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1. Tell us about your recent work.

My recent work is very different from any of my previous work. Up until about two years ago, my work had been very influenced by Indian miniature paintings and ideas drawn from my many trips to India over the past 15 years. But the collaboration I did in 2010 with Ajay Sharma – a good friend who is a traditional miniature painter in Jaipur – felt like the culmination of my exploration. So after we completed those works, I felt ready to move on from there and to throw out both the baby and the bath water. So I began exploring new ideas, and slowly developed completely new processes and imagery. I began making these assembled constructions that I piece together from many small, cut-out, abstract shapes of painted mylar. I seam these pieces together to form new “wholes” which I never could have arrived at directly. Some of these mylar forms are then mounted on paper, some onto wood panels and drawn into with pencil, and some – like the Wild Garden Series which I exhibited recently at Wave Hill – are mounted directly onto the wall. I didn’t want them to look like any animal mineral or vegetable specifically, but to resemble something possibly inbetween – and to suggest the atmospheric, the geological, the aquatic, the biological, the corporeal. It’s important that the works feel or look *kind of* like something, to sort of tease out your attention and get you thinking about what they are, making leaps off the point of familiarity they start from, but then you can’t ever really put your finger on it. Their dimensionality and almost photographic qualities add to their sense of connection to something “real”. But they aren’t anything knowable, which requires you to call on something other than recognizing and naming – you have to use different mechanisms to interpret them – take a different path to process them. I want the works to suspend knowing and activate thinking.

2. The new paintings appear so natural and organic, and are yet so totally bizarre and otherworldly. Are you developing any preternatural abilities to perceive and understand form through this recent work?

If I had to just paint these forms whole, I would never have been able to conjure them up in my head – nor would I be able to create the somewhat photographic effects that often occur from the pooled ink which are so suggestive of dimension. They are a result of process. What’s been interesting has been recognizing that my perception and understanding of form in these works is very consistent, but very personal. No two people see what I see in them, nor would they have cobbled the same forms together, given the hundreds or probably thousand of little pieces I have to choose from.

3. Do you look at any source imagery before working, or do you try to let the “random pours and gravitational pulls” happen as arbitrarily as possible?

No, I don’t look at any source material beforehand because there really IS no source material for the random splatters and pools of paint that the painted mylar sheet starts out as. They are nothing more than a collection of chance moments of ink spreading, floating, and accumulating with not that much intervention on my part. Then comes the most difficult stage of the process: deciding where and how to cut up the painted sheet – which edges to follow to isolate and designate as shapes. As I

cut the shapes out, I have no idea how they will later be used or what they will eventually contribute to a larger form. Sometimes, an entire painted sheet will not reveal a single, interesting shape and will just get tossed.

4. What prompted the switch from the dense and highly saturated paintings of 2005-2008 to the subtler washes and bleeds of color into negative space of later paintings? What does the empty space around a form mean to you? What does a partially transparent bleed of color into white space mean to you?

Wow, that's actually three separate, loaded questions. To answer the first one, about the switch from my earlier works; in 2008 I did make a deliberate move from the work I'd been making for years which were all-over compositions and as you say dense and highly saturated. I had become more and more obsessed with color, and found myself obsessively tweaking it, even repainting thousands of polka dots just to make the color even the slightest bit warmer or more neutral, etc. Eventually, after a few years of doing that, I felt I had learned what I needed to. I understood how to make them vibrate the way I wanted them to – and since I hear color (which is another whole long thing), I understood how to make the piece "sound" the way I wanted it to sound. So I decided it was time to stop doing what I already knew how to do. And the same applied to composition – I felt like I could solve whatever compositional problems each piece confronted me with, working off the edges, making certain "moves" or adjustments through color or form that would keep things flowing and directed. So basically, I felt like it was time to put color and that kind of composition away for a while since it felt like I was starting to repeat myself – use things I already knew how to do. So I gave up working with strong, saturated color and began working more monochromatically, and gave up working out all-over compositions and began just isolating central forms floating in white space. The first series of that kind of work was the *Ahmedabad Drawings* – which I made when I had set up a studio in Ahmedabad, India for a few months. Then came the *Lessons from a Guinea Hen* series, which also consisted of floating, central forms, followed by the *Cowdust* series with Ajay. But I've slowly been working strong color back in – and really miss painting directly and dealing with all-over space. So I plan to bring those things back in my next body of work.

5. Can you tell us about the collaborative pieces you did with artist Ajay Sharma? They are so amazing. Any more projects like that in the works?

Thanks! That project was quite a trip, in every sense of the word. It was actually the most difficult work I've ever done. But working with Ajay was amazing – he's such a wonderful person. We've known each other for years – about ten – and consider each other family. We decided we would collaborate on a group of paintings, so I went to Jaipur and set up a studio in a hotel room for about two and a half months (!!), painting everyday, racing against the sun going down in my room. Ajay is a traditional miniature painter and as such has mostly worked copying historical paintings out of books. He has never really had to generate his own imagery, so paying attention to composition or even color relationships wasn't really something he'd had to think about before – let alone content and context. He has worked with other artists in the past, but was hired to paint something very specific. (I had hired him back in 2003 when I was in India on a Fulbright. I asked him to paint garlands into a few of my works – which he would only do if I first showed him exactly where I wanted them and exactly what I wanted. This was out of respect for my work and his fear that he might "ruin" something). So when I told him these works were half his, and that he could paint whatever he wanted and should paint over anything I had painted if he didn't think it worked, it was a very new and different kind of

challenge for him. So these paintings were at times quite a struggle, with both of us having to somehow contextualize what the other had done even though we were coming from such different places with such different ideas about art and no real common frames of reference. Yet, I think we did come up with a few interesting works. Each piece has its own story, some of which are hysterically funny, others insanely frustrating, but it was a pretty amazing experience for us both. We both learned a lot. As for any other projects like it in the works – nothing at the moment, but I would like to work collaboratively again. I would also like to do another project with Ajay because there were a few things that kept coming up in the works that got censored out. I would like to address some of these things full on.

6. How did the Wave Hill project come about?

First I have to say that I LOVE Wave Hill! It really is an amazing place. And the curator Jennifer McGregor, and assistant curator Gabriel de Guzman are so wonderful to work with. I had applied to do a project there based on their Wild Garden and was then invited to be part of the exhibition that focused on that. My work changed between the time I made the initial proposal and when I began working on the project, but they were very receptive to my new work and were so incredibly supportive throughout the time I was developing the installation.

7. What are you inspired by and thinking about recently? (books, art, essays, current events, politics, music, etc)

I do get very inspired by looking at a lot of other artist's work – (the list is very long), and music propels or enables me to work like nothing else (that list is even longer!). But lately one of the things I've been thinking a lot about is perception – both visual and psychological - and how one affects the other. How shifts in perception can shift one's perspective and vice-versa – how your eye can play such tricks on your mind and vice-versa. I'm interested in that gap between your eye seeing and your mind finally catching on and trying to recognize.

With my new work, the endless possibilities in piecing the small shapes together - how turning and turning each of them by a few degrees could change everything, from seeing nothing to seeing something - has taught me a bit about judgement and how important it is to wait and keep looking before making a decision – and how that is important to apply to life and the bigger picture, (it's one of the many lessons art teaches us). So I've been thinking a lot about judgement – in relation to making things that don't necessarily look like anything you can recognize for certain, so you can't make assumptions using your usual systems. You have to use alternate ways of processing what you see. I'm interested in what those other processes are, how you access them.

8. You have a show coming up soon - can you tell us some more about that?

It actually just opened this past week at John Davis Gallery up here in Hudson, NY - where I've recently moved to from the city. It's been great to have the chance to see all the work from the last two years up together. It gives me the opportunity to pause and assess things after a very focused period of working, and to think about where I might want to take it next. (www.johndavisgallery.com)