

A condition of the contemporary American cityscape is visual overload. This is particularly the case for those places most artists find themselves working in American cities. I am besieged by graffiti as I walk around my neighborhood. This is not a particularly unusual visual event in American cities. I sometimes find the colors that I see paired together in graffiti to be an inspiration for my color choices. This morning I found a vivid cadmium yellowish green on an umber field to be particularly riveting. This will eventually be overpainted by someone beautifying (read gentrifying) the neighborhood. For me the overpainting is as interesting as the original graffiti colors. In fact, it is the constant overpainting of graffiti that informed the painting you are seeing. The **White Room** panels are quite literally painted out fields of color; presenting remnants of their history and the process of their obliteration.

All of which leads me to the point raised by graffiti on the inner-city streets. The garishly painted surfaces of graffiti, drug colors and dumpsters (large rubbish bins) have all influenced my recent color choices. These color sources are linked in that they are all examples of someone vying for someone else's attention. The hardest thing to do is get someone's attention and hold it for more than a few seconds. Manhattan is one of the most media saturated places on the planet. Walls, taxicabs and windows pulse with super-activated adverts in high keyed chromas. LCD and other digitized imaging truly turns everyday reality into something boring and dull. I personally find this to be mind cluttering visual pollution.

Imagine a populace where seemingly everyone is hyper-vigilant and no one is truly paying attention. This is very possibly explained by the hyper-aestheticization of the contemporary city. What does one focus upon when everything is designed to grab our attention? We've even trendy medical diagnoses and the drugs that go with them to keep people distracted. Ultimately what is lost is quietude. How can a painter deliberately produce a work that demands the viewer to become reflective and still? At times this simple action appears to be political. To have individuals suddenly confronted with themselves seems to me to be the most corrupting thing a painter could demand of an audience.

Current non-objective painting flies in the face of this hyper world. Contemporary reductive painting provides a clear antidote to the visual pollution of the advert-entertainment-world. Certainly much of contemporary art making stems from advertising and entertainment; which clearly dominates the gallery scene in NYC. This is what the populace is comfortable with and it is hence what they want to see more of in their art viewing experience. Apparently people want pictures and stories and not the absolute states offered by much of contemporary reductive practice.

At the end of the day almost no one gives real attention - either critical or commercial - to non-objective work. There are very few collectors of this kind of work in the world. But really does the lack of response truly serve as any indicator of this work's value? I would say not. In discussing this issue with my colleague Steve Baris, he noted the parallel examples set by poetry and ambient/minimal music. Both of these forms are highly marginalized but remain culturally resonant. Poetry and ambient music absolutely require developed well-honed skills to produce (as is the case with reductive painting). And yet both have almost no commercial value as is also the case with non-objective painting currently. I'll note that there is not one gallery solely dedicated to non-objective work in all of Chelsea. Completely without romanticization or apology, non-objective practice continues and will hold a place of cultural importance, in spite of its lack of commercial viability. And if for no other reason than maintaining its culturally vital function as a voice of opposition.

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