

TURPS

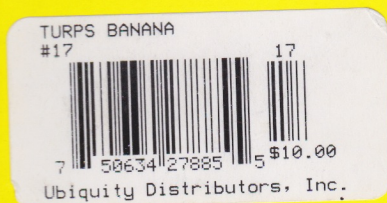


New York Edition

Peter Saul and Mark Greenwold
 Biggs & Collings and Abstract Expressionists
 Chris Martin, Peter Acheson, and Katherine Bradford
 David Reed on Pat Passlof
 Tom McGlynn's New York
 Elliott Green on Tom Burckhardt
 Suzan Frecon on Louise Fishman
 Mary Simpson and Joanne Greenbaum in Correspondence
 Glenn Brown's de Kooning
 Wendy White Visits EJ Hauser
 Keith Mayerson's American Dream
 Thomas Nozkowski on Jane Freilicher
 Phil King Deals With Clyfford Still

Issue Seventeen

£10



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MARY SIMPSON AND JOANNE GREENBAUM

A CORRESPON- DANCE

July 13, 2016

Dear Joanne,

These are the signifying elements I kept returning to in your paintings: here is a nipple (every human has them); a mouth, a hole, a shape, a staircase, a scaffold, contradictory colors, many heads, a frame.

And within the identification of elements, there is a logic, and then it breaks down again, as if a chorus were coming closer and then drowned or cancelled out. It all makes me think of this Polke text from 1977, *Presumably You Have a Hole in Your Head You Want to Fill with Art?* or, *His Laughter Cannot Be Killed* (an excerpt):

*What is then all around a hole,
First of all, there is the pull of the vortex
into the hole.*

*The not being able to defend yourself or a
certain devotion or the desperate effort not
to want to.*

*The field of adventure, promises, backward
consciousness, images of the past, climate
zones, odors, sensuality.
blah-blah-blah*

And here it is middle of July,
Thunder Moon approaching, storm
tomorrow, dog days upon us, melancholy
of August ahead and blah blah blah.
I will see you very soon in Long Island.

All my best,
Mary

July 19, 2016

Mary,

Someone recently said that people never write about the body in relation to my work but it's there. I see a lot of figure/ground stuff but also body parts. That is not intentional, but has come out recently, I don't fight it. I am not trying to fight anything, especially the desire to paint in different ways, and to go to areas that seem risky in terms of paint handling. The messy goo of paint which today always feels shameful in relation to all the cool art that doesn't use the goo at all. Maybe it has something to do with not denying one's femaleness, being made to feel ashamed of it, but making the paintings anyway in spite of that.

Polke knew what it meant to have one's work fill the empty place. Sometimes that's all I am doing – filling the empty place with the only thing I know how to do. It could be that painting is a physical manifestation of how one's brain is working when it's working well, when you can use it to non-verbally tell the world how you think. I am interested in seeing it or constructing one's painting that way, as a diary of the brain. We are just filling holes all day every day or at least that's how it feels.

Are you coming on Sunday?
It's VERY hot here but it smells nice and there is a breeze right now.

J.

Untitled - Joanne Greenbaum
2015
Oil, ink, flashe, acrylic, oil crayon and
marker on canvas
203 x 254 cm

Courtesy of the artist





Marsyas - Mary Simpson
2014
Oil on canvas
127 x 228 cm

Courtesy of the artist

August 22, 2016

Dear Joanne,

I was thinking about Beuys and that strange performance, *I Like America and America Likes Me*. There's a Native American mythological idea that the coyote is the ultimate trickster and can travel back and forth between the spiritual and the real worlds by turning itself inside out, literally wearing its hide with fur facing inward and organs out.

Turning the inside out, and back again, to switch from one world of reality into another metaphysical or simply 'other,' world, is this how it feels to make images sometimes? I think of this after being in the studio a long time, when the images seem to come partly from habit / inhabiting marks you might use like tools – but then what about those images that come from some deep interior? Fear, courage, stubbornness, anger, energy, other – being made to feel ashamed, and then not denying the fact of where you are.

I guess then painting is like you say, a diary of the brain, but perhaps also of the body, if images can be located in the body. I know we are both suckers for materials and when you write 'messy goo' and how uncool it may be to make material-based painting (in abstraction in particular) I think of the commitment it takes to work this way. I build my paintings up with oils and impasto over a very long time, the materials necessitate a slowness. The gradual addition of layers enforces a belief in the work, as if the painting itself is the form, that *faktura* of ethical, visual, and political investigation of surface that the Constructivists were wild for. And the body is material!

Just to hold ourselves up every day demands physical presence. In my 9 years in New York this summer has been the hottest ever, and slowed my brain and body. Your corner on the North Fork was such relief!

Thank you for the visit.
x Mary

August 23, 2016

Mary,

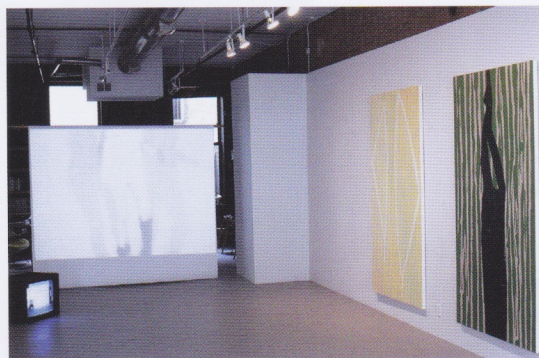
I never think about Beuys at all, but when you mentioned him I flashed on the idea of ritual and the myth of the artist; that the myths really don't have that much basis in reality.

In your work, I see the rituals very clearly – the careful making that perhaps comes from either the process or image that you don't know. I like that about it – that the sources are not really clear, or laid out for the viewer. It's stubborn, not really giving anything away. I like the idea of the ritual of the artist, what we do in the privacy of the studio, and how we get work done. I can see you in your studio making these very elusive/quiet/gentle paintings that are not screaming at me for attention. I can learn from that.

I think the body plays a part that I've denied for a long time. I used to think it was all mental, but now I think about the body in relation to the size of the canvas and the gesture, if there is a gesture. The gesture shouldn't be such a dirty loaded word with all those ABEX connotations; it's just gesture, no more no less.

I used to think about the painting as a totality, that it was a culmination of a long thought process, that it had to work on many levels – be beautiful, as well as complicated. Now I don't think like that. I work incrementally, adding things slowly, seeing what it needs to progress. Right now I have something in the studio that is so awful. I am both fascinated and haunted by it, trying to think of a way to get it out of the bad situation.

J.



Above: **Installation view - Glass Puzzle**
Simone Subal Gallery, New York, 2014

Courtesy of the artist

Left: **Off Hours - Mary Simpson**
2014
Oil on canvas
157 x 168 cm

Courtesy of the artist

August 24, 2016

Joanne,

Yes, the myth of the artist and studio. We feed on this somehow, certainly painting feeds on it (there is this great Asger Jorn quote, "*Painting is painting's favorite food*").

It's so interesting that you once thought of painting as a culmination of a long thought process and 'working' on so many levels (tick tick tick: beauty, concept, form, reception) and now, asking, what does this need to go on?

There is a loosening and letting go in that, a release, which has its own pressure. To sit with something you find awful. It's like playing with a cut in your mouth, ouch, stupid, salty.

x Mary



Left: **Untitled - Joanne Greenbaum**
2016
Oil, acrylic, ink, oil crayon, and flashe on canvas
127 x 175 cm

Courtesy of the artist

Below: **Installation view - Joanne Greenbaum:**
New Paintings & Books
Richard Telles Gallery, Los Angeles, 2016

Image courtesy of Richard Telles Gallery



August 29, 2016

Mary,

The studio is such a comfort to me, a retreat. It's a place to act out private fantasies and also a safe place. Maybe it's not that way for everyone, I know some artists who describe the studio as torture.

Lately it's been a release from the pressure to make something coherent. Once I let go of that many more things opened up. I actually enjoy sitting with the awfulness of some paintings' beginnings. It really challenges me, because the easy answer, which involves beauty in some form, is not the solution at all. Sometimes beauty happens despite my efforts. Lately I've been thinking a lot about branding, and why I never branded my paintings. I realized that I am incapable of doing the same thing again and again. It's uncomfortable to be so restless, but I just can't repeat myself. I have to move on. I think it confuses people but it's not my job to provide easy listening.

J.