

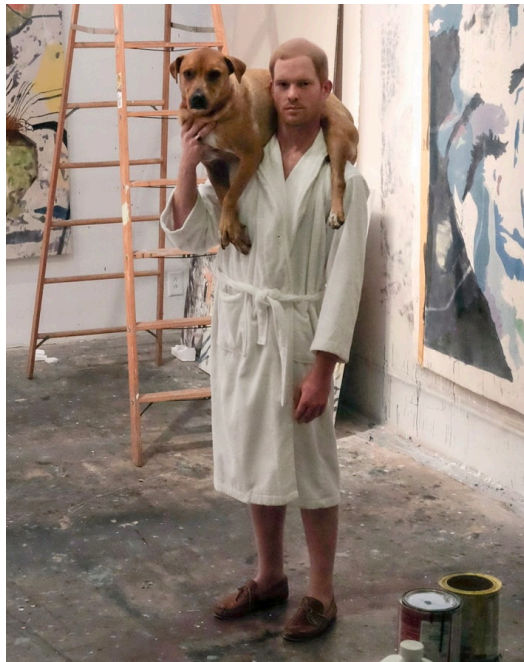
DEEDS.

[di:dz]

THE INTERVIEW IN|DEEDS: Chris Hood in 360° | 68 projects

by DEEDS.WORLD on JANUARY 2, 2020 in 3D TOUREN, ARTISTS, INTERVIEWS

In autumn 2019 the US-American painter Chris Hood was Resident Artist of 68projects, the Project Space of Galerie Kornfeld, in cooperation with Villa Aurora & Thomas Mann House e.V. During his several weeks' stay in Berlin the Berlin Fellow of Villa Aurora created a new complex of works influenced by the city surrounding him. Following his residency, 68projects will show his work in a solo exhibition. This can be seen from November 22, 2019 to January 18, 2020 in the rooms of 68projects. The aim of the residency and the exhibition is to present the artist to a new audience and to show his works for the first time in Berlin. The Berlin Fellowship was established in 2012 and promotes encounters between US artists* and former Villa Aurora Fellows. Chris Hood was born in Atlanta, USA and currently lives in Los Angeles. He received his Bachelor of Fine Arts from Georgia State University and completed his art studies with a Master of Fine Arts at the San Francisco Art Institute. After completing his studies, he spent several years in New York before moving his studio to Los Angeles.



Chris Hood at his studio, 2019

Two sentences about your vita.

I was born in 1984 in Atlanta. I have lived and made art in many places but currently live in Los Angeles.

What are you thinking about most at the moment; what are you up to right now?

At the moment I am thinking about multiple perspectives within a singular vision and how a painting can be a site of many modes of viewing. What does a contemporary landscape look like, for example? What would five-point perspective in virtual space look like? I am currently working out some of these ideas in small scale drawings and watercolors so it is an interesting restriction for my normal way of working on large canvases.

How did you get to art? Why art?

Art offers a kind of self-realization in the widest, and most not-yet-defined terms. As I was growing up, learning about the world, and becoming influenced by books and music it occurred to me that art was always just beyond being fully taken in. The best pictures and artworks would reveal more and more while still retaining an eternal enigmatic quality. Artists can make the once unthought of become commonplace. So this seemed like a bold way of being and a grand pursuit I could never find an end to.

What makes you happy these days? What frightens you?

Getting out into nature and watching a lot of movies is what I look for these days. Helps to get quiet and stay grounded so I can get back to work with clarity.

The sociopolitical tension in the US right now is pretty frightening. I feel like any fan of history can see patterns happening here that have not panned out so well in the past. There seems to be aggressive politics and comfort with conflict on a mass scale that is disheartening and alarming. I have hope calm can be found.

What is typical for your art? Could you please share with us the intention of your art?

My work is made by staining in many layers on the verso of the canvas. There are often multiple forms of image making colliding within the picture- the painterly, photographic, graphic, and the digital all set in a liminal picture surface. So I am aiming to describe visual space in a unique way that is part of our time. I am also looking for cultural material and other cues for emotional content that have not yet been exploited in painting. Largely I want to help mark a part of what it is like to be alive right now.

How do you protect yourself from too much inspiration these days?

We are all dealing with a sorting problem mostly. I focus my inspiration inwards and towards living experiences and nature. I try to think about the timeless instead of the immediate. It is important to remove the chatter to hear your own voice.

How do you assess the current development of the art market?

It seems to me there will be some corrections needed to the notions of progress in art as indicated by the market. There seems to be a phenomena of the dog chasing it's own tail where abstraction gives way to figuration that falls back to abstraction and around again in a shorter and shorter cycle. There is no need to regurgitate an old style anymore or have a new market develop for every identity political group reinterpreting canonical forms. I think there will be some recoil on this fad-prospecting of the market and a desire to find art that is truly rooted in its place in time and part of the continuum.

Two sentences about your current project.

I am currently working on a rather large commission. As it looks now it may be a singular 45 foot work which is exciting to undertake.

What are your (next) targets?

I hope to continue making my way into museum exhibitions and would be interested in showing in Asia. A biennial would be a strong step for me.

How much of your work is planned – how much emerges intuitive?

This is a delicate balance. I paint on raw canvas, so it all is in one shot where I cannot erase or cover up. It is mainly my goal to make a work that is greater than I could have envisioned. So I fold in stages of intuitive working with planned stages which nurtures both cohesion and improvisation. The sum is greater than its parts ideally.

What are your art works about?

—

Do your inspirations always refer to your own experiences?

There has to be a personal connection. But I aim to make works that are contact points for many experiences, so I try to be sensitive to my environment and open at the same time. I am always looking for something I can feel a spark of emotion from and translate universally as well.

Which role does play humour in your works?

Humor is important as a foil for intensity and seriousness. But I tend to use humor as a trigger for emotional content. I tend to think of the humor I use as a nervous laugh if anything. One that knows gravity.

Do you believe that art has a social responsibility? What do you believe it can cause?

No absolutely not. It only has aesthetic responsibility. Its purpose is to serve the people by advancing the intellectual and aesthetic concerns of the time. But it may be more true that art's highest aim is to serve the future. To help usher along those of us clinging to the present or still stuck in the past.

What do you feel about political art?

Ultimately I am not interested in politics in art because as the politics shift so does the art. So the meaning can drop out and has more momentary offerings than eternal ones. But politics can create great change in aesthetics and make for great content in art, but the formal evolutions are what hold through time.

In what artists are you interested in?

I am interested in a lot of the bold weirdos of the art world. Dieter Roth, Tetsumi Kudo, HC Westermann, Sigmar Polke, Mike Kelley

Does art run in your family?

Not so much. I got into drawing early trying to outdo my older brother but his interest was more in comics and illustration. There is a current of creativity but I am the only one that follows or makes art.

Do you have a gallerist? How did you meet?

I met my gallerist in New York a couple years before we started working together. He was one of my first studio visits in my small west village apartment. I am glad he had patience to visit me again when I had it better together a couple years later.

Do you have a credo (confession of faith) – and if yes, what does it say?

Be overwhelmed.

In all of your works and topics, that you are working on, which one is the most important?

—

How does an idea to an artwork occur?

I often have a strong vision for a painting, sometimes started by a thing in culture or just a color scheme I am interested in. But I have to digest it a bit and let it grow in my mind. I have been more interested recently in creating many versions of an idea so it can be stretched out and investigated through multiple paintings.

What should your art cause/evoke in your audience?

I aim for an emotional content in the work. I want the viewer to feel caught in a certain sense. Caught between culture, imagined space and their own vision.

Did your art change during the years – if yes, how and why?

—

How far would you go? Are there taboos?

A taboo for taboo sake maybe is not so interesting at the moment. There is enough shock in the world already perhaps. The most interesting taboos to challenge are those that surround conventions and taste.

What was your most uncomfortable moment?

—

Which project would you like to implement?

At some point far down the line I would be interested in designing a physical space. An architectural project would exciting.

Are you interested in what collectors are doing with your artworks?

Id prefer the works go on a wall and that they are enjoyed. But it is ultimately not my say. The best you can hope for is that they are taken care of.

What are from your point of view the attributes of really good art?

As an artist I am hip to the trends and changes. There is a kind of currency and newness that dominates art viewing and basically for me I am interested in art that circumvents these trends. Art that has enough vision and voice to stand out alone in front of accepted formats and on its own terms. Bold, personal, and confident.

What was your biggest challenge?

—

Do you listen to music, while working? If yes, which one?

No music generally unless I am doing very physical work with little thinking. I found music changed my mood so much it was messing with my focus. Podcasts and books on tape are good in the studio because they are even without many ups and downs.

Which author and which books did influence you the most?

Georges Bataille, Martin Heidegger, and Terrence McKenna were really big for me. After reading those three, what conventions can one possibly be holding on to?!

Is there an artist or an artwork in your life, that influences you sustainable?

—

Is oneself born as an artist? Or is it strongly required to study?

I don't necessarily think one needs to go to an art school. But at this point there is so much important and relevant information to be taken in I am skeptical it can be arrived at without serious devotion. Even in just the field of painting, there are many artists one should be aware of lest you spend your time repeating their discoveries. It's better to learn what they've done and step up to the front of the line.

To whom do you show an artwork first?

If I know the painting is a knockout I will send it to someone I know professionally- usually my New York dealer. But I go to my girlfriend for works in progress or things I am not certain on yet. There is a huge amount of trust involved for these stages and it is helpful if the person knows me and my progress well but does not have anything to gain or lose.

Does Berlin influence you art? If yes, how?

I try to make artwork free from the style of a particular place. But Berlin is inspiring in its seriousness. The dulled northern European light in fall time made for a nice contemplative air about things.

Where in Berlin do you find the best location to 1.) have breakfast 2.) drink 3.) party?

—

What does the first hour of your day look like?

The first hour is a rush to get moving and not get bogged down in small things. I set up a plan for the day, send correspondences, and make breakfast over a large pot of coffee. I am getting better at not picking up my phone right away. It sets such an affectation and general malaise that is just a terrible mindset to get started on. If I eat well, drink enough coffee, and go on a short walk I can be set up for a great day.