canvas on panel, 2013 (left), Leisure Painting, crayon on unprimed canvas on panel, 2013 (right)

However, it is also important to respond to Relyea’s concern that the present DIY moment points to the wide-scale destabilization of social infrastructure. Relyea warns,

“Today’s DIY culture portrays our neoliberal world in an all too enchanting light... Today’s claims of a romantic defiance too often look past the fact that our sense of expanded agency has been purchased largely through an
aggressive shattering and collapse of the larger social structure... This is a scene that belongs not to romance but to tragedy."

I acknowledge Relyea’s concern but see the ethos of DIY adaptability not as romantic defiance but as something scraped together from the infrastructural wreckage by necessity. These adaptations are not surprising and offer a reflection of our contemporary moment, as a relief and a coping mechanism, taking on our expanded agency to build something in the midst of what remains after disaster.

This mode of working aligns itself with Rebecca Solnit’s treatise on human behavior in times of disaster. She details the amazing ability for humans to rise up amidst disaster to help their neighbor, going against assumptions that humans would be mostly self-serving under such circumstances and looks at many historical instances that prove that assumption false. She describes the phenomenon of these occurrences as a “paradise entered through hell.” Each offers the opportunity to build some-things out of no-things amidst the peril wrought by all kinds of evil, be it war or capitalist economies. Solnit eloquently describes the optimistic possibility amidst collapse.

“[It is] a paradise of rising to the occasion that points out by contrast how the rest of the time most of us fall down from the heights of possibility, down into diminished selves and dismal societies. Many now do not even hope for a better society, but they recognize it when they encounter it,

\[16\] (Relyea, 12-13)
\[17\] (Solnit, 10)
and that discovery shines out even through the namelessness of their experience. Others recognize it, grasp it, and make something of it, and long-term social and political transformations, both good and bad, arise from the wreckage. The door to this year's potential paradises is in hell."\textsuperscript{18}

Figure 15: Untitled, Crayon on Unprimed Canvas on Panel, 64"x48", 2014

\textsuperscript{18} (Solnit, 9).
In my practice, I purposefully evade creating meaning by taking aggressive either/or stances and instead rely on a model of agency that promotes a tangible in-betweenness or state of flux, which is described by Jan Verwoert as a “workable form of resistance.” In his essay “Exhaustion and Exuberance: Ways to Defy the Pressure To Perform”, Verwoert describes this “workable resistance” as something that reaches beyond the black-and-white yes and no and serves as an interrupter to high-performance culture.\(^\text{19}\)

High-performance culture is Verwoert's way of describing a part of our contemporary condition. A similar sentiment is echoed in Relyea’s description of networked agency. It’s the reason one is spread thin, overworked or struggling to stay afloat. The ability to work into and at the same time resist or opt out of this kind of high performativity hedges into utopian thinking, representing the “possibility of other possibilities” and seeks to portray a different world that is presently not existent but within reach.\(^\text{20}\) Verwoert cites artists as being especially good at this sort of interruptive and utopic thinking, using the performance artist Julius Koller as one example. Koller’s staging of “anti happenings” in the 1960s (re-painting the lines of a tennis court for example) are described as having an air of “casual insistence, but from a position quite literally

\(^{19}\) (Verwoert, 19).
\(^{20}\) (Verwoert, 26).
on the margins of a society.\textsuperscript{21} The kind of insistent resistance that Verwoert promotes creates a resistant yet productive practice.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{image.png}
\caption{Julius Koller re-drawing the lines of a tennis court}
\end{figure}

The in-between state lacks a direct assertion; it is a refusal of pointed position. Between states lend themselves to possibility and radical ways of developing new forms; they are not positioned as a wishy-washy midpoint or a bland grey area of un-decidedness but assertively and decidedly in-between. Verwoert directs us to ask, “What silent but effective forms of non-alignment,

\textsuperscript{21} (Verwoert, 24).
non-compliance, uncooperativeness, reluctance, reticence, weariness or unwillingness do we find in everyday life?”

My paintings from a year ago used this idea of workable resistance by resisting authorship and taking many forms of being. Though the scale and uniformity of my newest drawn floral canvases are more easily readable as the work of a single author they still employ a form of quiet resistance. This is exhibited through formal decisions and the figure/ground relationship employed in this body of work. The surfaces of the canvases are mostly thin, though some are slightly more layered. They exhibit a flat finish. The thinnest ones dissolve up close yet in all of them the weave of the canvas is assertively present. Drawing directly on raw, unprimed canvas stretched directly over a wooden panel, the surface gives way to the weave. The canvas insists and refuses to be covered over completely, it remains in-between in its own liminal space. Pushing heavy layers of wax into the weave of the canvas is pointless as it will sit on the surface and the build up will flake off. The two things are by nature opposed. When I applied heavy applications of wax much of it had to be scraped off leaving behind a stained canvas with the weave exposed. Upon completion the relationship between figure and ground is indeterminate, the final surface is somewhere in-between the two.

Another work also expresses this in-betweenness. It is a small canvas, about 16 x 20 inches. The words, “The Thing,” are written across the front in

22 (Verwoert, 20)
purple and orange crayon. The remaining canvas is filled in loosely around the edges of the letters in pencil and crayon. This work exhibits an in-betweenness both lexically and formally. As a painting with marks it points as an index or a sign but is also lexical in that it builds marks together and uses language to direct.

Figure 17: Studio Image, 2013

The thing to which it points could be a number of things: the object itself or the container, the idea of the painting, or the marks which at times pick up the underlying frame of the stretcher. If it does ask a question, it would be, “Where is it?” directing the viewer with a possible answer: Between.
Betweenness can also be exhibited as placelessness, drifting, or a liminal state. After I finished my undergraduate degree I mounted a collaborative show with the artist Carson Fisk-Vittori, called *Casual Object Garden and Other Material Matters*. The centerpiece was an ‘object garden’ made with small sculptures, free-style accumulations and ikebana-inspired floral arrangements. I contributed scraps, debris, and small pieces of studio junk, which we arranged into a loose grid on grey felt carpet. It resembled a floor painting or a Zen garden but also referenced the detritus that you might encounter on an aimless walk through a city.

![Japanese Zen Garden in Portland, OR](image)

The casualness we employed in this instance was more about how to arrive at something. The objects in the garden were like drifters – placeless but
self-reliant. Our use of arrangement in this show reminds me of the ways in which the P+D movement paid close attention to what was around them and drew out of that a subject. It invites the viewer to wander through as one might browse in a used-record shop hoping for the surprise of a rare find to emerge.

Fig 19: ‘Casual Object Garden’, Carson Fisk-Vittori & Michael Hunter, 2010

At the time of the show I was reading *The Tanners* by Robert Walser, which features a drifting protagonist named Simon who wanders through life. Walser’s description of Simon at the beginning of the novel aligns with the lens of assertive resistance that I employ in my work:
“Simon had to confess to himself that he was walking there looking for nothing, but he nonetheless found it expedient to assume the bearing of a seeker... He let himself go, allowed himself to drift, looking now at the ground, now up above, now to the side into one of the many shop windows, before one of which he finally remained standing, without actually looking at anything.”

Simon’s aimless wandering is reflected in my own use of the thrift store as a way of finding ‘stuff,’ things temporarily un-contextualized and placeless. Incorporating found fabrics, objects and other materials into my work keeps me receptive to looking in new ways. Garage sales, thrift stores and flea markets are liminal spaces where the objects within have been severed from any origin or original value and now exist provisionally as things that have not yet been entirely discarded. This constant cycle of momentary preservation creates an ever-evolving museum of the everyday, an indexical marketplace of leftovers. It is exactly this kind of landscape of ruin that both Solnit and Relyea draw from. Even so there is a celebratory spirit to this way of thinking, a way of reveling in the ruins.

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23 (Walser, 206).
MULTIPLICITY / RELATIONALITY

In his treatise on being, meaning, and existence, Jean-Luc Nancy asserts, “Being cannot be anything without being-with-one-another, circulating in the with and as the with of this singularly plural coexistence,” which helps explain the way my recent suite of paintings operate as singular multitudes.\textsuperscript{24} The floral paintings circulate in the with as individuals belonging to a group. I reveal each singular work to be simultaneously a container of all the others but also a solidly

\textsuperscript{24} (Nancy, 3)
singular entity. By replicating the same floral imagery again and again by hand, I subtly draw out of it both sameness and difference, drawing the eye back to the composition to look for elusive shifts and differences.

The marks themselves operate as a multitude. Each painting is covered in drawn marks from end to end, performing like the visual representation of recorded speech. Erratic repetition moving from side to side, up and down, the marks cover the space in a sea of noise, as conduits performing the sound of the whole. The waxy marks lay on the canvas and dissipate like a fog or a mist as the viewer draws closer to the surface.

The uniform scale of these paintings tethers the individual pieces together into a composite whole. The paintings share a similar scale and are approximately four feet wide and five and half feet in height. The group signals to some family tree with a lost or unknown origin; each piece acts as a limb, an identifiable element at play amongst all the others. The paintings act both synonymously and autonomously as figures, which stand apart but are copacetic in their reunion.

The idea of with-ness is also expressed in my personal philosophy of optimism that I see as an integral part of the concrete center of my practice. I interpret any art making as a positive sign, a good omen, or a positive force, because it functions as a mode of concrete thinking which inserts itself into the world as a signal of care. The floral paintings can also be seen in this light of optimism. The paintings are displayed in a row, repeated again and again like an
emphatic mantra. If they were able to speak they might be assuring one that it will all be okay. Just relax...relax...relax. They function as tangible self help, a cloak of well-being. I see these works as relational in this way, extending a quiet hand.

The thinking and speaking characteristics of painting I’m describing point to a kind of relationality that art making can contain. In *Thinking Through Painting*, Isabella Graw describes the painting itself as a “quasi-person” and cites Frances Bacon, Charline Von Heyl and Albert Ohlen as people to whom painting spoke or communicated; they are artists that are led by their paintings and not the other way around.\(^{25}\) It is the difference between following something to its end or dragging something behind. Graw elaborates:

“[The painting has] the ability to evolve an independent mental life. By according a subject like power to painting, Hegel laid the ground work for what I would describe as the central trope around painting in the twentieth century – namely, the assumption that there is thought in painting, that painting itself is able to think”.\(^{26}\)

This kind of relationality expresses itself in a concrete way through listening to the work as I make it. With the floral works, I set out with a predetermined structure and a loose goal in mind, to cover the entire surface or pick a few initial colors. Similar to the way a sense of balance was achieved through a slow accumulation in *Jock Rock* I have to be attuned to how the marks accumulate

\(^{25}\) (Graw, 45).

\(^{26}\) (Graw, 54).
and how the varying pressure of my hand against the canvas and panel affect depth and painterly concerns such as figure and ground. Most importantly, this continual attunement with my paintings is how I achieve communicating anything at all through them.

Moving forward I will continue to approach painting as both an experience of pleasure and as a mode of resistance and critique. Identifying the alliances that my work has with DIY, and modes of "workable resistance" I am able to persist, to "circulate in the with" alongside them.


Bibliography


