DAVID
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GALLERY

Jonas Wood

Plants and Animals

January 22 – March 5, 2022

Exhibition Binder

press@davidkordanskygallery.com
www.davidkordanskygallery.com
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David Kordansky Gallery is pleased to present Plants and Animals, an exhibition of new paintings and works on paper by Jonas Wood. Occupying all three of the gallery's exhibition spaces, the exhibition will be on view January 22 through March 5, 2022. An opening reception will take place on Saturday, January 22 from 4 to 8 PM.

In Plants and Animals, Jonas Wood explores some of the most frequently recurring themes in his work, turning to a variety of formats and mediums to render images not only of flora and fauna, but also of detailed worlds of related forms, spaces, and moods. Wood foregrounds the processes of composition that are the driving forces in all of his pictures. The subtleties of scale, color, and visual texture that are found everywhere throughout this show, however, demonstrate both the evolving nature of Wood's ideas and his ever-increasing commitment to his vision, including his passion for and preternatural understanding of the material elements of painting, drawing, and printmaking themselves.

The works in Plants and Animals were made over the last three years, and often are the results of evolving studies that go back even further than that. Wood has long turned to subjects that attract him for their personal relevance and formal idiosyncrasy. To make paintings, he works from photographs, drawings, and collages; in technical terms, his sources often combine several of these approaches as well as varying degrees of mediation, with Wood developing his ideas according to principles that are as informed by abstract notions of pattern and shape as they are by representational fidelity.

Imagery from one work often appears in others, highlighting the ways in which Wood's ideas go through these several phases of development. In some paintings, he establishes anachronous juxtapositions, inserting family members

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into images he finds on the internet or compiling entirely fictional scenes out of otherwise factual elements drawn from diverse sources. What unifies these diverse elements are Wood's increasingly nuanced approaches to color and paint application. While many of the paintings are notable for their saturated hues and bold forms, they all contain innumerable instances in which less immediately perceptible decisions play key roles in the paintings' overall effect. Woven throughout some pictures, for instance, are carefully modulated grey and neutral tones that generate palpable volume.

The teeming detail that defines many works in Plants and Animals has visual as well as physical functions. Whether he is rendering images of densely patterned textiles, thick dog fur, or large-scale, foliage-packed landscapes, Wood produces each painted mark with remarkable clarity and intention. Density, therefore, becomes paradoxically responsible for imbuing the compositions with vibrating luminosity, even as it roots their presence in the material world. Wood gives every mark, no matter how small, an indelible feeling, character, and shape. He pays special attention to the viscosity and structure of the oil medium, which allows the eye to perceive these marks as carriers of color as well as instances of material invention in their own right.

Each of these characteristics reveals Wood's project to be one in which craft and process go hand-in-hand with psychological connection and overall pictorial vision. The works on paper that constitute an essential part of Plants and Animals shed further light on the elaboration of these various modes of thought, intuition, and production. They also demonstrate the artist's breadth and curiosity: he employs various types of printmaking to create a range of effects and moods, and experiments with varying approaches to layering and foreground/background distinctions. The exhibition provides viewers with many opportunities to follow Wood as he examines an idea from numerous perspectives, rendering it in

different mediums and altering its feel and scope as he responds to their possibilities and demands.

What arises from all of these works, whether on canvas or paper, are images of life as remembered, imagined, invented, and observed. But as plants and animals often do for those who appreciate them, their subjects also speak to a deeply felt curiosity about—and affection for—the natural world. Deeply personal on the one hand and capable of generating broad appeal on the other, Wood's pictures are antithetical to the kinds of separation and distance that mark so many attempts, artistic or otherwise, to analyze or represent the phenomena of daily life. They are testaments, rather, to what happens when art becomes another living phenomenon, as vivid and responsive as the things it depicts—and as able to elicit emotion from the humans who experience it.

Paintings by Jonas Wood (b. 1977, Boston) are currently on view through April 3, 2022 at The Broad in Los Angeles in the group exhibition Since Unveiling: Select Acquisitions of a Decade. Wood has been the subject of solo and two-person exhibitions at the Dallas Museum of Art (2019); Museum Voorlinden, Wassenaar, the Netherlands (with Shio Kusaka, 2017); Lever House, New York (2014); and Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2010). Other solo projects include Still Life with Two Owls, a monumental picture covering the façade of The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (2016—2018); Shelf Still Life, High Line Billboard, High Line Art, New York (2014); and LAXART Billboard and Façade, LAXART, Los Angeles (2014). Other recent group exhibitions include Psychic Wounds: On Art and Trauma, The Warehouse, Dallas (2020); One Day at a Time: Manny Farber and Termite Art, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (2018); and Los Angeles: A Fiction, Astrup Fearnley Museet, Oslo (2016) and Musée d'art contemporain de Lyon, France (2017). His work is in the permanent collections of many institutions, including the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden,

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Washington, D.C.; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Guggenheim Museum, New York; The Broad, Los Angeles; Museum of Modern Art, New York; and Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. In 2019, Phaidon published the first monograph dedicated to Wood's paintings and drawings. Wood lives and works in Los Angeles.

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Jonas Wood
Plants and Animals
January 22 - March 5, 2022

North Gallery

Jonas Wood
Five Dogs, 2021
oil and acrylic on canvas
78 x 83 inches
(198.1 x 210.8 cm)
(Inv# JW 21.004)

Jonas Wood
Patterned Interior with Mar Vista View, 2020
oil and acrylic on canvas
100 x 87 inches
(254 x 221 cm)
(Inv# JW 21.017)

Jonas Wood
Palms and Inglewood View, 2021
oil and acrylic on canvas
70 x 40 inches
(177.8 x 101.6 cm)
(Inv# JW 21.029)

Jonas Wood
C.M.Z. House on M.V. with Ptolemy, 2021
oil and acrylic on canvas
100 x 87 inches
(254 x 221 cm)
(Inv# JW 21.016)

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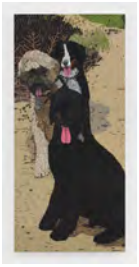
Jonas Wood
Future Zoo, 2021
oil and acrylic on canvas
120 x 96 inches
(304.8 x 243.8 cm)
(Inv# JW 21.014)

South Gallery

Jonas Wood
Deer and Picasso, 2019
oil and acrylic on canvas
80 x 60 inches
(203.2 x 152.4 cm)
(Inv# JW 21.034)

Jonas Wood
Hanalei Bay, 2021
oil and acrylic on canvas
120 x 122 inches
(304.8 x 309.9 cm)
(Inv# JW 21.001)

Jonas Wood
BBall Studio, 2021
oil and acrylic on canvas
110 x 104 inches
(279.4 x 264.2 cm)
(Inv# JW 21.015)



Jonas Wood
Three Dogs, 2019
oil and acrylic on canvas
65 x 30 inches
(165.1 x 76.2 cm)
(Inv# JW 21.025)

Jonas Wood
Ravello, Italy, 2021
oil and acrylic on canvas
78 x 58 inches
(198.1 x 147.3 cm)
(Inv# JW 21.030)

Viewing Room

Jonas Wood
Shio with Three Dogs, 2020
oil and acrylic on canvas
76 x 74 inches
(193 x 188 cm)
(Inv# JW 21.028)

Jonas Wood
5 Dogs, 2019
gouache and colored pencil on paper
14 1/2 x 14 inches
(36.8 x 35.6 cm)
framed:
17 7/8 x 17 3/8 x 1 3/4 inches
(45.4 x 44.1 x 4.4 cm)
(Inv# JW 21.018)

Jonas Wood
Shio with Dogs 1, 2019
gouache, colored pencil, and ink on paper
13 1/8 x 13 1/4 inches
(33.3 x 33.7 cm)
framed:
16 1/2 x 16 5/8 x 1 3/4 inches
(41.9 x 42.2 x 4.4 cm)
(Inv# JW 21.021)

Jonas Wood
Shio with Dogs 2, 2019
gouache, colored pencil, and ink on paper
13 1/4 x 13 1/8 inches
(33.7 x 33.3 cm)
framed:
16 1/2 x 16 5/8 x 1 3/4 inches
(41.9 x 42.2 x 4.4 cm)
(Inv# JW 21.022)

Jonas Wood
Dinosaur Landscape, 2019
oil and acrylic on canvas
46 x 41 inches
(116.8 x 104.1 cm)
(Inv# JW 21.026)

West Gallery

Jonas Wood
Three Dogs, 2020
etching and drypoint on paper
15 1/2 x 9 inches
(39.4 x 22.9 cm)
framed:
18 7/8 x 12 3/8 x 1 3/4 inches
(47.9 x 31.4 x 4.4 cm)
Edition 1 of 20, with 4 AP
(Inv# JW 21.023.1)

Jonas Wood
C.M.Z. House on M.V. with Ptolemy, 2021
soft ground etching and aquatint on paper
36 1/4 x 27 1/2 inches
(92.1 x 69.9 cm)
framed:
40 5/8 x 33 1/2 x 2 inches
(103.2 x 85.1 x 5.1 cm)
BAT, Edition of 35, with 20 AP
(Inv# JW 21.013.BAT)

Jonas Wood
Pattern Couch Interior with Mar Vista View, 2020
soft ground etching on paper
29 x 25 1/2 inches
(73.7 x 64.8 cm)
framed:
34 3/8 x 30 7/8 x 1 3/4 inches
(87.3 x 78.4 x 4.4 cm)
AP1, Edition of 35, with 20 AP
(Inv# JW 21.020.AP1)

Jonas Wood
Kiki and Leopard (State II), 2020
etching and drypoint with chine-collé on paper
11 5/8 x 10 3/4 inches
(29.5 x 27.3 cm)
framed:
15 1/8 x 14 1/8 x 1 3/4 inches
(38.4 x 35.9 x 4.4 cm)
Edition 1 of 12, with 4 AP
(Inv# JW 21.019.1)

Jonas Wood
Nighttime T.V. Room with Janet, 2021
oil and acrylic on canvas
65 x 65 inches
(165.1 x 165.1 cm)
(Inv# JW 21.031)

Jonas Wood
Four Landscapes, 2020
Ukiyo-e Japanese style woodcuts on paper
set of four, each:
26 x 22 inches
(66 x 55.9 cm)
framed, each:
29 5/8 x 25 3/8 x 1 3/4 inches
(75.2 x 64.5 x 4.4 cm)
AP2, Edition of 35, with 20 AP
(Inv# JW 21.024.AP2)

Jonas Wood
Kiki with Leopard, 2020
oil and acrylic on linen
52 x 38 inches
(132.1 x 96.5 cm)
(Inv# JW 21.027)

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JONAS WOOD

born 1977, Boston, MA
lives and works in Los Angeles, CA

EDUCATION

2002 MFA, University of Washington, Seattle, WA
1999 BA, Hobart and William Smith Colleges, Geneva, NY

SELECTED SOLO / TWO PERSON EXHIBITIONS
(*indicates a publication)

2021 *Four Landscapes,* Pace Prints, New York, NY
Four Tennis Courts, Gagosian, New York, NY
Gagosian, Central, Hong Kong

2019 *Gagosian, New York, NY
Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, TX
Jonas Wood & Shio Kusaka: Pots, Plants, and Sports, Masahiro Maki Gallery, Tokyo, Japan

2018 *Three Clippings*, Mixografia, Los Angeles, CA
**Prints*, Gagosian, New York, NY
Tennis Court Drawings, Shane Campbell, Chicago, IL

2017 *Interiors and Landscapes*, David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
**Shio Kusaka and Jonas Wood*, Museum Voorlinden, Wassenaar, The Netherlands
Ed Ruscha and Jonas Wood*, Notepads, Holograms and Books*, Gagosian Gallery, San Francisco, CA
Bball Studio (cropped) 2012, organized by Annin Arts, Billboard 8171, London Bridge, London, England

2016 **Portraits*, Anton Kern Gallery, New York, NY

2015 Gagosian Gallery, London, England
Shio Kusaka and Jonas Wood, Karma, New York, NY
Blackwelder, with Shio Kusaka, Gagosian Gallery, Hong Kong

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2014 *David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles, CA

2013 *Clippings*, Lever House, New York, NY
Anton Kern Gallery, New York, NY
Jonas Wood & Shio Kusaka: Still Life with Pots, Glenn Horowitz Bookseller, East Hampton, NY
Shane Campbell Gallery, Chicago, IL

2012 David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles, CA

2011 Anton Kern Gallery, New York, NY
Anthony Pearson and Jonas Wood, UNTITLED, New York, NY
Patrick De Brock Gallery, Knokke, Belgium

2010 *Prints*, Cirrus Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
**Hammer Project: Jonas Wood*, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA
Chris Caccamise and Jonas Wood, La Montagne Gallery, Boston, MA

2009 Shane Campbell Gallery, Chicago, IL
Jonas Wood and Mark Grotjahn 'Collaborative Works', T&S n' Kreps, New York, NY
Gallery Min Min, Tokyo, Japan

2008 *Anton Kern Gallery, New York, NY

2007 Anton Kern Gallery, New York, NY
Shane Campbell Gallery, Chicago, IL
Primitives: Chris Caccamise and Jonas Wood, Cereal Art, Philadelphia, PA

2006 Black Dragon Society, Los Angeles, CA

2005 RAW & CO, Cleveland, OH

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS
(*indicates a publication)

2021 *The Beatitudes of Malibu,* David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
Via Cafe, Tif Sigfrids, Comer, GA

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ETERNAL SEASONS: PART II, Lévy Gorvy Gallery, Central, Hong Kong
Wayne Thiebaud Influencer: A New Generation, Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem Museum of Art, UC Davis, Davis, CA
Berggruen Gallery, East Hampton, NY
Shared Visions, Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR
An Ideal Landscape, Gagosian, New York, NY
Return of the Dragons, Blossom Market, Los Angeles, CA
Home & Away: Selections from Common Practice, Miles McEnery Gallery, New York, NY
Since Unveiling: Select Acquisitions of a Decade, The Broad, Los Angeles, CA
There is Always One Direction, de la Cruz Collection, Miami, FL

2020 **Psychic Wounds: on Art and Trauma*, The Warehouse, Dallas, TX
Rendez-Vous, Museum Voorlinden, Wassenaar, The Netherlands
Friend of Ours, curated by Joel Mesler and Benjamin Godsill, Rental Gallery, East Hampton, NY
Drawing 2020, Gladstone Gallery, New York, NY
A Possible Horizon, de la Cruz Collection, Miami, FL
The World: From The OKETA COLLECTION, 21s Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, Japan

2019 *Words,* Alexander Berggruen, New York, NY
Private Passion - New Acquisitions in the Astrup Fearnley Collection, curated by Gunnar B. Kvaran, Astrup Fearnley Museet, Oslo, Norway
Louis Vuitton X, 468 N. Rodeo Drive, Beverly Hills, CA
California Artists from the Marciano Collection, Marciano Art Foundation, Los Angeles, CA
Winter Garden, Lyndsey Ingram, London, England

2018 *IT'S PERSONAL,* Edward Ressle, New York, NY
**One Day at a Time: Manny Farber and Termite Art,* organized by Helen Molesworth, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA
Sky Above Clouds, curated by Meredith Darrow and Olivia Davis, Performance Ski, Aspen, CO
An Homage to Hollis Benton, Over the Influence, Los Angeles, CA
In My Room: Artists Paint the Interior 1950-Now, The Fralin Museum of Art at the University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA
This is a Pipe: Realism and the Found Object in Contemporary Art, Shane Campbell Gallery, Chicago, IL
Movable types, curated by Frances Horn, Marian Goodman Gallery, Paris,

France

2017 *LA Invitational,* Gagosian Gallery, New York, NY
Unpacked: Contemporary Works from Private Collections of Northern California, Art Museum of Sonoma County, Santa Rosa, CA
**The Trick Brain,* curated by Massimiliano Gioni, Aïshti Foundation, Beirut, Lebanon
**Unpacking: The Marciano Collection,* curated by Philipp Kaiser, Marciano Art Foundation, Los Angeles, CA
FEED BACK, curated by Leo Fitzpatrick, Marlborough Contemporary, New York, NY
Summer Show, Kostyal Gallery, Stockholm, Sweden
Oliver Twist, Chapter 2: Dear Darren, Rental Gallery, East Hampton, NY
**Los Angeles – A Fiction,* curated by Gunnar B. Kvaran, Thierry Raspail, and Nicolas Garait-Leavenworth, with advisory from Hans Ulrich Obrist, Ali Subotnick and Alex Israel, Musée d'art Contemporain de Lyon, Lyon, France
UNIQUE & SINGULAR, Cirrus, Los Angeles, CA
Part I: Figuration of Victors for Art: Michigan's Alumni Collectors on view at UMMA, University of Michigan Museum of Art, Ann Arbor, Michigan
The Age of Ambiguity: Abstract Figuration/Figurative Abstraction, curated by Bob Colacello, Vito Schnabel Gallery, Moritz, Switzerland

2016 *Before Sunrise*, Karma, Amagansett, NY
Implosion 20, Anton Kern Gallery, New York, NY
Generation Y: 1977, BankArt Studio, Tokyo, Japan
Human Interest: Portraits from the Whitney's Collection, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY
**Los Angeles - A Fiction*, curated by Gunnar B. Kvaran, Thierry Raspail, and Nicolas Garait, Astrup Fearnley Museet, Olso, Norway
Tailgate, organized by Timo Fahler, BBQLA, Los Angeles, CA
Anton Kern Gallery, New York, NY
Before Sunrise, Karma, Amagansett, NY
PLEASE HAVE ENOUGH ACID IN THIS DISH!, organized by Vinny Dotolo, M+B, Los Angeles, CA
Piston Head II: Artists Engage the Automobile, Venus LA, Los Angeles, CA
Landscape, Karma, New York, NY
Paper in Practice, Moran Bondaroff, Los Angeles, CA

2015 *Tightrope Walk: Painted Images After Abstraction*, organized by Barry Schwabsky, White Cube, London, England

Storylines: Contemporary Art at the Guggenheim, Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY
#CrowdedHouse, Harper's Books, East Hampton, New York, NY
The Shell (Landscapes, Portraits & Shapes), a show by Eric Troncy, Almine Rech Gallery, Paris, France

2014 *Another Cats Show*, 356 Mission, Los Angeles, CA
Displayed, curated by Matthew Higgs, Anton Kern Gallery, New York, NY
The White Album, curated by Gladys-Katherina Hernando, Richard Telles Fine Art, Los Angeles, CA

2013 *Jew York*, UNTITLED and Zach Feuer, New York, NY
More Young Americans, curated by Susanne van Hagen and Marc-Olivier Wahler, Hôtel de Miramion, Paris, France
Paintings, Sculptures, Drawings and Mixed Media Artworks, The Rema Hort Mann Foundation, New York, NY
Selections from the Grunwald Center and the Hammer Contemporary Collection, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA

2012 *The Irreconcilable*, The Spaceship on Hayarkon 70, Tel Aviv, Israel
East West Shift to the Middle Part II, Bill Brady KC, Kansas City, MO

2011 *From Where You Just Arrived: Paintings from New York & Los Angeles*, Pepin Moore, Los Angeles, CA
**ESLOV WIDE SHUT*, curated by Stefan Lundgren, organized by Eslövs Kommun and Mallorca Landings, Blomsterberg's Warehouse, Eslöv, Sweden
Roe Ethridge, Margarete Jakschik, Jonas Wood, Shane Campbell Gallery, Chicago, IL
Greater L.A., curated by Benjamin Godsill, Eleanor Cayre and Joel Mesler, New York, NY
**The Shortest Distance Between 2 Points is Often Intolerable*, curated by Andrew Berardini, Brand New Gallery, Milan, Italy

2010 *Mixed Signals: Artists Consider Masculinity in Sports*, Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, OH
Drawing, Shane Campbell Gallery, Chicago, IL
Not Extractions, but Abstractions (Part 2), Clifton Benevento Gallery, New York, NY
The Road to Here, John Berggruen Gallery, San Francisco, CA

Newtonland: Orbits, Ellipses and Other Places of Activity, White Flag Projects, St. Louis, MO
Not Extractions, but Abstractions, Karma International, Zurich Switzerland
Patricia Low Gallery, Gstaad, Switzerland
The Fifth Genre: Considering the Contemporary Still Life, Galerie Lelong, New York, NY

2009 *Wild Group Show*, Karma International, Zurich, Switzerland
White Columns: Xerox Prints, Shane Campbell Gallery, Oak Park, IL
Copy, White Columns, New York, NY
1999, China Art Objects, Los Angeles, CA
Galerie Daniel Blau, Munich, Germany
Abstract America: New Paintings and Sculpture, Saatchi Gallery, London, England
No Shoes on the Carpet, Cirrus Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
Prose pour des Esseintes, Karma International, Zurich, Switzerland
Collectors Days, Hotel Castell, Zuoz, Switzerland

2008 *Friends and Family*, Anton Kern Gallery, New York, NY
Psych!, Gallery Dennis Kimmerich, Dusseldorf, Germany
The Black Dragon Society, Black Dragon Society, Los Angeles, CA

2007 *Warhol and…,* Kantor / Feuer Gallery, Los Angeles CA
Primitives: Chris Caccamise and Jonas Wood, Cereal Art, Philadelphia, PA
So Wrong, I'm Right, Blum & Poe, Los Angeles, CA
Eddie Martinez, William J. O'Brien, Roman Wolgin, Jonas Wood, Gallery Min Min, Tokyo, Japan
Modern Lovers, Glendale College Art Gallery, Glendale, CA
Kairos!, Kantor / Feuer Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
This Palindromic Life, South La Brea Gallery, Los Angeles, CA

2006 *Then & Now & Again*, Black Dragon Society, Los Angeles, CA
Boat Show, High Energy Constructs, Chinatown, CA
Heather Brown, Jacob Stewart-Halevy, Jonas Wood, Cirrus Gallery, Los Angeles, CA

2005 *Christmas in July*, Black Dragon Society, Chinatown, CA

2004 *Walking on Elbows*, Anna Helwing, Culver City, CA

Faith, Champion Fine Art, Culver City, CA
L.A. Painters, Raid Projects, Los Angeles, CA
Stay Inside, Shoshana Wayne Gallery, Santa Monica, CA
164 1/2 Group Show, Los Angeles, CA

2003 Etherington Fine Arts, Vineyard Haven, MA

2002 *Re/order*, Houghton House Gallery, Geneva, NY
Seed, Soil Gallery, Seattle, WA

ARTIST PROJECTS

2017 *Still Life with Two Owls (MOCA)*, Facade, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA

2014 LAXART Billboard and Façade, LAXART, Los Angeles, CA
Shelf Still Life, High Line Billboard, High Line Art, New York, NY

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2021 **24 Tennis Court Drawings,* Tokyo: MAKI Inc. / MAKI Gallery, 2021
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Ghassemitari, Shawn, Jonas Wood Unveils New Gagosian Exhibition in Hong Kong, *Hypebeast.com*, November 24, 2021
Ramakrishnan, P., and Joey Wong, "The Must-See Art Exhibitions for November 2021 in Hong Kong," *PrestigeOnline.com*, November 15, 2021
"2021 Artist Plate Project Features a List of Legendary Work," *Hypebeast.com*, November 12, 2021
Bravo, Tony, "Celebrating Wayne Thiebaud's influence as artist turns

101 at Manetti Shrem Museum," *SFChronicle.com*, October 30, 2021
Adam, Georgina, "Troy Carter — from managing Lady Gaga to collecting blue-chip art," *FT.com*, October 7, 2021
Bagley, Christopher, "In David Kordansky and Mindy Shapero's Home, Art Always Comes First," *W Magazine*, September, 2021, pp. 72-79
"Ten great insights from ten great artists who made Artspace editions," *Artspace.com*, September 24th, 2021
Al-Hadethi, Rand, "A Palette of Tranquility," *GQ Middle East*, July/August 2021, pp. 24-29
Taylor, Elizabeth, " "Best of Summer," *T2COnline.com*, August 6, 2021
Museum, Manetti Shrem, "Explore Wayne Thiebaud's Evolving Influence at the Manetti Shrem Museum," *Hyperallergic.com*, July 12, 2021
"The Beatitudes of Malibu," *LAReviewofBooks.org*, June 14 2021
Lee, Shannon, "Market Brief: Record-Breaking Auction Results for Claire Tabouret, Salman Toor, and Others," *Artsy.net*, May 14, 2021
"Jonas Wood breaks auction record at Christie's," *Artspace.com*, May 13, 2021
Gerlis, Melanie, "New York wakes up with $81m Basquiat sale," *FT.com*, May 12, 2021
"Basquiat's *In This Case* headlines Christie's inaugural 21st Century Evening Sale at $93,105,000," *Christies.com*, May 11, 2021
Fry, Naomi, "Not a Serious Guy," *NewYorker.com*, April 5, 2021

2020 Donoghue, Katy, "David Kordansky Expands L.A. Space," *Whitewaller*, Up Close, issue 31, 2020, pp. 36-37
Smith, Roberta, "A Bouquet of Group Art Shows Near Houston Street," *NYTimes.com*, August 13, 2020
Westall, Mark, "Trespassing from Christie's a cross-category sale that traces graffiti's influence on contemporary art," *FadMagazine.com*, August 12, 2020
"Online-Only Auction by Christie's Featuring Kaws, Invader and Banksy Runs Until August 19," *SG.AsiaTatler.com*, August 11, 2020
Goldstein, Caroline, "Rashid Johnson, Anicka Yi, and Other Art Stars Twist Reality and Truth in This East Hampton Show—See Images Here," *Artnet.com*, July 13, 2020
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Fokschaner, Serena, "When the party starts: a home to lift the spirits," *TheGuardian.com*, April 12, 2020

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"Are these the most beautiful gardens in art?," *Christies.com*, March 31, 2020
"Jonas Wood at Children's National Hospital," *RXArt.net*, February 2, 2020

2019 **Jonas Wood*, with texts by Ian Alteveer, Helen Molesworth and a conversation between Jonas Wood and Mark Grotjahn, London and New York: Phaidon, 2019
**Jonas Wood*, with texts by Anna Katherine Brodbeck, Ken D. Allan and Hans Ulrich Obrist, Dallas: the Dallas Museum of Art, 2019
**Landscape Painting Now: From Pop Abstraction to New Romanticism*, edited by Todd Bradway, with text by Barry Schwabsky, and contributions by Robert R. Shane, Louise Sørensen, and Susan A. Van Scoy, New York: D.A.P./Distributed Art Publishers, Inc., 2019
**Shio Kusaka & Jonas Wood*, with texts by Jurriaan Benschop and Suzanne Swarts, Wassenaar: Stichting Voorlinden, in association with Gagosian, 2019
**Jonas Wood*, New York: Gagosian, 2019
Gerlis, Melanie, "The art market in 2019: a nervous year ends in hopeful mood," *FT.com*, December 27, 2019
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A Palette of Tranquillity With Artist Jonas Wood

American painter Jonas Wood on his love of art, sports, and finding balance in his career

By Rand Al-Hadethi | July 19, 2021

Through his use of shadows, angles, and irregular balanced objects, Jonas Wood paints a parallel world that explores modes of abstraction. Inspired by Henri Matisse and David Hockney, his fresh documentative style does not come as a surprise, and neither does the welcoming aura his paintings emit. In a 15-year career, Wood has grown to become a vibrant figure in the world of modern art.

The 44-year-old artist has a distinct palette composed of his experiences, passion for sports (basketball specifically), and the surrounding domestic miscellanea. And while you might think that doesn’t speak to you, you’ll realise that you still haven’t shifted your gaze away from his paintings. You see, though it is obsessively detailed, there is a certain serenity in Wood’s artwork. In short, it’s nothing but fresh, fashionable, and domestic. To Wood, painting is not only a hobby or a career but an extension of his existence. And much like how he finds it therapeutic and joyful, the American painter wants you to feel that energy too. “What I would like people to take away from my work is energy, because that’s what I look for when I collect art and when I live with art,” says Wood. “I want to feel energy, I want to be excited.”

Your work has a calm and cosy aura. What attracts you most about creating still-life paintings? When did you realise that this was your focus?

I like taking things and organising them in my own way—using pattern and shape and colour to try to find a balance that feels good. I approach still life in different ways; sometimes they’re very simple and sometimes they’re very complicated. There are times in which I’ve populated a still life with a bunch of plants and pots I’ve found in photos and other sources, and then cobbled them together to make a new space. In 2007, I made a painting called *The Still Life* which was my most elaborate large-scale still life at the time. That painting made me think that it was something I wanted to continue investigating in the future.

We know that “basketball paraphernalia” is all over your studio. What makes you so attached to sport-related art?

I grew up in Massachusetts. It was a big sports town for all the major teams: basketball, football, baseball, and hockey. Basketball was just one of my favourite sports, I played it up through high school. As I began to make paintings, it started coming into my practice. I liked the idea of a floating basketball because I was seeing the basketball as an isolated, simple object… I also liked making portraits from the basketball imagery I was looking at. I was searching for subjects to paint that I loved and was attached to, so it sort of infiltrated my work. As I’ve gotten older, I’ve found more time to watch basketball games while painting in my studio.

We heard you had a mirror that you used to paint from life. Can you tell us more about the process and how it has changed over time?

The mirror story is from when I was in grad school in 2001. A professor told me if I wanted to be a figurative painter that I should paint from life, so I spent a whole year painting from life, from a mirror, from a still life—just trying to paint from what was in front of me. I had a big mirror in my studio and was making a giant self portrait of myself, nude, standing up painting. And then when I had finished it, the professor told me I needed to paint more from imagination and not from life; maybe it wasn’t for me. While I was moving this huge mirror out of my studio, I dropped it and it shattered—not while I was naked, I was clothed—but it cut my right hand badly and I had to have major surgery to tie a tendon back onto itself. I painted left-handed for the rest of grad school. I finished my grad school thesis left-handed. I guess that’s a crazy story, but the reality was that even if I hadn’t broken the mirror, I was going to begin trying to paint in a different way. That is when I started painting from photographs and source images, and drawings I had made. My process has developed over the years. I don’t ever really paint from life; I draw from life and I doodle from life, but I don’t ever paint from a 3D physical object. I paint from 2D objects and from tons and tons of images that I use as my source material.

Do you ever look back at your old paintings and compare the difference between then and now?

I do that all the time. I think the idea of painting is that you practice to get better. Sometimes I look back and assume that my early work is going to look worse than it actually does. It’s for sure more primitive because I was naive and knew less and hadn’t practiced as much, but it’s not as bad as anticipated, especially in the case of going back
and looking at my first museum show at the Dallas Museum of Art. For that show, we had collected all these earlier paintings that we wanted to hang together. When I got to the museum, I was anxious to see paintings that were 10–12 years old, and to see how they held up with my newer work, which were considered to be more advanced. However, looking back, I realised the earlier paintings were advanced because I was trying my hardest at those moments. It’s really interesting. There are a lot of things you can take from the earlier works and bring back into the new paintings; they feed off each other. I think it’s good to continue to look back, to appreciate a good painting, and to try and get back there with the newer paintings—to make a great painting.

What was the defining moment when decided to be a full-time artist?

I knew I wanted to be a full-time artist when I arrived in Seattle for my first year of graduate school. I still had about three weeks before school started and they were like, “Oh, you want your studio now.” And I was like, “Sure!” They let me into this little cell of a studio, but at the time it felt huge. I just started working and within the first week, I remember talking to my parents or a friend, and saying, “I think I’m going to be a painter,” even though I had just arrived at grad school. Before that, in undergrad, I had studied psychology and science. I had painted and made stuff before, but I had never spent all my time doing it.

You had learning disabilities and dyslexia, and then got kicked out of public school in third grade. Did painting help you deal with that?

In third grade, I got kicked out of school because I was super disruptive. I had learning disabilities, and probably attention-deficit disorder, that weren’t diagnosed, but I was definitely dyslexic. I think my parents saw that I was good at making stuff and they kept that in front of me. It was never like, “You have to make art.” My sisters and I were always just into making stuff our whole lives. We had different drawing tutors, so we were always involved in the arts. I think my parents saw that I was halfway decent at it as a child and they geared me towards it, even though, like I said earlier, I wasn’t really aware that I was going to be an artist early on. Later in life, painting definitely saved my life in a way, because it’s very therapeutic for me. It’s a way to release energy.

What do you think is the trick to being productive and equally proud of your work? How do you embrace the wins and avoid beating yourself up too much?

I think being productive is setting yourself up to be successful. Like preparing some materials for yourself or understanding how you operate. How to be proud without beating yourself up? Well, make a bunch of stuff and then be critical about it. Say, “This is great” and then, “This is maybe not so great. But why isn’t it so great?” I think that you have to beat yourself up, and then you have to be proud, and you have to be able to differentiate greatness. Not everything is great. You should be proud of your wins and you shouldn’t necessarily be upset about your losses, but you should look them in the eye and try to address them.

There’s an obvious element of commercialism related to the art world— such as sell enough quantities of your work in the first place. Should you consider that, and would that scare a new artist?

In all honesty, selling enough quantities is rubbish. Whatever dealer is telling you to make a bunch of quantities, you should just go tell them off. That’s capitalism driving demand versus your interest as an artist in making something. If you want to make more work, figure out how to make more work because you want to make more work, not because somebody is telling you to. That’s just going to lead you down some dark alley of negativity.

Artspace

Jonas Wood breaks auction record at Christie’s

By Artspace Editors | May 13, 2021

Jonas Wood in the studio as featured in Phaidon’s Contemporary Artist Series book.

After two hours of intense bidding, Christie’s live-streamed 21st Century Evening Sale this week ended at over $210million and set 10 new auction records for artists including Nina Chanel Abney, Rashid Johnson, El Anatsui, Mickalene Thomas, and Jonas Wood, whose ‘Two Tables with Floral Pattern’ broke its $2-4million estimate when it sold for $6.5million.

Los Angeles-based artist Wood has established himself as the reigning prince of contemporary painting, using playful geometrics and lush, vibrant color to excavate traces of memory and domestic selfhood. His work combines art historical references with images of objects, interiors, and people that comprise the fabric of his life.

His ascent to art stardom has included a spate of critically acclaimed solo shows in the world’s most prestigious outlets, including a recent turn at the Dallas Museum of Art and his work has been collected by the Guggenheim and Hammer Museums.

Wood, as you’d hope and expect, explained the lasting value of his art, rather than its price, when Artspace interviewed him around the release of his Contemporary Artist Series book and limited 200 edition print.

“There’s so much more to art than just what it ends up aesthetically looking like or feeling like,” Wood told us. “I think that there’s a lot of value in seeing things from a different perspective. I was introduced to Phaidon’s Contemporary Artists Series with monographs by Peter Doig and Franz West, which were so revealing visually. So when we were thinking about what to do for the limited edition print, I went back and looked through my drawings and found the original drawing I had used as a tracing to make the painting that eventually became the book cover. It represented what I think this book is about: process.

Jonas Wood - *Two Tables with Floral Pattern*, 2013

“I wanted to recreate the source image, and part of the vision for the project was to show how I get to where I get to. It starts out very simply. It’s almost like a blueprint, or a skeletal part of my studio practice, but it’s also a drawing. That’s exactly what this etching is. It’s the blueprint of the painting. Printmaking is a big part of my process, drawing is a big part of my process, and tracing and getting the basic shapes of things before I make the painting is a big part of my process.”

That process of making the Phaidon book and the accompanying etching was not without nostalgia for Wood. “I’m trying to appreciate things like that, because I think I live in a way that’s very much in the moment. But it’s nice to look back and see some of the older work, like some of the really simple plant paintings, and some of the really complicated interiors. It has changed but hasn’t really changed. There are always new things I want to paint about, but there’s a lot I still keep coming back to.

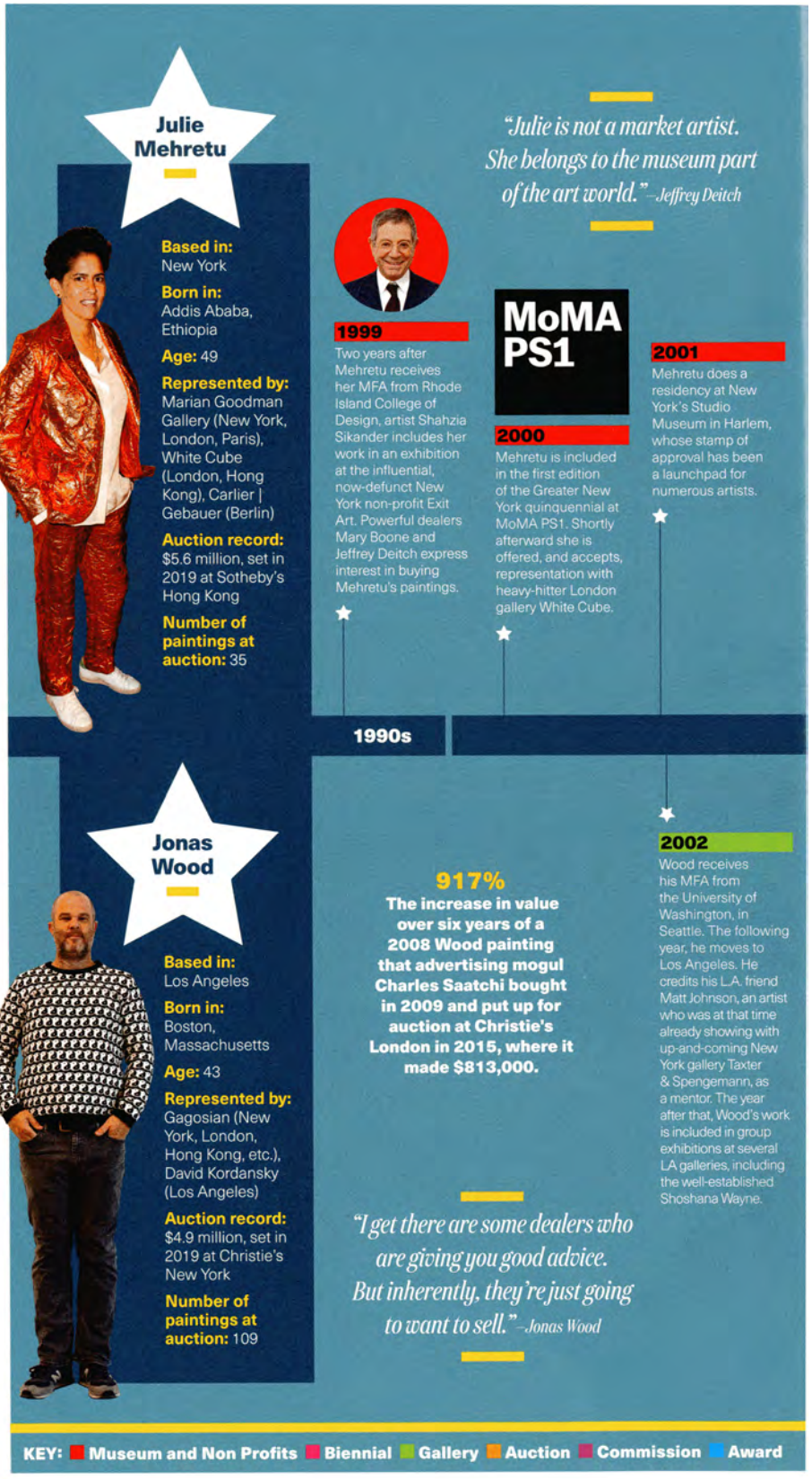
“So it wraps up all of these things: nostalgia of this old studio I rented from Ed Ruscha in 2007 after my first show in New York, (This is where I started making drawings of isolated basketballs, pinning them up on the wall, and looking at them in grids and eventually making paintings of them) this great painting that we used for the cover, and the original drawing, changed back into a print—eight years later—to raise money for charity.”

How Stars Are Born

Some artists arrive at art-world endorsement by getting the attention of curators, gaining inclusion in major museum shows and international biennials, and winning awards and grants. For others, the market ends up playing a bigger role. Their work accrues monetary value quickly, through a high volume of secondary market sales.

To showcase these two pathways, *ARTnews* focuses on two prominent mid-career artists—**Julie Mehretu** and **Jonas Wood**. Both are painters—Mehretu creates gestural abstractions made of overlaid lines and shapes referring to various histories, and Wood paints domestic interiors in his inimitable color-block style. Their current auction records both hover around $5 million, but 50 percent of Mehretu's solo exhibitions have been at museums or other nonprofit institutions, as opposed to commercial galleries; for Wood, it's 14 percent. Six years younger than Mehretu, Wood has had three times as many paintings come up at auction.

BY ALEX GREENBERGER



"Auction prices put a lot of pressure on an artist."
—Julie Mehretu

2003
A painting by Mehretu comes up for auction for the first time, selling at Christie's New York for $74,090.

2003
Mehretu is the subject of a museum exhibition at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis that travels to the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, a museum in Buffalo, New York.

2005
Mehretu wins a $500,000 MacArthur Foundation "genius" grant.


Mural, 2006

2006
Goldman Sachs pays Mehretu $5 million to paint a gigantic mural in the lobby of their New York headquarters.

2010
An untitled painting by Mehretu sells at Sotheby's New York for $1.02 million, more than $200,000 beyond its pre-sale estimate, making her one of the world's most expensive female artists.

2010
Mehretu joins the roster of Marian Goodman's esteemed gallery, after being introduced to her by Goodman artist Tacita Dean. Mehretu goes on to praise the care Goodman has put into building her career—something that, Mehretu says, isn't often seen at similarly large galleries.

$60,000:
The price put on paintings at Mehretu's first significant New York solo show, in 2001, at the Project gallery.


Invisible Sun (algorithm 5, second letter form), 2014

2014
Mehretu is one of 17 artists selected by curator Laura Hoptman for the Museum of Modern Art's exhibition "The Forever Now," the first painting survey held at the museum in 30 years.


HOWL, eon (I, II), 2017

2017
A 32-foot-wide, site-specific diptych by Mehretu is the first commissioned artwork to appear in the stairwell of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art after the opening of the museum's new building.

2019
Mehretu's painting *Black Ground (Deep Light)*, 2006, sets her current auction record of $5.6 million at Sotheby's Hong Kong.

2019
Mehretu's mid-career retrospective opens at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.


Sing, Unburied, Sing (J.W.), 2018

2019
Curator Ralph Rugoff includes Mehretu in the 52nd Venice Biennale.

2000s

2010s

From 2003 to 2005 Wood works for artist Laura Owens, who is now considered one of the most notable American painters active today. He credits Owens's style with helping him develop his own.

"Working with [gallerist] David [Kordansky] was one of the best things I ever did."
—Jonas Wood

2006
Wood has his first solo gallery exhibition in Los Angeles, at Black Dragon Society, and powerful LA dealers Tim Blum and Jeff Poe buy work from it. Wood's friend Matt Johnson joins the Blum & Poe gallery roster, and Wood meets painter Mark Grotjahn, who becomes a friend and mentor, and introduces Wood to his gallerists Anton Kern (in New York), and Shane Campbell (in Chicago). A year later, both add Wood to their rosters.

2013
Wood pays homage to megacollector Michael Ovitz, the founder of Creative Artists Agency, by making a painting of the library in Ovitz's Beverly Hills villa. The piece is now owned by New York's Guggenheim Museum.


Ovitz's Library, 2013

2013
A painting by Wood comes up at auction for the first time, selling at Phillips New York for $56,250.

2015
Wood begins showing with Gagosian, the world's largest gallery. His friend Mark Grotjahn had joined a few years earlier, and in two years will have an auction record of $16 million. "I have friends who show there," Wood tells *ARTnews* that year. "It all came very organically."


Red Portrait Pot, 2015

2018
An Artnet report labels Wood the top-grossing "ultra-contemporary" artist working today.

2019
Wood's first mid-career museum survey opens at the Dallas Museum of Art, in Texas.

2019
Wood's painting *Japanese Garden 3* (2009) sets his current auction record of $4.9 million at Christie's New York. Its pre-sale estimate was $500,000–$700,000.


Japanese Garden 3, 2019

Mehretu: Courtesy Marian Goodman. Wood: Courtesy David Kordansky/Gagosian

Allan, Ken D., “Jonas Wood’s Modernism,” *Jonas Wood,* Dallas: the Dallas Museum of Art, 2019, pp. 20-27

JONAS WOOD’S MODERNISM

Ken D. Allan

Allan, Ken D., "Jonas Wood's Modernism," *Jonas Wood,* Dallas: the Dallas Museum of Art, 2019, pp. 20-27

Fig. 10
Jonas Wood
Schindler Apts, 2013
Oil and acrylic on canvas
Zabludowicz Collection

Fig. 11
Georges Braque
La Roche-Guyon: le château (*The Castle at Roche-Guyon*), 1909
Oil on canvas
Moderna Museet, Stockholm

In *Schindler Apts* (fig. 10), Jonas Wood hints at his interest in using structures of the past—in this case, an example of European modernist architecture in the Silver Lake neighborhood of Los Angeles—to build vivid contemporary pictures. The bones on which Wood puts down layers of flat, bold color in his paintings run the gamut from modern architecture, the compositions of Henri Matisse, and the rooms of his childhood home to the arrangements of houseplants from 1970s gardening magazines. Wood became aware of the history of art at a young age through visits to museums in Boston and New York, and from his grandfather, who began collecting modern art in the 1960s with the help of dividends from early IBM stock. Wood remembers experiencing works by Bacon, Rauschenberg, Motherwell, Calder, and Lichtenstein on a regular basis in his grandparents' house during his childhood in New England.[1] The intimacy of his initial encounter with Modernism, then, explains Wood's incorporation of its lessons into his depictions of friends, family, and the spaces in which he lives and works.

It is perhaps no accident that the kind of steep hillside seen in *Schindler Apts*, with its rhythm of foliage broken by the geometry of house walls, roof planes, and window frames, would appeal to Wood since it recalls the kinds of sites chosen by artists such as Paul Cézanne and Georges Braque for their own painterly experiments. A comparison of Wood's painting with Braque's 1909 *La Roche-Guyon: le château* (*The Castle at Roche-Guyon*) highlights some of these correspondences (fig. 11).

Braque's landscape paintings, inspired by Cézanne, led him to the fully fledged Cubism he and Picasso developed in the 1910s, in part because the locations he depicted already contained the kinds of spatial contrasts that he sought to make the basis of his avant-garde art. The twelfth-century tower and La Rochefoucauld family castle that climb the hill above the Seine in *La Roche-Guyon* provide the compositional tension between surface and depth that Braque makes the focus of his painting. The high horizon line and the shallow space create a disorienting picture that becomes more about the arrangement of shapes on its surface than a traditional depiction of a landscape.[2] In *Schindler Apts*, the Silver Lake hillside offers Wood a similar verticality and flattened plane on which to play the angularity of the architecture against the

organic form and detailed texture of the surrounding plants and trees as the composition ascends to the top of the canvas. Braque reinvents a medieval castle and seventeenth-century French palace as a modern painting, while Wood makes a contemporary painting out of a 1920s modernist apartment complex. But one could argue that a Rudolph Schindler building in Southern California serves a similar function for Wood as the castle did for Braque—it is an iconic historical site on which a painter can strive to make his mark as an ambitious and innovative artist.[3]

Schindler Apts is based on a photograph that his mother took while touring Schindler and Richard Neutra buildings in Los Angeles with his father. Wood had been working on a series of etchings based on his paintings around this time, and the emphasis on line and draftsmanship in the printmaking process helped him solve the problem of how to convey the different layers and variety of foliage that structured so much of the composition. As he recalled in an interview,

> I basically took everything I have learned, from all these different mark-making parts of the etching process, and applied it to painting . . . I found it reinvigorating seeing my mark, and then I got more exploratory . . . It made me become way more aware of the idea of how powerful these individual marks can be versus the whole image . . . It gave me a better understanding of myself.[4]

The passage in the lower left of *Schindler Apts* in which residential plantings and shrubbery become a remarkable experiment in abstract shapes and repeated mark-making is one example of the kind of insight that Wood describes here. Since the painting is 11 × 9 feet, his “exploratory” marks in this area of the canvas are very legible, overwhelming their traditional status as mere ornament in the image. This tension between ostensible subject matter and the striking visual impact made by the depicted surfaces and material objects that fill the spaces of his compositions is seen throughout Wood’s work. He creates these effects by painting in oil on top of layers of acrylic, but the relationship with printmaking reinforces the importance of flatness and pattern to the overall graphic quality of his aesthetic and connects his work to some of the central debates about the status of painting in the twentieth century.

Fig. 12
Jonas Wood
Red Interior Pot, 2015
Oil and acrylic on canvas
The Broad Art Foundation

Allan, Ken D., "Jonas Wood's Modernism," *Jonas Wood,* Dallas: the Dallas Museum of Art, 2019, pp. 20-27

Fig. 13
Jonas Wood
Self Portrait in Alexis's Room, 2014
Oil and acrylic on canvas
Collection of Steve and Lizzie Blatt, Los Angeles

Fig. 14
Henri Matisse
Intérieur aux aubergines (Interior with Aubergines), 1911
Oil on canvas
Musée de Grenoble

What happens when the abstract components of a figurative painting, or the decorative ornaments found in furniture designs, textiles, carpets, or wallpaper, become just as important to the visual impact as the figures themselves? Can a painting carry meaning when the artist's expression seems to be contained within these traditionally marginal aspects of a composition? In response to these kinds of questions, in 1908 Henri Matisse explained, "The entire arrangement of my picture is expressive . . . Composition is the art of arranging in a decorative manner the diverse elements at the painter's disposal to express his feelings."[5] Wood's return to such questions allows us to see that painting's delivery of visual pleasure has a history—a history that Wood's work surely continues. Yet this return also brings into relief how removed we are from the urgent need of modernists such as Matisse to understand the medium of painting itself in the early twentieth century. Wood reveals a self-consciousness about this past in his paintings that asks us to think through the changed status of the ubiquitous, yet dematerialized image in contemporary culture. Wood declared his interest in Matisse most pointedly in a series of pot drawings and paintings, for instance *Red Interior Pot* (fig. 12), in which he reproduced a section of Matisse's famous 1908 canvas *The Red Room (Harmony in Red)*[6] as if it were the design on a large ceramic vessel. This mode of direct quotation aside, Wood engages the question of the decorative in portraits such as *N. Lowe (Peach Faced Love Bird)* (p. 81), *Robin with Phoebe* (p. 67), and *Leslie and Michael* (p. 77), as well as in his paintings of interiors.

In *Self Portrait in Alexis's Room* (fig. 13), Wood's play with pattern, framing, and reflection suggests a relationship to the groundbreaking treatment of these issues in paintings Matisse made before World War I, such as *Interior with Aubergines* (fig. 14). Matisse confuses the viewer's sense of the distinction between the depicted room, the mirror's reflection, and the view out a window by emphasizing the flatness of the decorative patterns in the folding screen, the wallpaper, the floor, the tablecloth, and the prints hanging on the wall. Wood borrows some of Matisse's tricks in *Self Portrait in Alexis's Room*, but one of the most striking aspects of this painting is the slight break in the alignment of the mirror frame and the edges of the two pictures hanging on the wall. Similar to Matisse's

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complex exploration of surfaces and their representation, this disjuncture works like an exposed seam, drawing our attention to Wood's process in making the painting and to the photographs the artist is depicted taking with a small digital camera in the mirror. This glimpse of the reflection of Wood's partial figure, mostly obscuring his face, conveys a sense of the almost reluctant presence of the artist within this private space. The painting is in fact based on multiple photographs of his sister's bedroom in their childhood home, indicated by the personal effects and a large photographic portrait hanging on the wall of Alexis and her friends, taken by the Boston-area photographer Elsa Dorfman.[7] Wood's portrait of a portrait within a self-portrait suggests the layers of representation through which he depicts his subjects, projecting our connection with them onto other elements in the composition. In this painting, as in Wood's other work, the traditional focus of the self-portrait gets displaced onto the furniture, reproductions pinned above a desk, the patterns on the bedspread, or the clothes of the young women in the photograph on the wall. Scholar Jenny Anger describes the role of the decorative in the history of modern art in a way that provides perspective on Wood's approach:

> The decorative [is] found not in a rarefied, idealist realm but, rather, in the objects around us. The rugs, the pillows, the wallpapers surround us daily without our paying them any attention, yet they are loyal accompaniments to the events and emotions of our lives, memories of which we project upon them . . . arabesques on the wall are empty signifiers made full by our projections, made rich by our intimate, lived connection with them.[8]

Since we often assume modern artists such as Matisse were painting from life, their distortions of interior space and experiments in depicting everyday objects can be read as a form of personal expression, a report on their feelings about a scene and the things within it. How is our belief in this "lived connection" between painter and painted affected when we consider that an artist like Wood constructs his interiors from photographs, and oftentimes from collages built out of a combination of personal photographs, online media, or other reproduced images?

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The intimacy of a painting such as *Momo with Stuffed Animals* (p. 45), a portrait of the artist’s infant daughter, is complicated by the fact that Wood created it by combining a photograph of a bulletin board in his sister’s childhood room, a picture of dogs found on the internet (which he also made into a stand-alone painting called *Dogs (Robots Roots)* (see fig. 6, p. 16), and a photo of Momo lying on a bed with animal plush toys and a baby doll. Wood’s process for this kind of painting is the same for much of his work, and often involves collaging together different source images, making a small test drawing or painting, and then scaling up the image onto canvas via a projector. The eponymous subject of this portrait is at first hard to find, so distracting is the visual information contained in the postcards, photographs, and other assorted imagery that dominates the 6 × 6–foot composition. Furthermore, Wood’s rendering of his child lying on her back at the bottom left is easily confused with the image of the doll on the middle-right, lying on its belly and seemingly clutching a stuffed giraffe. This blurring of the distinction between representation and the real is thematized throughout this painting. The pixilated line, the shallow pictorial space, and the flatness of Wood’s application of color put the collection of images hanging above his daughter in the same visual register as her little figure even as she looks out at us from the composition.

Fig. 15
Jonas Wood
Rosy’s Masks, 2008
Oil on linen
Private collection

Momo with Stuffed Animals is primarily a painting of a wall with pictures on it, a feature that recurs again and again in Wood’s work. Paintings such as *The Hypnotist* (p. 47), *Rosy’s Masks* (fig. 15), *Ovitz’s Library* (p. 37), *Guest Room*,[9] drawings of his own work in exhibitions such as *Hammer Projects: Jonas Wood*,[10] and even the still-life arrangements of potted plants such as *Night Bloom Still Life* (p. 51) or *Studio Exterior* (p. 31), all emphasize pictorial spaces that face the viewer and present a variety of visual material and objects on display. If Wood’s references to Braque, Cézanne, and Matisse signal his interest in the foundations of modernist painting, these compositions might indicate how his work tracks the response to the orthodoxy of modernism in the late twentieth century: the emergence of what historian and critic Leo Steinberg called “the flatbed picture plane” in the work of artists such as Robert Rauschenberg, Jean Dubuffet, Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein, and others. In his 1972 essay “Other Criteria,” Steinberg identified the reproduction

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of pop-culture imagery and the collagelike compositional strategies in postwar art like Rauschenberg's Combines as components of a new kind of flatness in painting. He used the analogy of the opaque work surface of the "flatbed" printing press to articulate a new relationship of viewer to artwork that he saw as postmodern. Work in this mode rejected the traditional model of the canvas as a window onto nature, which, he argued, still guided our comprehension of even abstract compositions:

> The flatbed picture plane makes its symbolic allusion to hard surfaces such as tabletops, studio floors, charts, bulletin boards—any receptor surface on which objects are scattered, on which data is entered, on which information may be received, printed, impressed—whether coherently or in confusion. The pictures of the last fifteen to twenty years insist on a radically new orientation, in which the painted surface is no longer the analogue of a visual experience of nature but of operational processes.[11]

While Jonas Wood makes paintings that have none of the avant-garde provocations of a 1950s Rauschenberg, his approach to the traditional genres of portrait, still life, landscape, and interior acknowledges the kind of paradigm shift that Steinberg details in his essay. In Steinberg's reference to printmaking, we might recall the impact that medium has made on Wood's approach to painting. In some respects, Wood's studio practice resembles Steinberg's description of the "operational processes" that were just beginning to impact the work of painters at the dawn of the electronic age when the essay appeared. The artist has multiple streams of imagery flowing into his studio: pictures emailed by friends that they think he might like; piles of old gardening manuals and magazines; particular categories of imagery gleaned from Instagram; stacks of printed images from the internet; a wall with reproductions of photos from his family albums, his own shots of friends, interior scenes, and various locations that he might use in a painting. Much of Wood's work, in fact, focuses our attention on the spaces and surfaces within his compositions that naturally convey the kinds of visual information or data Steinberg identifies in his essay. One of the largest paintings he has made to date, *The Hypnotist*, provides a particularly clear example of this phenomenon.

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Wood has described the inspiration for this painting as an overwhelming visual experience he had when first walking into the small garage-office space of a hypnotherapist he visited to help him quit smoking. The far wall was filled top to bottom with such a variety of different images—movie posters, framed magazine articles, travel pictures—that Wood instantly knew he wanted to paint it. He quickly snapped some photographs when the therapist left the room to get him some water.[12] Wood’s painting is based on a collage of these photographs, the misalignments and distortions of which further emphasize the space itself as defined by the visual imagery on display—the slight tilting of the plane of the wall and subtle variations of the frames’ rectangles echoed in the warped grid of the floor tiles. While these features of the painting may resonate when seen through Steinberg’s model of the flatbed picture plane, the odd interiority of this picture harkens back to an even earlier moment in the history of modern painting with which I will conclude.

Fig. 16
Édouard Vuillard
Grand intérieur aux six personnages (Large Interior with Six Figures), 1897
Oil on canvas
Kunsthaus Zürich

The shifting, unstable space, heavy with ornamental detail, that Wood creates in *The Hypnotist* suggests the kinds of effects seen in late nineteenth-century paintings of the psychologized domestic interior by Post-Impressionist painters such as Édouard Vuillard and Pierre Bonnard. In Vuillard’s *Large Interior with Six Figures* (fig. 16), for instance, the furniture, ornamental rugs, and densely decorated interior walls mark shifts in perspective in a way comparable to the composition of Wood’s painting. Vuillard sought to convey the social anxieties of fin-de-siècle France in his depictions of the interior spaces of his family and friends. He even wanted the viewer to feel these tensions through their bodily relationship to his compositions.[13] At 9 × 14 feet, *The Hypnotist* is a similarly ambitious painting, but if Wood’s work immerses us in the disorienting space of this interior, and those of his own family and friends, he does so in a historical period in which the privacy of the home, the workplace, and any other space we occupy is permeated by the technology of the internet and social media, creating another level of psychological intensity. It is Wood’s return to the traditional subjects, familiar spaces, and critical problems of modern painting that asks us to take account of how the medium can still offer a place for us to think through the increasing complexity and persistent seductions of our contemporary culture.

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PEOPLE, PLACES, AND THINGS: ALLEGORY AND THE WORK OF JONAS WOOD

Anna Katherine Brodbeck

Brodbeck, Anna Katherine, “People, places, and things: allegory and the works of Jonas Wood,” *Jonas Wood,* Dallas: the Dallas Museum of Art, 2019, pp. 10-19

Fig. 1
Diego Rodríguez de Silva y Velázquez
Las Meninas, 1656
Oil on canvas
Museo del Prado, Madrid, P001174

Fig. 2
Jonas Wood
Untitled (double self portrait), 2007
Oil on linen
Collection of Scott and Cissy Wolfe, Rancho Santa Fe, California

Jonas Wood’s *Face Painting* (p. 73) functions as an allegory of the act of painting. There we see the reflection of a young girl in a mirror, painting her face a patchwork of shades of purple. Propped in front of the mirror is a how-to manual for the craft, highlighting a distinctly novice version of what all portraiture is at its most basic: face painting. Abutting the manual are a painter’s palette and a gray plastic tray. The tray casts a shadow on the table, and the table’s wood grain appears in the tray’s central passage, recalling the visual games of Cubism, which are echoed in the distortion of the forms to the right of the child’s reflection. Cubism exemplifies the avant-garde defiance of the conceit of painting as a mirror of, or window onto, the outside world. This illusion is broken explicitly here. At the painting’s left extremity, an iPhone can be seen reflected in the mirror—the now familiar pose of a “mirror selfie”—that captures this scene.

Face Painting contains many of the key, self-referential characteristics of the work of Jonas Wood. Often featuring mirrors and photography, it puts into question the relationship between reality and the illusory world of painting. The artist draws on his own life as subject matter: the child depicted in the mirror is the artist’s daughter. But most importantly, Wood’s work, so intricately tied to appearance, identity, and the family, can be read allegorically. An allegory is a story that tells a parallel story, often with characters that serve as personifications of ideas or concepts, as in a fable. Perhaps the most emblematic example of allegory—and the use of mirrors—in painting is Diego Velázquez’s *Las Meninas* (fig. 1).[1] Velázquez’s inclusion of his own self-portrait in what should be a portrait of the king and queen of Spain (who are just barely visible in the mirror in the background of the painting) turned what was otherwise a royal commission into a powerful argument for himself and his craft. Illustrating this, the artist presumptuously dons the insignia of the Order of Santiago before actually receiving such an honor.

Wood’s oeuvre also foregrounds self-presentation. In his masterful *Calais Drive* (p. 69), he relies on the same “mirror selfie” format used in *Face Painting* but here employs the reflective surface of a poolside window to capture his own likeness. Wood adopts this seductive pose in numerous works (for example, fig. 2), pointing to the compulsion to capture the image of one’s own

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reflection. However, just as Michel Foucault famously argued that Velázquez's game of mirroring signaled the modern awareness that we as viewers are being addressed by the painting,[2] Wood's self-portraiture points to something beyond vanity. Indeed, he seems to paint his own image, his own family, and his own studio and home life in a way that surpasses the convenience of what is close at hand and points to what is existentially compelling about the subject matter for the artist. While self-portraiture and its use for allegory have been hallmarks of painting for centuries, our predilection toward creating self-images has dramatically intensified, honed by social media and the creation of avatars in gaming. To approach Wood's formal and conceptual treatment of people, places, and things through the lens of allegory illuminates how his work transcends its own specificity to speak to universal stories of relationships and, ultimately, the vulnerable position of artistic subjectivity.

As Wood's paintings elicit a movement toward psychological interiority, let's begin with the exteriors, move inward, and conclude with the portraits, echoing the format of our exhibition design, which follows a similar trajectory toward intimacy. Upon entering the gallery, one sees the various worlds Wood inhabits: a Japanese garden (p. 39), a snowy landscape in rural Massachusetts (p. 41), the exterior of the artist's studio (p. 31). Other works move in closer, depicting empty rooms in a house: the kitchen (pp. 33 and 43), the library (p. 37), the bedroom (fig. 3). These places are devoid of people, yet personal effects animate them as if they are awaiting habitation (or revealing narratives of past use).

Fig. 3
Jonas Wood
MV Guest Room, 2012
Oil and acrylic on canvas
Collection of Kenneth Tan, Singapore

The missing subject is even more notable in Wood's still lifes, a favorite genre of the artist. Recent examples depict tables and shelves stacked with indoor plants, pots created by his wife and other ceramicists, and pattern-rich carpets. Earlier still lifes, which showcase crates, screens, and bird cages, are most striking for their depiction of claustrophobic enclosures, a formal effect of nearly all of Wood's paintings, with their shallow sense of space. The very name “still life,” or *nature morte* in French, points to the essential lifelessness of these objects—suggesting human use but ultimately divorced from it.

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It is this quality of lifelessness that calls to mind the most influential modern theory of allegory, which Walter Benjamin put forth in *The Origin of German Tragic Drama* (1928). There Benjamin argued that the historical past can only be represented through allegory. The allegory is presented in strict opposition to the symbol, which Benjamin saw as irrevocably intertwined with the theological and the eternal—a unified presentation of truth as if in a divine revelation.[3] In contrast, the allegory is fragmented and decaying, and finds its ultimate expression in the ruin, or in the “death’s head”:

> Everything about history that, from the very beginning, has been untimely, sorrowful, unsuccessful, is expressed in a face—or rather in a death’s head. And although such a thing lacks all “symbolic” freedom of expression, all classical proportion, all humanity—nevertheless, this is the form in which man’s subjection to nature is most obvious and it significantly gives rise not only to the enigmatic question of the nature of human existence as such, but also the biographical historicity of the individual.[4]

The “death’s head” Benjamin alludes to is apparent in one of Wood’s earliest still lifes, simply titled *The Still Life* (p. 49). A skull, in what looks to be a textbook reference to *memento mori*, lies atop a plinth. A folding screen stands in the background, surrounded by a set of crates and a few potted plants. The death’s head is the quintessential blank canvas for the projection of identity. It belonged once to a specific person but now stands in for petrified history and the arbitrary nature of signifiers. This literal hollowness or emptiness, waiting to be filled, is matched by Wood’s repeated depiction of empty cages, crates, and boxes in contemporaneous still lifes. This *memento mori*, created so early in his career, sets the tone for his production to come.

While I do not contend that Wood consciously engages with Benjaminian theories—indeed many of his works incorporate a sense of humor and levity wholly absent from Benjamin’s writings—they do have interesting implications for both the form and the content of his work.[5] Formally, Wood’s use of preparatory photo collages recalls Benjamin’s other canonical text, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (1936). For Benjamin, art in the modern

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Fig. 4
Jonas Wood
Preparatory photo-collage on wood panel for *Untitled (M.V. Landscape)*, 2008
Courtesy of the artist

Fig. 5
Jonas Wood
Main Black, 2008
Charcoal on paper
Collection of James Raff, Chicago

age has lost its aura because of the easy reproducibility of images through photography and film. One implication of this is the reclassification of the artist from “magician” to “surgeon,” whereby the relationship between the artist and the viewer has changed. The magician maintains what Benjamin terms a “natural distance” from the viewer, whereas the surgeon penetrates the viewer’s experience with totalizing control. Wood, in his manipulation of the composition via photographic studies, acts like the cinematographer who carefully selects angles and light, pasting together various views to get the desired effect and creating a new (sometimes fictional) space unburdened by realistic representation. In the upper third of *Snowscape with Barn* (p. 41), for instance, a subtle shift is evident—the tree branches splinter and no longer line up with their trunks. These scenes aren’t observed from life at all; they are re-created based on collaged photographs likely taken years ago (fig. 4), and the trees in those old images might be long gone by the time they are painted (quite unlike the plein-air painting revolutionized in the nineteenth century). In this way, they also function as ruins. They recall past versions of themselves, living on in fragmented form. Wood’s depiction of ancient pots is a more explicit example of the artist’s affinity for the ruins of history (fig. 5).

For Benjamin, history is an enigma that one must decipher through obsessive deliberation, or melancholy, a concept productively applied to Wood’s work. A melancholic stillness pervades the artist’s landscapes and still lifes. This quality is most conspicuous in the Clippings series (pp. 55–65) to which Wood has increasingly turned his attention over the past several years. The Clippings take pieces of his still lifes—the potted plants—and show them at their most abstracted. Divorced from sources of life, from soil and sunlight, these extracts are set against solid colored backgrounds. In the striking case of a small series of gray and white Clippings, Wood employs stark black backgrounds almost as if to underscore the draining of vitality (p. 55). Benjamin theorizes melancholy as the prerequisite sensibility through which to filter past events into allegory:

> If the object becomes allegorical under the gaze of melancholy, if melancholy causes life to flow out of it and it remains behind dead, but eternally

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> secure, then it is exposed to the allegorist, it is unconditionally in his power. That is to say it is now quite incapable of emanating any meaning or significance of its own; such significance as it has, it acquires from the allegorist. He places it within it, and stands behind it; not in a psychological but in an ontological sense.[6]

Benjamin's critique of the allegory, applied here to German Baroque theater, was updated for the conditions of modern life in his unfinished *Arcades Project*, notably in terms of the rise of the commodity allegory in the industrial nineteenth century. Such theories have cast a large, but intermittently fashionable, shadow on the interpretation of art, revived by Craig Owens in his seminal 1980 essay "The Allegorical Impulse: Toward a Theory of Postmodernism." Writing in *October*, Owens concentrates mainly on the darlings of that publication at the time, Robert Smithson and artists of the Pictures Generation whose work inspired the theories of postmodernism in the visual arts. His analysis of allegory is especially insightful; he defines the "fundamental impulses" of the allegory as "a conviction of the remoteness of the past, and a desire to redeem it for the present . . ."[7] Interestingly for our purposes, Owens underscores the intimate connection between allegory and psychoanalytic practice. Wood, who has a degree in psychology, addresses familial relations in a way that approaches psychoanalysis with its focus on filial relationships and the importance of recounting past events to determine their influence on the present (quite similar to the role of melancholic deliberation in allegory).

For Wood, self-presentation is often directly tied to familial relations, and as in his self-portraits, mirrors and photographs often accompany portraits of the artist's family. See, for example, *Self Portrait with Momo* (Momo is Wood's daughter), *Rosy In My Room With His Cat* (Rosy is his grandfather), and *The Bat/ Bar Mitzvah Weekend* (pp. 70–71, 87). In the case of the latter, a painting based on a photograph by Elsa Dorfman, past pictures of family members are placed at their feet as they pose for the current photography session. The painting captures the act of posing in two temporal registers, making it a meta commentary on the relationship between painting and photography, family and the passage of time. And as is evident from its title, *Sears Family Portrait* (p. 89) is a rendering of a

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photograph, the kind most popular among American families during Wood's childhood. His use of appropriated source material is reminiscent of the artists of the Pictures Generation who were the subject of Owens's essay. While other works are based on publicly available images (see *P Guston*, p. 83), it is striking to see this same treatment of his own family photos.

For Wood, there is much at stake in the depiction of the family. It is not just an exercise in nostalgia, but rather provides for the artist a clear system of identity creation through oppositional relationships and substitutions. Take the portrait pair *Robin and Ptolemy* and *Robot (Self Portrait)* (pp. 84–85). Wood looks directly at the viewer in his confident self-portrait, which stands in stark contrast to his mother, who shies away from the viewer's gaze. Wood had a difficult relationship with his mother, and one can sense here the deliberate effort to differentiate himself, revealing her as withholding or withdrawn. His exploration of identity, and history, is thus tied to a series of relational oppositions, what Owens describes as “add[ing] another meaning to the image . . . only to replace.”[8]

The difference in dates of these works is telling for their relation to allegory and history. Wood revisits scenes from years past, repopulating them with new characters. The most striking illustration of this filial replacement is when he directly substitutes himself with family members, as he does in *Self Portrait with Momo* and *Rosy In My Room With His Cat*. The portraits have identical settings—the artist's room—but in one, the artist holds his daughter, and in the other, his grandfather poses with his pet cat. This signals another key characteristic of allegory—personification, or the transference of a human quality to an object, which Wood incorporates through his use of attributes or animals, calling to mind the prevalence of animals in fables. As we can see, family members are often accompanied by animals, real or stuffed, who serve as extensions of their own personality traits. His mother is often shown with a cat, Jonas with a dog. The stereotypically “feline” qualities of his mother are thus enhanced—skittish and shy, she hides her face behind her cat Ptolemy—while Jonas's gregarious side is emphasized.

Fig. 6
Jonas Wood
Dogs (Robots Roots), 2010
Oil and acrylic on canvas
Collection of Olivia Douglas and David DiDomenico, New York

In *Momo with Stuffed Animals* (p. 45), Momo is accompanied by a doll that is itself hugging a giraffe, in an act

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Fig. 7
Jonas Wood
Untitled (Big Yellow One), 2010
Oil on linen
Dallas Museum of Art, gift of Vernon and Amy Faulconer, 2017.45.2

Fig. 8
Jonas Wood
Two Picassos, 2016
Gouache, ink, and colored pencil on paper
Courtesy of the artist

of transference. On the wall of the room are source materials that appear in other paintings by Wood. In the center of the wall looms Wood's large canvas of a brood of canines, *Dogs (Robots Roots)* (fig. 6). The painting explores the hereditary origins of Wood's beloved pet Robot, and its pairing with the artist's daughter continues this line of familial affiliations. Momo herself is shown beside a stuffed dinosaur. Dinosaurs stand in for familial collaboration in Wood's work. He has long depicted the pots of his wife, Shio Kusaka, including her dinosaur-themed ceramics (pp. 51–53). (Drawings done in collaboration with their children have also found their way onto pots, and those pots into Wood's paintings.)

Wood depicts artists with attributes or creations that directly connect them to their vocations. Magdalena Suarez Frimkess and Akio Takamori are shown behind their ceramics as if they themselves are extensions of their production—Takamori's pot displays a face, in fact a self-portrait, which is magnified in scale from the original (pp. 74–75). Mark Grotjahn stands triumphantly in front of a painting from his Face series, which brought him fame and with which he is closely identified (p. 79). (In another work, not included in this exhibition, the young Grotjahn twins sit in front of a painting by their father—a familial association par excellence.[9])

Wood's depiction of contemporary artists like Grotjahn, with whom he has collaborated, along with veteran modern artists like Philip Guston, suggests an artistic lineage to which he aspires. This lineage is also tied directly to the family. Wood's grandfather was an amateur painter and a collector of modern art. Wood inherited, quite literally, this love from his grandfather—not only did he serve as an early exposure to painting, but Wood is now in possession of works from his grandfather's collection, such as a Calder drawing. The artist created his own rich series of Calder-inspired abstractions, whose inspiration can also be felt in his later Clippings (fig. 7). Other paintings and drawings feature miniature reproductions of Picasso's heads and Matisse's collages that grace the walls of his interiors (fig. 8). Wood appropriates the work of such modern artists and incorporates it into his own; in conjunction with his interest in self-presentation, he seems to suggest an aspirational posturing similar to Velázquez's gambit in *Las Meninas.*

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Fig. 9
Jonas Wood
My Old Bedroom Shelf, 2013
Oil and acrylic on canvas
Private collection, New York

This suggests another apt reference in Wood’s work, which is to avatars. In the digital world, users often create surrogates that are idealized versions of themselves, primarily in gaming platforms but increasingly appearing as well in messaging applications. David Joselit has explored the use of avatars in art, taking as his example another great contemporary allegory, Matthew Barney’s *The Cremaster Cycle*:

> In Cyberspace an avatar is a movable icon representing a person, a virtual-presence capable of navigating mediascapes. More the index of a location than a traditional form of subjectivity, an avatar does not possess an identity but rather exercises one (or many) provisionally in order to chart a particular path: As a fictional character controlled by an actual body, it is defined by where it goes rather than what it is.[10]

This idea of surrogacy is illustrated more explicitly in Wood’s depiction of masks in works like *Rosy’s Masks* (see fig. 15, p. 25) and *My Old Bedroom Shelf* (fig. 9). Wood’s grandfather collected African art, calling to mind the influence of decontextualized “primitive” artifacts on the development of modern art. Masks, of course, also suggest the differences between public faces and core identities.

The Hypnotist (p. 47), a monumental work that Wood painted during a pivotal moment in his career with which I will conclude, suggests an interesting parallel to the “death’s head” and the avatar in its presentation of the possibilities of identity projection. The painting depicts the occasion when the artist himself visited a hypnotist. In hypnotism, one’s body is overtaken and control is relinquished to the practitioner. Indeed, the figure of Wood in the painting, with his eyes almost completely closed, appears lifeless compared to what so vividly surrounds him: posters, books, photographs, memorabilia, and the intensely outlined depiction of the hypnotist’s face, as if this accumulation of stuff has been literally animated by the vacated personality of his body.

The Hypnotist is an outlier in Wood’s practice, in as much as it is a commemoration of a specific event in the artist’s life rather than a posed portrait, casual family anecdote, or vacant locale. The importance that

Brodbeck, Anna Katherine, “People, places, and things: allegory and the works of Jonas Wood,” *Jonas Wood,* Dallas: the Dallas Museum of Art, 2019, pp. 10-19

hypnotism thus holds for Wood is instructive. It points to a fluidity, or even hollowness, of identity that one would not expect in an oeuvre that otherwise obsessively chronicles one's personal life in art. But when his work is considered in light of theories of allegory, it actually seems to fight against the supremacy of the artist's own biography, as in Benjamin's questioning of the "biographical historicity of the individual." In this way, Wood's oeuvre can stand the test of time, not as personal narrative, but as an allegorical operation of relations. Wood presents art as a way to recall history. As through an act of hypnotism, in which a body or an object can be conjured up and inhabited, he allows us to recover what is otherwise irretrievable. *The Hypnotist*, like *Las Meninas* before it, seems to suggest that we as viewers might have the ability to inhabit the artist's work and embody the "other" to see what lessons that might hold for us.

1 Michael Ned Holte also explores the important precedence of *Las Meninas* and other examples of *mise-en-abyme* painting in his essay "Rooms," in *Jonas Wood: Interiors* (Brooklyn: Picture Box, 2012). Like allegories, *mise-en-abyme* paintings, which include other paintings or mirrors, functioned didactically beginning in the medieval period.

2 See Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, trans. Alan Sheridan (London: Routledge, 2002).

3 "The distinction between the two modes is therefore to be sought in the momentariness which allegory lacks . . . There [in the symbol] we have momentary totality; here we have progression in a series of moments. And for this reason it is allegory, and not the symbol, which embraces myth." Walter Benjamin (quoting Friedrich Creuzer), *The Origin of German Tragic Drama* (London: Verso, 2009), 165.

4 Ibid., 166.

5 Indeed, Wood's accumulation of "stuff" seems to beg a dialectic reading. One need only think of Susan Buck-Morss's evaluation of the commodity—"if the social value (hence the meaning) of commodities is their price, this does not prevent them from being appropriated by consumers as wish images within the emblem books of their private dreamworld." Susan Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991), 181.

6 Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, 183-84.

7 Craig Owens, "The Allegorical Impulse: Toward a Theory of Postmodernism," *October*, no. 102 (Spring 1980), 68.

8 Ibid., 69.

9 Jonas Wood, *Grotjahn Twins*, 2011. Gouache and colored pencil on paper. Private collection.

10 David Joselit, "Navigating the New Territory: Art, Avatars, and the Contemporary Mediascape," *Artforum* (Summer 2005): 278.

Obrist, Hans Ulrich, “Conversation,” *Jonas Wood*, Dallas: the Dallas Museum of Art, 2019, pp. 90-99

CONVERSATION

Jonas Wood and Hans Ulrich Obrist

Obrist, Hans Ulrich, “Conversation,” *Jonas Wood*, Dallas: the Dallas Museum of Art, 2019, pp. 90-99

Hans Ulrich Obrist I'm curious how you came to art, or how art came to you. How did your art begin, was it an epiphany?

Jonas Wood The true epiphany of thinking that I was an artist came when I arrived at grad school, because it was the first time that I was spending all of my time making art. Before that I was pursuing both science and art. But my grandfather was an art collector and I grew up with a lot of art, and my parents went to art school. My dad was an architect and my mom was a drama teacher, and they met at Yale. So I think that's more the epiphany, my parents meeting.

HUO So that's why your parents keep popping up in the work. I read this very revealing interview in which you talk about growing up with Matisse and Calder and Picasso.

JW My grandfather was a second-generation Jewish-American in upstate New York, and he became a doctor in Syracuse. He was successful, and he decided to get into fine art, and then later got into painting. From the age of sixty to ninety-five he painted. He's the person who brought those artists into my life.

HUO You've mentioned the freshness of Calder's colors. Can you tell us what inspired you about his work? Was it also the flatness of the colors?

JW The flatness, I think, and the shape and the color, and how his work is defined by his hand drawing a line. He's obviously cutting out a piece of metal. And the lightness in his work—even though it's sometimes made out of heavy materials, it's floating. And the fact of an artist finding his own language in modern painting or modern sculpture. I gravitated to all of that. And also, I like the way he worked, the way that he kept his studio. Calder's studios were fantastic, they were full of his ideas. He seemed to like to be in this giant space with all of his work, and he'd be working on one thing, and then he'd make something, put it to the side, make something else, put it to the side, and that's how I always imagined working.

HUO And what about Matisse?

JW It's something similar, but I gravitated to his cut-

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outs, which is definitely a connection to Calder as well. A very similar thing, but a different person speaking the language. But it isn't so much the lightness of Matisse's painting that I respond to—it's the patterns and the colors, the heavy patterning. I grew up with a very specific Matisse print that belonged to my grandfather.

HUO You have a BA in psychology, and you initially wanted to become a doctor. How did that enter your art?

JW I realized when I was choosing subject matter that certain things were more charged than others, and that I had trouble finishing and starting paintings because I wasn't picking appropriate things to paint—appropriate for me. That's part of what I've learned from studying psychology—thinking about what I connect to. Making a lot of paintings of my family or things that I was interested in made it more fun and interesting for me to paint.

HUO I always wonder: where does the student work end and the catalogue raisonné of the artist begin? What's the number one work in your catalogue raisonné, the first work you no longer consider student work?

JW I would say a painting that I made right before I left grad school. But it was less the actual painting than the idea that was good. So then the catalogue raisonné probably starts right after I finished grad school, in 2002.

HUO And what would be the first work?

JW Probably a self-portrait.

HUO And that leads us to the exhibition we're doing this interview for. Is it a survey?

JW Yes, it's a painting survey show, but I'm able to bring together a number of portrait paintings that have never been shown. There's a room of family members painted at different times, a room of artist friends, and a room of interiors/exteriors. There's a still life with a skull in it that I made in my first painting show at Anton Kern in 2007, when I first started showing. The exhibition starts with that still life, along with a painting of me getting hypnotized. I went to this man's garage to get hypnotized to quit smoking cigarettes, and I was super turned on by his room, and decided to make a painting

from that. I think the show extrapolates from those two paintings.

HUO Plants are very present in the work. But the catalogue raisonné begins with portraits. When did the plants enter the work?

JW It was all connected. There really *was* a plant epiphany. When I left grad school, I was trying to pinpoint what I wanted to paint. I wanted to make still lifes because I thought that would help me become a better painter, and that coincided with moving to Los Angeles. Then, when I saw all the plants in Southern California, compared to the ones I was used to from growing up on the East Coast, it was a mind-blowing experience. It was like plants on acid from the Flintstones. Being able to start drawing and painting these things was really about the environment of Southern California. Even isolating parts of plants, the idea of something being clipped, I was riffing on the way that plants are shown in a horticulture book.

HUO You have a certain methodology that has a lot to do with collecting. You source images, then sometimes you collage in an analog way, and then you blow it up. Can you tell me a little bit about this methodology, how you work, and how photography is used?

JW My work is photography-heavy. More specifically, the origin of my work is *in* photography, but it isn't *about* photography. I don't think that photography is the first thing people think of when they see my work, even though I'm constantly photographing things, collecting things, finding things from my personal archive, or people are sending me things, or I'm just seeing things in the world. And then I'm making drawings of what I see.

HUO These are studies?

JW Yes, for bigger works. I might have a source image, and then I take things from it that I want. Sometimes I just take all the shapes of the pots and some of the shelves. Other times, I take the shapes of the room and then add things to it from my database of images.

HUO So the process begins with looking through the pictures, and then you add the collage with scissors and glue.

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JW Exactly. There are things glued onto that one drawing. The methodology is the idea of something and then knowing that I can always add to or subtract from the image I've found. I'm using the images by tracing them and taking pieces of them out and then projecting them together and creating my own world, but using all of these source images. What often happens is that I source images from my own work and reconstitute them. So the process is not a scientific, one-through-fifty-step formula that gets me to the final work. There are many steps taken in between what I've just described, between finding a photo and making a painting. I never paint on the fly. I draw in a doodle kind of way, but I never paint that way. Painting's a bit more mechanical, it involves building and figuring out how to make a piece and work from the back to the front of the canvas.

HUO When is a painting finished?

JW That's the age-old question. How many paintings do you make a year? When is a painting finished? How many paintings do you keep? Those are three very common questions, but the hardest one to answer is definitely the second one. I know the elements of a work that need to be added up to a certain point, and then I get there. And then, usually, I have a lot of self-doubt about it right away.

HUO So doubt is always there?

JW Yeah. I think the doubt is always there. Sometimes I know a work is going to be awesome, and I'm going to pull it off, but there's always an element of doubt. To be critical of one's work, there has to be some doubt.

HUO You grew up with Warhol cow wallpaper, and you yourself make wallpaper works that also become rooms. How do these works enter the larger picture?

JW I like the idea of wallpaper, but so far all the wallpaper that I've made has been about pattern. It inhabits a space and other things interact with it. But I do think that aesthetically my work is reproducible, if that's what you mean by the question—it could all be like wallpaper.

HUO Yes, that's what I mean. Murals, which you also do.

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JW I start with this little picture in my phone, or a little picture that I cut out, and then it can become as large or small as I choose. I look at the image and size it out. But if I wanted to make it huge, I would use a scale model to figure out if it's working.

HUO I spoke to Alex Israel and asked him to give me a question for you, because I like the idea of an interview within an interview, like a Russian matryoshka.

JW I like that too.

HUO And so here is Alex's question for you: "What is the importance of the hand in your work? Does the hand matter to you? I think the obvious answer to the question in your case is yes, of course, because your work seems to deviate from contemporary ideas about reproduction as pertaining to painting in exchange for an upholding of traditions of craft and the handmade. But actually, many of your paintings are translated in the studio by assistant painters from your drawings and studies," which we see here. "So can the aura of the artist's hand be transferred by a studio assistant? What are your thoughts?"

JW Hmmm. This is an astute question, because it gets at a major fear of mine when I decided to have assistants help me make my paintings. The question I would ask myself is, would this now not be authentic? Would this now not be handmade by me? If anyone had asked me when I was younger whether I would let another person touch my work, I would have said, "Hell no. Not over my dead body." Because that's what I was taught in grad school. This relates to what we were discussing earlier, about where my catalogue raisonné begins. Another way of stating that question could be: Where do you start to make your mature work, or how are you maturing as an artist? Those sort of issues collided when I began to expand my practice. My studio was growing and I was figuring out my process: I draw things out, I mix all the colors, and I have people paint by numbers. At the beginning, to test the process, I made one work myself and I had an assistant make one, and then I asked my wife what she thought. Initially, I was really nervous that this way of working would detract from the idea of things being handmade. I want my hand and my line and my color to always be relevant. And now I think

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that the way I approach my work, having other people involved in the creation of it, doesn't sacrifice any of those things. So getting back to Alex's question—the hand *is* the most important thing in my work, because the line, the line and the shape of what I make with my hand, is what I'm interested in as a painter. It's crucial to my lineage as a painter, or the lineage I've sought to be a part of, those other artists I've looked up to, who are able to make a statement with two little squiggles on a piece of paper. You recognize that artist in the work because he or she has a particular touch. You have asked me about Calder or Matisse or Picasso or Van Gogh. They're all defined by their line. So, yes. The answer is *yes*. The hand is the ultimate, because it could never be anybody else's hand.

HUO And of course, the line is also in the portraits. Your catalogue raisonné begins with the portraits, and there are going to be portraits in Dallas. The people you've painted the most are basketball players, your mother, your father, I think. So can you talk a bit about the role of the portrait in your work?

JW When I decided I wanted to make an oil painting, my first thought was to paint the people in my family. I've just continued the tradition as a very intense wealth of emotional energy that I can tap. For me, it's very important to confront the mirror of this person. Sometimes the process can be fun and exciting, for instance if the subject is a basketball player that I really like. And sometimes it's difficult, if the subject is my mom or somebody that I'm emotionally connected to. I try to pick subjects who elicit strong responses in me, and obviously making a portrait of my parents a couple of years after they met in New Haven is really important to me. But I'm also simply responding to the way the picture is put together. A lot of these are conglomerations of images. They're not straight appropriations—I've added or manipulated elements. The *Sears Family Portrait*, for example, is just a portrait that we had shot in the commercial studio at Sears. I've dug into this giant archive of family photos and found things I can paint.

HUO And what about the animals in your paintings? Do they represent a kind of bestiary?

JW I think they're a reflection of growing up with a lot

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of animals. A lot of our family portraits include an animal or group of animals. My mom was kind of a hobbyist farmer, and we had goats and chickens and ducks and a parrot and different cats and dogs and rabbits and rats and cockatiels and geese and sheep. Not like a real farm—she was like the cat lady who, instead of having twenty-seven cats, had five goats and six chickens and a dog and some birds. These animals made their way into our family pictures, and that's the link to my paintings.

HUO You've mentioned that you always start small, and it's interesting that besides the photos you collect, you have things like basketball cards that are obviously readymades. But then you blow them up, and it's often the same player. What's the story with basketball, because already, in your early, pre–catalogue raisonné phase, in your psychedelic prints, there are some Red Sox t-shirts from the '90s. What's the obsession with—

JW Sports? I think it's an East Coast thing, and my dad was into sports. I grew up with a lot of kids who loved sports, and there's just a fervent sports thing. I loved all the Boston teams. I am just a diehard sports fan. And a sports portrait was a convenient readymade, as you say, when I needed a break from a difficult painting of my mother.

HUO Because the memories the work evoked were actually traumatic.

JW Yes, yes, horrible. Even painting friends can be an intense experience. So the readymade of the sports card was like, well, I don't know these people, but I can still practice portraiture. I think that was an important aspect of it. They're readymade portraits, so I don't need to confront the memories of actual interactions. It doesn't involve the same kind of psychic energy, but I can still work.

HUO Is the painting process fast or slow?

JW Slow, because I do a lot of things simultaneously, but I think if I were just working on one thing, it would probably be pretty fast.

HUO There are many parallel realities in a single work.

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JW: Yes. I just don't want to be the guy who comes into the studio and has to work on that one thing every day and then be sad about it.

HUO Let's talk about your interiors, and the connection to architecture. I was in the Calder archive in New York looking at his collaborations with architects. He worked with Oscar Niemeyer, he worked with Gordon Bunshaft, he worked with all the great architects of his time. Schindler's architecture is featured in your works, and its influence is felt in your modernist interiors. The Dallas show will feature some of these interiors, so how do they fit into your overall oeuvre?

JW I've created levels of subject matter in my paintings. The interiors have a lot of stuff in them, there's a lot of visual interaction, multiple vanishing points, and shifting perspectives. I look for those types of things. I'm interested in observing how somebody else put objects together in a space. I put these objects together in my interiors, but the configuration is based on what someone else has assembled. The space of the painting *Children's Garden* is where I went to preschool, and my dad actually helped to build it. I think I'm just interested in how these spaces are put together. I like the challenges that architecture presents. I like the challenges of making a portrait. I like the challenges of making a still-life painting. I like painting. It's fun.

HUO And what's your definition of painting? Gerhard Richter says it's the highest form of hope. What do you say?

JW The highest form of hope . . . I like that. It implies a new experience for somebody. Not like an acid trip, not that kind of experience, but the idea that you can take yourself somewhere else. My world is not real. My world is *painted*, but it's based on the world that we live in.

HUO That's a great definition. To come back to the interiors, they've been described as being uninhabited, which is not altogether true. Some of them are empty, others have people. What would you say about that? Are they inhabited? Uninhabited?

JW *I'm* definitely inhabiting all of them. When there's not a person there, for instance if I'm creating a group

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of plants, the painting is not about the absence of people. It's part of the tradition of making a painting that is a still life, defined as an interior. But it's still a still life. It doesn't move. There's nobody in the painting. It's set up. I'm painting from images that I assemble and move around, eliminating things I don't like and adding others that appeal to me. I would describe the painting as a stage, an empty stage. Sometimes there are players on the stage. And sometimes the painting's just the stage, and the stage looks cool.

Van Scoy, Susan A., “Jonas Wood,” *Landscape Painting Now: From Pop Abstraction to New Romanticism,* New York: D.A.P./Distributed Art Publishers, Inc., 2019, pp. 116-119

Jonas Wood

BORN 1977, BOSTON, MA, USA. LIVES AND WORKS IN LOS ANGELES, CA, USA

East Coast edge meets West Coast fresh in Jonas Wood's large-scale, Post-Pop landscapes. Wood, who was born in Boston and lives in Los Angeles, constructs his works using found imagery, old snapshots, other artists' works, and his own. He applies opaque paint in an affectless, paint-by-number style that creates patterns of condensed time and space. In his paintings he marries the personal and impersonal, past and present, flatness and depth, nature and industry.

In *Scholl Canyon 2* (2017), Wood depicts a golf course in Glendale, California, with putting greens and sand traps flattened into a camouflage pattern. Upon close inspection, the stone footpaths don't match up; the patchwork becomes more apparent in the sky, with visible seams of blue-gray, gray, and light blue. The striped towers in the upper left reference the Scholl Canyon golf course's history, which is complex and layered like the work itself—the course was built atop a landfill, and the methane gas produced by the landfill provides 7 percent of Glendale's energy. In *Maritime Hotel Pot with Aloe* (2014), Wood reverses the process. Rather than painting from a collection of clippings, he isolates an elevated view of New York's skyline overlooking the Hudson River within the adumbration of a potted plant—an appropriation of his wife's, Shio Kusaka's, ceramics. In what may be a self-referential nod, the pot is crowned with aloe—a "clipping" that can sprout roots and take on a new life wherever it is transplanted.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT

Landscape Pot with Yellow Orchid, 2014. Oil and acrylic on canvas, 118 x 90 inches (299.7 x 228.6 cm)

Untitled (M.V. Landscape), 2008. Oil on canvas, 120 x 156 inches (304.8 x 396.2 cm)

Maritime Hotel Pot with Aloe, 2014. Oil and acrylic on canvas, 120 x 76 inches (304.8 x 193 cm)

Van Scoy, Susan A., “Jonas Wood,” *Landscape Painting Now: From Pop Abstraction to New Romanticism,* New York: D.A.P./Distributed Art Publishers, Inc., 2019, pp. 116-119

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JONAS WOOD

Snowscape with Barn, 2017. Oil and acrylic on canvas, 106 x 120 inches (269.2 x 304.8 cm)

Van Scoy, Susan A., "Jonas Wood," *Landscape Painting Now: From Pop Abstraction to New Romanticism,* New York: D.A.P./Distributed Art Publishers, Inc., 2019, pp. 116-119

Scholl Canyon, 2007. Oil on canvas, 88 x 48 inches (223.5 x 121.9 cm)

Scholl Canyon 2, 2017. Oil and acrylic on canvas, 94 x 90 inches (238.8 x 228.6 cm)

Bourbon, Matthew, "Jonas Wood," *Artforum*, September 2019, pp. 264-265

DALLAS

Jonas Wood

DALLAS MUSEUM OF ART

Jonas Wood's first major solo museum exhibition happened to coincide with a showing of seventy works by the Impressionist Berthe Morisot. On the surface, the two artists' paintings are very different, but in fact their congruence is strong. Like Morisot, Wood depicts sentimental scenes of domestic life with family, friends, pets, and houseplants. Yet Wood's banal, recognizable subjects are often made to feel extraordinary through a colorful profusion of visual information and ornamentation, and a palette associated with a certain Southern California light, also found in the upbeat paintings of David Hockney. The resulting images are pleasing, even comforting, in their thematic plainness. His paint-by-numbers approach can at times feel predictable, even stodgy. The portraits are especially clunky. In most cases, the renderings of faces and bodies are unduly stiff and lack any countervailing élan. It is when this method is applied to a landscape or to interior spaces that the paintings are most impactful.

Jonas Wood, *Jungle Kitchen*, 2017, oil and acrylic on canvas, 100 × 93".

In the standout *Japanese Garden*, 2017, for example, on view here, Wood depicts a manicured landscape as a series of overlapping patterns. The canvas appears to have been sectioned off to contain smaller markings accumulating into a view of trees, rocks, and water. The collage-like puzzle of contiguous shapes and multihued surfaces builds to an optical crescendo that intensifies the rendering and sidesteps the sameness of Wood's technique. The picture is simultaneously schematic and observational.

Wood's predilection for patterns was also evident in *Jungle Kitchen*, 2017, where he has applied a curious treatment to the material objects within the scene. The mass of repetition in the bamboo blind is nearly discordant against the flat-green walls and cabinetry. The most interesting aspects of this work are the swaths of what could be floral wallpaper floating across the dishwasher, the drawers, and the backsplash. A bird improbably appears to either emerge from the wallpaper or fly inside the room. These optical slippages invite and reward careful scrutiny.

Despite the clumsy quality of most of Wood's portraits, a few transcend robotic simplification. An outstanding exception here was *Akio Takamori*, 2014, which exhibits Wood's typical technique but showcases a sensitivity not present in many of the other figurative works. Takamori's hand and neck are loosely brushed compared to his face, which is painted with slow and delicate layers. His visage is mirrored in a ceramic vessel he seems to be making, while other faces are represented on a jug and vase in the upper-right corner of the painting. This hall of mirrors, offset by a childlike rendering of art materials, creates a beguiling push and pull between the different manners of description.

Despite awkward limitations and some mawkish meanderings, Wood's oeuvre is graced by his enthusiasm for elaborating on the abstract within the quotidian. Wood, like Morisot, is a pictorial bricklayer intent on making the commonplace more than common.

—*Matthew Bourbon*

Cohen, Alina, “How Jonas Wood Got His Start as an Artist,” *Artsy.net*, June 28, 2019

How Jonas Wood Got His Start as an Artist

Alina Cohen | June 28, 2019

Jonas Wood, *Untitled (Self Portrait)*, 2006. © Jonas Wood. Courtesy of the artist and Black Dragon Society.

Artist Jonas Wood possesses one of contemporary painting’s most instantly recognizable aesthetics. His canvases depict plants and ceramics, often on shelves or in lush domestic interiors, rendered with a flattened perspective in vibrant hues. Yet Wood’s work is hardly formulaic. His subjects are merely vehicles for skillful, textured mark-making, which evolves year by year.

Success caught Wood (b. 1977) early. In 2006, four years after he graduated from the MFA program at the University of Washington, the Los Angeles art space Black Dragon Society gave him a solo show that launched his career. In the years since, he has participated in exhibitions from Tokyo to Dusseldorf, Los Angeles to Beirut. Through July 14th, the Dallas Museum of Art is mounting Wood’s first major solo museum presentation.

Wood now lives in Los Angeles with his wife, fellow artist Shio Kusaka, and their two children. Before he was settled and successful, though, Wood was floundering and alone, struggling to develop the discipline and practice that have led to over a decade of fruitful making.

How did you become interested in art?

My parents were into art. My dad was an architect. My mom was a drama teacher. They took me and my sisters to museums. I remember visiting the MFA Boston, where I grew up. Once, I saw a Lichtenstein landscape show there. We went to New York City and I saw MoMA and the Met.

Jonas at his parents house, Weston, MA, circa 1997. Courtesy of Wood Kusaka Studios.

A woman named Kimmy came to our house once a week to teach art to my sister and me. My sister, Augusta Wood, who's now a photographer, was already an amazing artist at around 12.

My grandfather collected art. He had this giant Francis Bacon painting that he'd bought in the '60s, hanging above the living room piano. It didn't mean that much to me at the time, but when I got to grad school I was like—holy shit, I grew up with a Bacon painting. My grandfather also had a blue Jackie O Warhol in his study.

I had learning disabilities and dyslexia—I got kicked out of public school in third grade because I was disruptive—but was good at puzzles and drawings. I was a maker. I think my parents pushed me to do that stuff as much as possible because it was rewarding for me. They weren't saying, "You should be an artist," but they thought it was good that I was making stuff.

I was in an environment where there was a lot of interesting art, but I don't know if I was really conscious of it until later.

Jonas Wood, *Untitled (Rosy)*, 2006. © Jonas Wood. Courtesy of the artist and Black Dragon Society

Jonas Wood, *Untitled (M Tree)*, 2006. © Jonas Wood. Courtesy of the artist and Black Dragon Society.

You got your bachelor's degree in psychology at Hobart and William Smith Colleges in New York, then decided to get your MFA. What made you decide to pursue art?

I was just somebody who made stuff. Maybe other people's perceptions were like, "This guy's an artist." But early on, it was just my hobby. I doodled, made colored pencil drawings, took undergraduate art courses. After my junior year of college, I finished my major in psychology and then reconsidered my plan: I always thought I wanted to be a doctor. Instead, I started learning to paint and get better at art. This was around 1999.

Out of college, I started working in a psychology lab—an fMRI lab with neuroscientist Deborah Yurgelun-Todd. I administered IQ tests to study participants. At the same time, a friend let me paint out of his barn. I painted all of my family members—already, I was just mining the stuff around me for material. I made enough work that I could try to get into painting school. Still, I didn't really see myself as an artist. It was when I got to grad school that I realized I had all this time to just do this one thing I'd been dabbling in my whole life.

Jonas Wood's graduate school studio, 2001. University of Washington, Seattle, WA. Courtesy of Wood Kusaka Studios.

Now, art is my life and my therapy, and if I don't do it, I'm not going to feel great. It definitely has saved me in some ways.

Were any instructors particularly helpful?

This college professor, Nick Ruth, told me I needed to learn how to draw and spend more time working. That was really good advice. He also suggested I go to the University of Washing-

Left-handed paintings. Jonas Wood, *Shio with Three Eyes*, 2002. © Jonas Wood. Courtesy of the artist.

Jonas Wood, *Untitled*, 2002. © Jonas Wood. Courtesy of the artist.

ton for my MFA and study with the person who’d taught him, Denzil Hurley, who shows at Canada Gallery. I applied to seven or eight schools and only got in there—which makes me think it was definitely nepotism. One person was vouching for me. If you look at my work from that time, it was so pedestrian; unrefined and underdeveloped, but I was ready to work.

I instantly connected with Denzil’s approach. He had this idea that you should be able to make the work even if you live in the woods by yourself in a cabin, without anyone coming over to tell you what’s good. You should be able to be critical of your work and push yourself to have a painting practice. I needed to learn that because I just had raw ambition and potent surroundings. Denzil was like the painting Yoda.

I knew I was a figurative artist. Denzil told me I shouldn’t paint from life, though. So I removed this mirror (which I was using so I could paint from life) from my studio and ended up having this horrible accident. The mirror shattered and a shard of glass cut my right hand really badly. I cut a tendon and nicked this nerve bundle. It was like this weird metaphor.

Jonas Wood, *Red Rug Still Life*, 2015, David Kordansky Gallery

This surgeon—who worked with dock workers who had accidentally cut their fingers off—had to sew my hand back together. I couldn’t use my right hand for four months. I finished the work for my thesis show with my left hand. They were these crazy paint-

ings with cartoonish shapes; angry paintings that wouldn't make any sense if you saw them. Since that time, I haven't painted from life.

How did you land on your signature style?

When I was in grad school, I made images with letters and numbers and tried different ways to mark-make and make a line—it was all over the place. I didn't have anything to hold onto. Then I started to develop these big, flat shapes and colors that pushed up against each other with different colors. The flatness comes from this idea that painting isn't real; it can be whatever you want it to be.

Jonas Wood, *Red Pot with Lute Player #2*, 2018, Gagosian

Jonas Wood, *Landscape Pot with Plant*, 2017, Gagosian

I wasn't giving myself enough time to mix paints before I tried to make an oil painting and move everything around and change all the colors. Everything would get muddy. It was like my brain was moving faster than my body. I couldn't even access my ideas. Finding myself as a painter was figuring out how to change things, so that I could get a result that matched what I was thinking of in the first place.

I started sourcing images, compiling pictures that I took (of plants, for example) or cut out of magazines, or that people gave me. I've always been super into color. I started picking out the most potent stuff, [combining] a bunch of found images to make a hybrid space. It just kept evolving.

"How I found my style" is hard to answer. I don't feel like I'm there yet. Even when I'm in a moment of making a lot of things, there's still this daily practice of putting colors and shapes together and figuring out the balance, adding details, and deciding whether it's interesting.

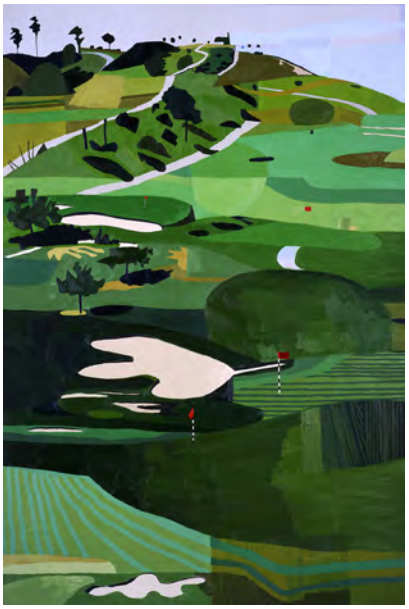
Image of Jonas Wood's notes. Courtesy of Wood Kusaka Studios.

I've had this strategy the whole time that I need to get better—as opposed to thinking that I'm the best. Painting practices are ever-evolving and cumulative. I'm just starting.

Did you have any mentors after graduate school?

When I first moved to Los Angeles in 2003, Matt Johnson, who shows at Blum & Poe and 303 Gallery, was like a mentor. He was the only person in the city that I knew. We went to high school together. He's really rad. When me and my wife moved to Los Angeles, he got us jobs. I worked for Laura Owens and Shio worked for Charlie Ray.

Working for Laura Owens was a big part of my development. I got to see how she made her art and applied some of those things to my own work. I'd never used an overhead projector before. What's fascinating about Laura is she made these smaller works on paper and then either projected them or used these huge pieces of paper where she would draw the shape of the painting. Her drawings were pretty automatic, but the paintings were all slowed down: She'd dissect these smaller drawings and studies, then rebuild them as paintings. That really clicked with me because I was more of an automatic drawer who needed to slow things down when I painted.



Jonas Wood, *Scholl Canyon*, 2007. © Jonas Wood. Photo by Joshua White. Courtesy of the artist and Anton Kern Gallery, New York.

Jonas Wood, Daisuke Matsuzaka, 2007. © Jonas Wood. Photo by Joshua White. Courtesy of the artist and Anton Kern Gallery, New York.

That strategy really unlocked my work and brought back some of my psychology experience, too. Not insight into a brain, but what happens in a lab. Like cooking. How do you formulate ideas and test them? It’s like a puzzle.

Laura also underpainted with a certain type of paint, and she overpainted with a different kind of paint. I ended up doing something similar—underpainting with acrylic and overpainting with oil. I saw how she organized her studio and got ready for shows and used materials. I feel very lucky that I had that job for a couple years.

We had a nice community in Los Angeles. Matt was just graduating from UCLA. My sister, Augusta, went to grad school out here for photography. I came to a community. Then in 2006, I had my first show, at Black Dragon Society. I met Mark Grotjahn, who bought some of the work and became a mentor and a really good friend.

I read that you met Mark Grotjahn through playing poker?

I’ve been playing poker with Matt Johnson, Jeff Poe, and Mark Grotjahn for 13 years. After I worked for Laura Owens, I worked for Matt. He was getting ready to do a show at Blum & Poe. Mark Grotjahn, Mark Richards, Bob White, Matt Johnson, and I got invited to play poker at Blum & Poe.

I knew who Mark Grotjahn was just from being in L.A. for three years. I had a big painting crush on him. Mark didn’t know that I was an artist. I definitely brought posters to Blum & Poe and said make sure Grotjahn gets one. He introduced me to Anton Kern and Shane Campbell, who both started showing me in 2007. Jeff Poe and Tim Blum got work from the Black Dragon show, too. It was like I instantly had an advocate.

What were the biggest obstacles when you got to L.A.?

The biggest obstacle early on was just not understanding how to put myself back together after grad school and access my power. My grad-school friend said I had a wild horse inside of me, and I needed to learn how to ride it.

Jonas and Mark Grotjahn during install of their collaborative show at T&SnKreps, New York, 2009. Courtesy of Wood Kusaka Studios.

I was around a lot of young artists in L.A. We were just trying to be artists. Me and my wife

Jonas and Shio Kusaka at University of Washington, Seattle, WA,

Shio, too. We got married right after grad school in 2002, and then broke up for a year and a half, mostly just because we just hadn't figured out how to make work. I was obsessed with that part of the struggle, trying to get traction and get people to pay attention. I remember feeling a lot of anguish. I just needed to get to that point where things started to click and it became more fun. Now I'm challenging myself, but it's super fun. I have access to this amazing thing. This line that can describe something that you can identify as me.

How did you meet Shio? How did you end up getting back together?

Shio worked at the art library at the University of Washington, which was in the same building as the grad studios. She was an undergraduate ceramicist senior, and I was a first-year painting grad student. She's five years older, but this was her third sort of undergraduate experience. She studied English, then accounting, and then tried out pottery when she was in Colorado, and a professor told her she should study in Seattle with Akio Takamori.

I was checking out an exorbitant amount of books because I was trying to learn about art. I'd thumb through the pages and paint at the same time, trying to study and see what I liked. When I saw her at the desk, I kind of hit on her. Then we saw each other at a bar and she introduced herself. We've been together ever since, except for when we broke up for a year and a half.

We never got a divorce. We got back together right before my show in 2006. We'd been seeing each other 8 months or 10 months after we broke up; being together, but not really being together. Then we

Jonas Wood, *Shio's Still Life*, 2006. © Jonas Wood. Courtesy of the artist and Black Dragon Society.

moved into a house together. I guess it was mostly about getting to a place where I could handle somebody else. Selfishly, I guess we both needed our own time to get there.

If we hadn't broken up early on, we never would have made it. Obviously, it worked out because we have two kids. Since we got back together in 2006, we've shared studio space. We figured it out.

Did you ever feel any sense of rejection early on?

Oh, yeah. When I first moved to L.A., I set up a studio visit with some gallery and they never showed up. I felt like I was ready to show right when I got to L.A., and it wasn't happening. It was for the best—it would have been a fucking disaster if I showed right off the bat.

What would you consider your breakthrough moment?

Jonas Wood, *Make It Talk, Teodoro*, 2006. © Jonas Wood. Courtesy of the artist and Black Dragon

There were a few paintings right after grad school where I started to put it together. But I think I really started to feel secure after my 2006 Black Dragon show. I had my first real stage, and people were paying attention. I didn't need a job after that. It's like if you're in a band and you can go on tour instead of working at the bar.

I was just so happy to have a show in the town where I was living. People were going to see it. It's every young artist's dream, right?

“Good Wood,” *Art & Antiques*, May 2019, p. 36

Art & ANTIQUES

Good Wood

THE DALLAS MUSEUM of Art is currently hosting the first major solo museum exhibition of Los Angeles-based painter Jonas Wood (through July 14). The mid-career survey puts 33 works from a span of 13 years on view, showcasing Wood's celebrated playful and graphic style.

Wood's colorful and compressed paintings feature the people, places, and things that

populate his daily life. Deeply psychological, the artist's figurative depictions express the notion that the illusory images conjured by memory form one's ever-evolving sense of biography.

Sears Family Portrait (2011, oil and acrylic on linen) recreates the common family photograph taken in the department store photo studio—a keepsake that is uniquely personal yet generically awkward. *Calais Drive* (2012, oil and acrylic on canvas), a Matisse-like view through a window, shows a man standing near a pool in a suburban backyard. The surrounding palm trees and sunny atmosphere bring the the L.A.-inspired works of David Hockney to mind. Wood is a master of depicting cluttered, plant-filled

interiors. *Night Bloom Still Life* (2015, oil and acrylic on canvas) is a twist on the canonical still life with potted houseplants, while *Jungle Kitchen* (2017, oil and acrylic on canvas) pictures a suburban kitchen covered in patterns of flora and fauna.

Ovitz's Library (2013, oil and acrylic on canvas), a highlight of the show, recreates the library in art collector Michael Ovitz's Los Angeles home. An onslaught of precise geometric details, the painting, though highly representational, mirrors post-war abstraction in its compression of line and shape. Featuring a plethora of books and artworks, the image showcases how a space can communicate information about the person who inhabits it, whether he or she is present or not.

THE BROAD ART FOUNDATION, COURTESY THE ARTIST AND DAVID KORDANSKY GALLERY, LOS ANGELES, PHOTOGRAPHER CREDIT: BRIAN FORREST; WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, NEW YORK; GIFT OF LINDA MACKLOWE, 2016.124, COURTESY THE ARTIST AND GAGOSIAN, PHOTOGRAPHER CREDIT: BRIAN FORREST; YUSAKU MAEZAWA COLLECTION, CHIBA, JAPAN, COURTESY THE ARTIST AND DAVID KORDANSKY GALLERY, LOS ANGELES, PHOTOGRAPHER CREDIT: BRIAN FORREST

Donoghue, Katy, “A Modern-Day Matisse: Jonas Wood at the DMA,” *Whitewall.art*, April 11, 2019

whitewall

A Modern-Day Matisse: Jonas Wood at the DMA

By Katy Donoghue | April 11, 2019

Jonas Wood, *Sears Family Portrait*, 2011, oil and acrylic on linen, 44 x 32 in. Photo by Thomas Müller. Private collection, courtesy of the artist and Anton Kern Gallery, New York.

Currently on view at the Dallas Museum of Art is the first major solo exhibition of work by Jonas Wood. The Los Angeles–based artist captures quotidian life, working from personal photographs, capturing landscapes, family, and the interior life.

On view through July 14 are 35 paintings made over the past five years. Whitewaller spoke with Anna Katherine Brodbeck, the Nancy and Tim Hanley Associate Curator of Contemporary Art at the Dallas Museum of Art, to learn more about the show.

WHITEWALLER: How did you begin the process with Jonas Wood of selecting works to include in the exhibition, which includes around 35 works made over more than a decade?

ANNA KATHERINE BRODBECK: I became interested in how Jonas often thought of his works in terms of the traditional categories of still life, landscape, and portraiture; the museum now has representative works from all three genres. We selected works from these genres that were exemplary, and from those selections themes started to emerge that helped us make further selections.

WW: How will the show be laid out. Is it chronologically?

AKB: The show will not be arranged chronologically, but, rather, by genre, with a special attention paid to the evolution of the show’s major theme.

WW: Is there an evolution in theme, subject matter, or technique that’s apparent in the show?

AKB: The theme that emerged through taking a deep dive into Wood’s practice is how he uses his own biography as source material to tell stories of universal relevance, and how self-presentation is tied to larger themes found in art history and, more broadly, in visual culture, that have found new urgency in the digital era.

WW: Can you tell us about how the artist is drawn toward certain subject matter, like interiors, loved ones, and landscapes?

AKB: Jonas is a painter of quotidian life, much like the modern and Pop artists, like Henri Matisse and David Hockney, whose work he reveres. However, it is how he uses that subject matter allegorically to explore larger issues that I find most compelling.

WW: What about his painting, do you think, exudes that sense of familiarity?

AKB: Jonas often works from found and family photographs, which serve a function that is almost bound to be nostalgic. You can just sense the personal connection to the subject matter. Yet Wood creates preparatory collages out of these photographs— cutting and pasting them into new configurations, combining moments from distinct temporalities—and that act of manipulation by the artist is crucial. What looks like fact might actually be fiction, and that resonates with the digital age as well.

WW: What is the earliest work on view?

AKB: The earliest work in the show is a portrait of Philip Guston, based on a photograph that was published in a retrospective of the artist’s work at the Fort Worth Modern. If you google “Guston,” it is the first image that comes up, demonstrating how the digital circulation of images has had a profound impact on our internal image banks.

WW: Will there be any new work included in the show, or pieces that haven’t been widely shown?

AKB: Many works from the exhibition come from the past year. And his Tennis Ball wallpaper is reconfigured each time it is shown, making it a new work of art each time it is installed. However, I am most excited to include rarely seen early works, like The Still Life from 2007, which is exemplary of some of the darker themes implicit in Jonas’s work that are seldom discussed, such as the passage of time and an awareness of our own mortality.

Dobrzynski, Judith H., "'Jonas Wood': Interiors Gone Wild," *The Wall Street Journal*, April 2, 2019, p. A13

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

ART REVIEW

'Jonas Wood': Interiors Gone Wild

BY JUDITH H. DOBRZYNSKI

Dallas

PLANTS, POTS, FLOWERS, birds, cats, dogs, modernist furniture, books, toys—even a kitchen sink. And a toilet. From these quotidian objects, along with his relatives and associates, Jonas Wood fashions large, lush, dense paintings that reflect his life and his surroundings, not necessarily as they occurred but as filtered through his memory and his emotional mind-set.

Visually, these paintings are striking, as visitors to "Jonas Wood"—a midcareer survey for him—at the Dallas Museum of Art will see. Using photographs and magazine pictures as source materials—sometimes just as they are, sometimes manipulated or made into a mélange—Mr. Wood (b. 1977) creates flat, graphic, realistic images with a dollop of Pop. He uses bright, appealing colors. He sometimes compresses or distorts the spaces, but not in a disorienting way—doors, windows, trees are just a bit misaligned. He makes paintings you want to hang in your modern home.

A stainless-steel kitchen sink, for example, has rarely looked as attractive as it does in "Jungle Kitchen" (2017), which is based on an image Mr. Wood found in a 1970s design magazine. The sink is engulfed by verdant ferns and broad-leafed plants, both real, seen through a window, and on wallcoverings that are dotted with yellow and purple flowers. The highly patterned "Untitled (Fish Bathroom)" (2009), which is dominated by a shower curtain awash in red fish, is almost as appealing. "Japanese Garden" (2017) trumps them both: This enchanting scene of greens and blues seems contemplative, even a bit mysterious.

JONAS WOOD/DAVID KORDANSKY GALLERY, LOS ANGELES/BRIAN FORREST

Jonas Wood's 'Jungle Kitchen' (2017)

Dobrzynski, Judith H., "'Jonas Wood': Interiors Gone Wild," *The Wall Street Journal*, April 2, 2019, p. A13

On closer examination, many of Mr. Wood's interior and landscape paintings have a slightly disquieting feel. They generally lack people. A few, like "Ovitz's Library" (2013), which portrays a modernist room in the Los Angeles home of the erstwhile Hollywood agent Michael Ovitz, seem sterile. And yet, painted with brio, Mr. Wood's paintings suggest not alienation, but detachment.

Mr. Wood's proclivity for things over people diminishes, of course, in his portraits, which occupy two of the five galleries in this exhibition. One focuses on family, and these works play up Mr. Wood's interest in psychology and the passage of time. The pairing his mother, Robin. She is portrayed in profile, with her face all but hidden behind her tightly hugged cat. "Robot" shows Mr. Wood meeting the viewer's gaze, a shaggy dog in his arms. The message: He's friendly and open, she's not.

In "Sears Family Portrait" (2011), the smiles on the faces of Mr. Wood's parents and siblings may be pasted on, like those in so many staged photographs, but the work is less judgmental. So are his other portraits here, which portray artists, such as his friend Mark Grotjahn. Straightforward and benign, they are less interesting than his interiors traying a single flower, with foliage, on a blank background. They are meant to impress, to hold a wall, and they do.

Calculated wall power, in fact, could be a theme of this exhibition. Mr. Wood is a sports fan—baseball cards, basketballs and players figure in his works, though not in the 35 paintings chosen by curator Anna Katherine Brodbeck for this show—and you can see him swinging for the fences. Soon after arriving in Los Angeles (from Boston, originally) and beginning his career, Mr. Wood painted "The Still Life" (2007)—an assortment of crates and plants, with chair, screen and drops heavy hints about his ambition with his allusions to giants of art history.

He cites Alexander Calder as a major influence, and both "Ovitz's Library" and "Clipping E2" (2013) incorporate Calder mobiles. Other images, in pose or color or composition, refer to the work of David Hockney, Stuart Davis, Picasso, Rousseau and Vuillard, to name a few. Patterns repeatedly run through his paintings, as they did Matisse's, and Mr. Wood's "Clippings" series recalls both Matisse cutouts and Ellsworth Kelly plant drawings. Like Jasper Johns, Mr. Wood uses hatchwork—for example, to create the snow-laden tree branches of his lovely "Snowscape With Barn" (2017).

The contemporary painter, enjoying his first museum solo show, creates flat, graphic, realistic images with a dollop of Pop

That painting also contains what may be his most brazen reach for greatness by association. In a famous story from 1832, as John Constable was laboring to enrich the colors of a nearly finished masterpiece at the Royal Academy, J.M.W. Turner upstaged him by adding a bright red buoy with one daub to his own almost monochromatic seascape hanging nearby. Could it be a coincidence that Mr. Wood plants a red shovel in his snow scene in about the same spot on his canvas as Turner's buoy?

One can't blame Mr. Wood for great aspirations, but something else is troubling about this exhibition, and it's related. The museum says it chose Mr. Wood for his first major museum exhibition, from a universe of hundreds of other rising contemporary artists, because several Dallas museum patrons collect his work. And with loans from several high-profile collectors from elsewhere around the world, and major support from his powerhouse New York gallery, the exhibit seems too close to the market for comfort. This may be the way of the museum world today, but it makes it hard to avoid skepticism about the long-term merit of these agreeable paintings.

Jonas Wood
Dallas Museum of Art, through July 14

Ms. Dobrzynski writes about arts and culture for the Journal and other publications.

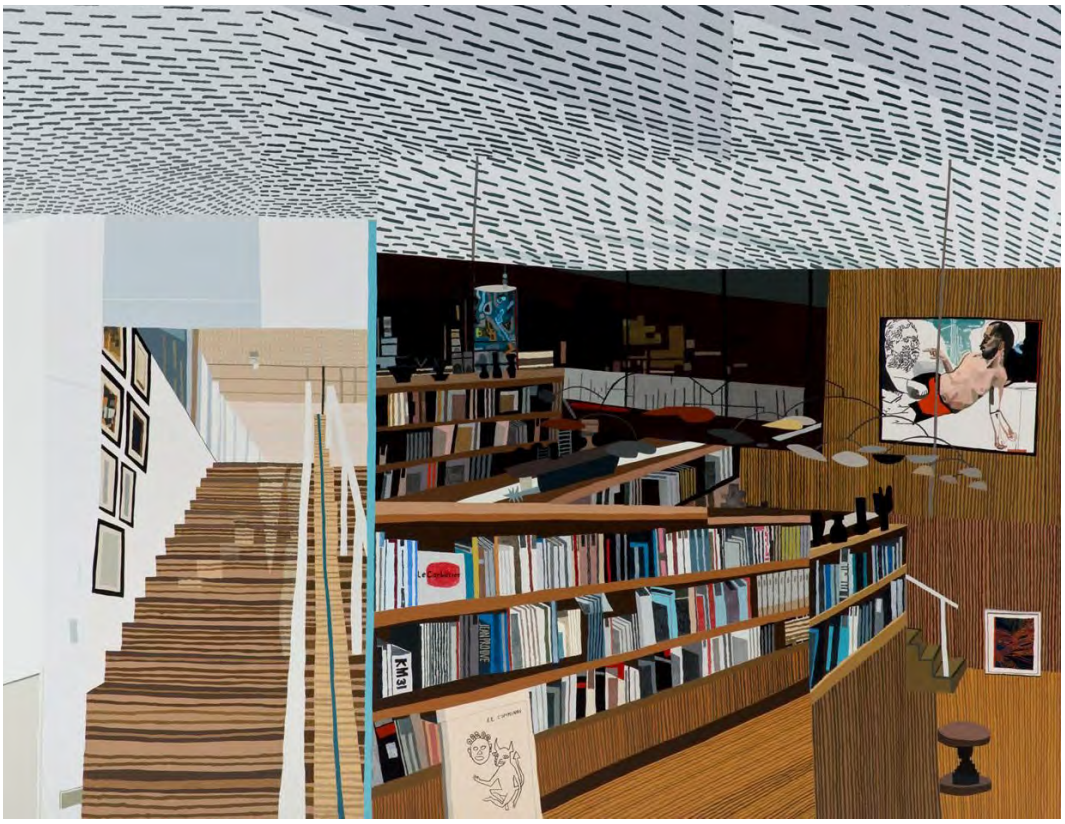
Dobrzynski, Judith H., "'Jonas Wood' Review: Interiors Gone Wild," *WSJ.com*, April 1, 2019

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

'Jonas Wood' Review: Interiors Gone Wild

The contemporary painter creates flat, graphic, realistic images with a dollop of Pop.

By Judith H. Dobrzynski | April 1, 2019



Jonas Wood's 'Ovitz's Library' (2013) PHOTO: JONAS WOOD/ANTON KERN GALLERY, NEW YORK/BRIAN FORREST

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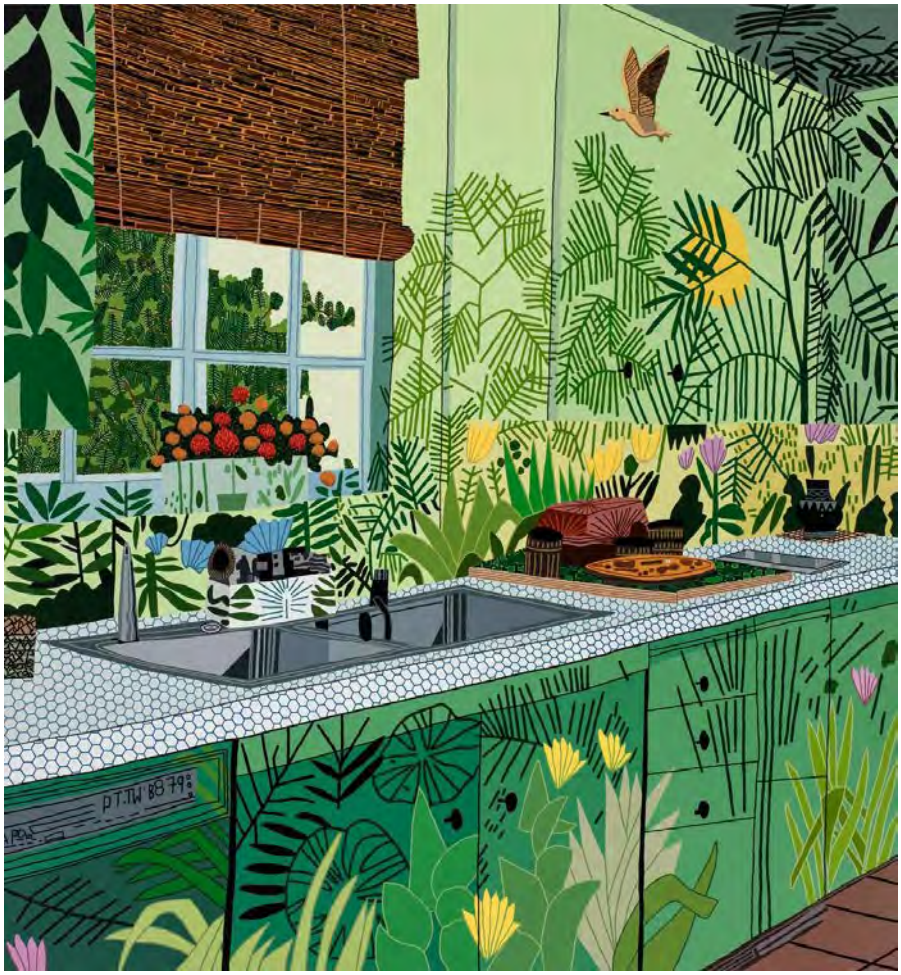

Jonas Wood's 'Jungle Kitchen' (2017) PHOTO: JONAS WOOD/DAVID KORDANSKY GALLERY, LOS

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Jonas Wood's 'Snowscape With Barn' (2017) PHOTO: JONAS WOOD/DAVID KORDANSKY GALLERY, LOS ANGELES/BRIAN FORREST

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Pobric, Pac, "'I Was So Afraid for Way Too Long': Painter Jonas Wood on How Going It Alone Helped Him Survive His Immense Market Success," *Artnet.com*, March 28, 2019

artnet

'I Was So Afraid for Way Too Long': Painter Jonas Wood on How Going It Alone Helped Him Survive His Immense Market Success Wood's First Major Solo Museum Exhibition

Wood's advice for young artists trying to make a living? Don't take money from dealers.

Pac Pobric | March 28, 2019

The artist Jonas Wood in his studio. Photo by Brian Forrest, courtesy of the artist.

Jonas Wood is not shy. He won't hold back, takes aim when he fires, and doesn't seem concerned about ruffling anyone's feathers. He's also busy—very, very busy—and seems to have a lot on his mind.

When artnet News spoke with the artist earlier this month, he was preparing for the first institutional survey of his work at the Dallas Museum of Art, which opened last week. The show is a real boon; although Wood has earned a solid reputation for his lush interiors, tender portraits, and vibrant still lifes, which he has shown in dozens of commercial gallery exhibitions, museum support has largely eluded him until now. Not that he has much time to bask in his success. In April, Gagosian will present new works by the artist in New York, which means he has to quickly shift gears and look ahead.

Yet one of his guiding principles, which he restated repeatedly throughout the interview, is how it's essential to pause and re-calibrate. The art world moves fast. Pressures mount quickly and tastes can change on a whim. There are always more requests than there is time. So it's absolutely necessary, he says, to carve out space to think.

As far as that's concerned, Wood has an excess of experience, and he's never short on advice. We spoke with the artist about how he navigates the hot market for his work, why artists shouldn't take advances from dealers, and why he refuses to take commissions.

The press release for the Dallas show mentions that your work "resonates with a wide audience." Who would you say you paint for? Is there a particular audience you have in mind?

I think, "What artist do I want to hang my paintings next to? Where do I want to fit in?" So that's sort of a dead audience, maybe. But I think I'm probably painting for me, to see if I can top myself or top my fears or top my friends. Not in like a ranking, but just trying to create a masterpiece, trying to make the work that transcends us, I guess. I think it happens to be that I have a broad audience right now. Maybe that's not always the case, but the reason I paint is not for those people. I think it's for my own mental health and for my own sort of goals as a painter, but I'm aware of the viewer.

Pobric, Pac, "'I Was So Afraid for Way Too Long': Painter Jonas Wood on How Going It Alone Helped Him Survive His Immense Market Success," *Artnet.com*, March 28, 2019

What's your working process like?

I work from photos. I collect photos, ones I've taken or I've appropriated or that other people have sent to me. And then I either make a collage of those things or work directly from photos. And a bunch of times, I'll make a drawing from a found photo, a photo collage, or photo I took, and then make a painting from that drawing.

I'm not a spontaneous painter. But the spontaneity of being able to paint directly from the photo as opposed to always having to use the drawing is sort of where it deviates. And I do a variety of things in between, either making more 2D models to work from or just using the [first] 2D model.

Speaking of models, I recall you saying in another interview that you read Painting as Model by Yve-Alain Bois when you were a student, and one of the things he emphasizes is that painting is its own way of thinking.

Yeah, that's big for me. Because as a figurative painter people say, "Your paintings are so comic book." Or, "Your paintings are so flat," or "The colors are strange." And I'm like, "It's just a painting. It's a painting. I know it's a painting, and therefore it doesn't have to have the kind of rules that you think it should have."

Jonas Wood, *Calais Drive* (2012). Courtesy of the artist and David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles. Photo: Brian Forrest.

Everyone basically has their own set of rules when they're limiting themselves and practicing within a very specific set of procedures that are still flexible—like jazz, or cooking. You sort of just have to be creative. Cooking, you have to know the temperature. And what kind of pan? What are the right ingredients?

What are some more of those other irrelevant questions people ask you?

Okay, so I get asked this question a lot. "How long does it take you to make something?" Or, "How many paintings do you make in a year?" And I don't really know, because those are two things that I choose to not think about because I don't think it's relevant—especially because I work on a lot of paintings at once. So it's really hard to determine the amount of time I actually spend on them.

And the other thing is, "How many paintings do you sell a year?" I think a lot of people think it's some formula that I've cracked to get this far. And I didn't want to know how many paintings I made because it doesn't really matter. I think it matters how many paintings you release, and that makes you edit so you only release your best work. And you just sort of hold tight and you save things.

I'm sure a lot of young artists are thinking about this. What advice would you give? How do you navigate the tremendous pressures of having to produce for the market, or for an art fair? How do you stay sane and continue to be productive and happy with your work?

Okay. That's a good question, and I can answer it. When I was younger and starting out, I got advice from Mark Grotjahn. It was 2007 when I met him, so he was huge in LA. He already had an office, he already had somebody working for him. He had people helping him out. Mark's one of my best friends. And I got advice from Laura Owens. I worked with Laura Owens. And I got this really good advice—and from other people too—which was just, if you want to separate yourself from the noise, you've got to create some distance.

Jonas Wood, *Jungle Kitchen* (2017). Courtesy of the artist and David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles. Photo: Brian Forrest.

You've got to hire [somebody to run] an office. You've got to protect yourself. Because the nature of a gallery is to ask you for work to sell. And if you're popular, or if you're doing well, they're never going to be like, "Do you know what? You should take a break. We don't want to sell your work for a year." Unless they're trying to do some sort of crazy market scam where they're going to jack it all up or whatever.

I get there are some dealers who are giving you good advice. But inherently, they're just going to want to sell, and they're hoping that you're the one who's going to stop them. But when you're younger, you're very afraid that the dealers hold all the power. They can cut you off. They're not going to sell your work anymore. So I got this advice: set up an office. I was getting requests and stuff, but at least it was getting filtered through my people. And then I was talking with a person that I wanted to talk to, on my time, and start figuring out what I wanted to do. And I knew I was selling the work more and more, and I was more aware that, "Hey, this is a collaboration. This isn't a dictatorship."

This is where I'm at now, and it took years, because I was always giving extra work and not really thinking about it. Another thing was just saving my own work and not being so greedy, and being aware that, okay, $5,000 now is $5,000 now. If I sell three more paintings, yes, I'll get a little bit more money, but it's not like life-changing money. Maybe I should start holding onto things for myself and not selling everything.

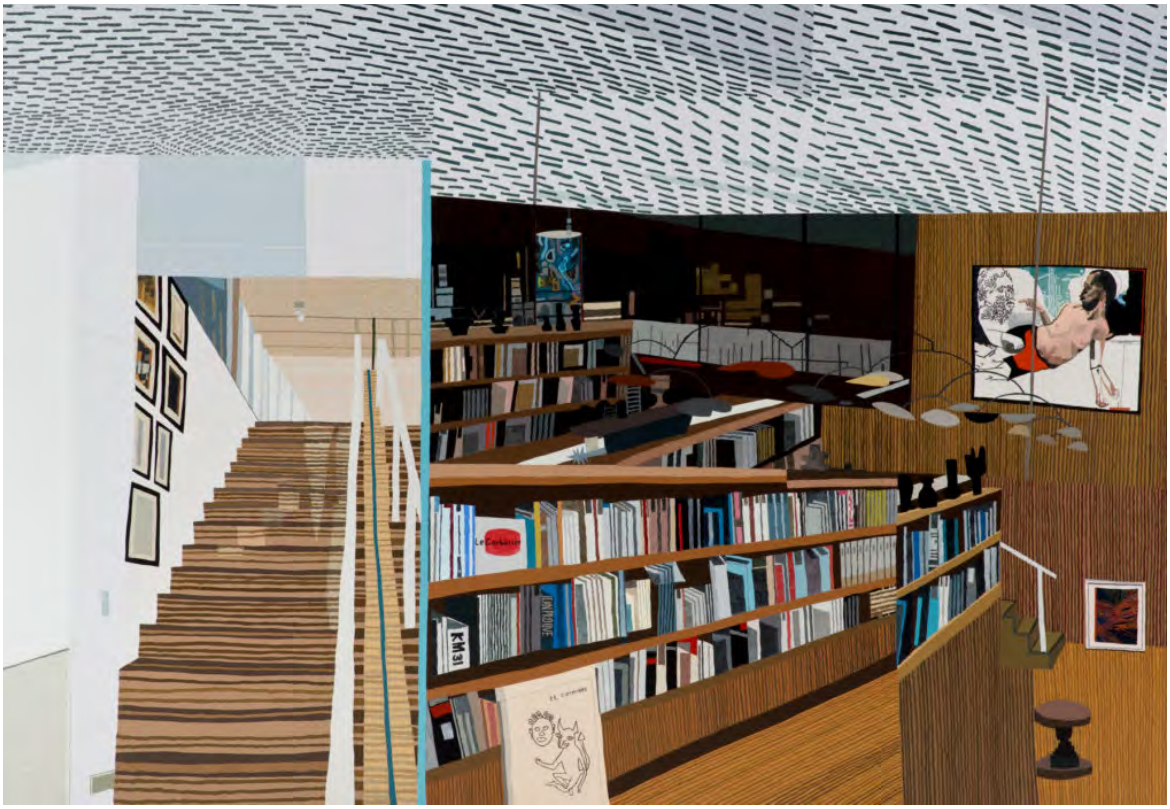
I mean, the dealers are going to hate hearing this, but maybe they won't. Maybe it's good because they want an empowered artist. But they would offer to give me money to buy stretchers and buy stuff for my studio, and I didn't really want them to buy stuff for me because I didn't want them to know how many paintings I was making. I wouldn't want to have to have them buy 10 stretchers and then expect for them to give them 10 paintings. I didn't want any pressure, because I was already putting tremendous pressure on myself to paint, because I was so motivated. And obviously that's a big reason why I've gotten to where I am today, because I was working really hard.

So don't take too much from art dealers?

Yeah, just not taking money from dealers. Probably the biggest thing for me is that I was like, "Hey, I'm not a commission artist. I don't take orders like a short order cook. So I would prefer not to know what anybody wants." If a dealer's like, "You've got to make 20 of these paintings huge," I would say, this person's probably a fucking idiot.

It goes back to your first question. I wasn't painting for that audience. I was painting for me, and I knew that I didn't want to paint for the collector audience. I wanted to paint for me. I love collectors. But I knew that was a trap. Luckily all the dealers I ever worked with are really cool about it. Nobody comes at me with those type of things, and that's really great because I know that I don't operate that way.

So establishing that was really important for me because I was able to keep my practice open. I didn't want to be pigeon-



Jonas Wood, *Ovitz's Library* (2013). Courtesy of the artist and Anton Kern Gallery, New York. Photo: Brian Forrest

holed right away. I showed a lot of different kinds of work, and I didn't really cut myself off and be like, "He's the tennis court painter." Or, "He's the sports portrait painter," or, "He's the guy who makes the still life." I guess I'm kind of all of those things, which is better than just being one of those things

I also had the benefit of having this really crazy thing happen when I had my first show in Los Angeles. In 2006, I showed with Black Dragon Society, which doesn't even exist anymore, and Anton Kern and Shane Campbell each offered me a show from that show. But Black Dragon Society kicked me out because I wouldn't consign the work through them to Anton Kern. They told me that I shouldn't interface with Anton Kern, that they would do all the talking for me and basically told me to go to my studio and paint. And I knew that was wrong. So I basically said, "No. I'll keep showing it through your gallery, but I'm not going to consign the work through you. I'm going to show it in New York, and let's see how it goes." And they just sent me an email the next day and said, "We're kicking you out of the gallery."

And then I had no gallery in Los Angeles and that was a really big deal, because I didn't have a hometown dealer. And I had the trust of Anton Kern and Shane Campbell. They were my only two galleries for like six years.

And then after that, you did get an LA gallery, David Kordansky.

David moved his gallery close to my studio in Los Angeles and had been courting me. And I was just like, "I don't know if I can do this," even though me and David are the same size, because I wanted something bigger. But it turns out working with David in 2012 was obviously one of the best things I ever did. We're the same age, and we're friends, and we're growing together. So that was a big deal. All these circumstances helped lead to me to realize that I was more in control than I thought I was when I was younger.

But that's the hardest thing when you're really young, isn't it? You just don't know, and you're afraid that—

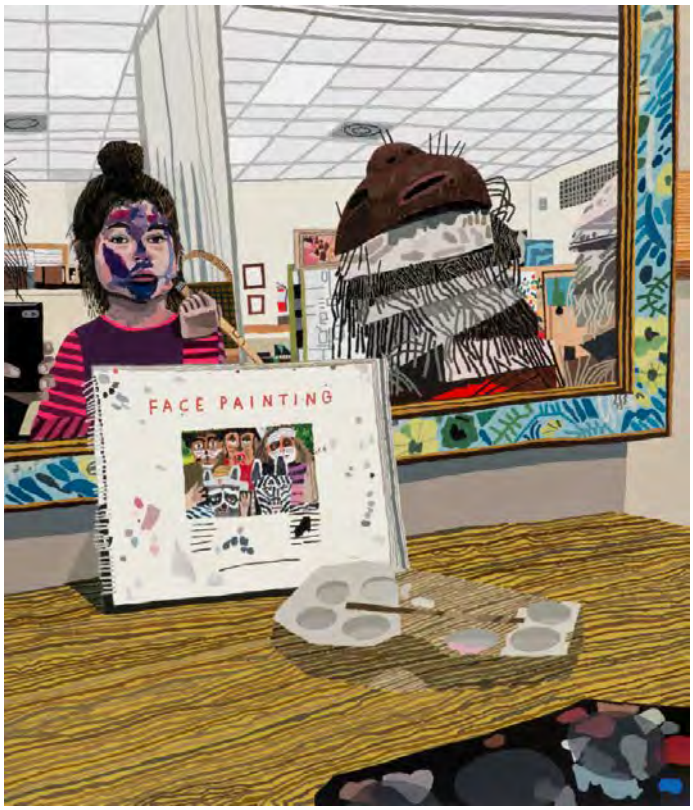
Look, I was so afraid for way too long. I should have been less afraid in certain circumstances where I made mistakes,

for sure. Because you just don't know your worth. And even now, I'm not—I don't see myself as other people see me. I don't come to my studio and think, "I'm the fucking best." That's not really how I view myself anyway.

But you do see cases all the time where artists get chewed up very quickly.

Well, yeah, because I think there's a lot of greed from both sides—from the artists too. There's the pushy dealer, but somebody on the other side has to be saying "yes." The dealer is pushy inherently, because how else are they going to get work? I mean, to a certain degree. But the chewed up thing is also [about] people's misconceptions about art and art-making and painting. When you're starting out, you're like a micro, little, mini-baby, and you're supposed to be having this super-long career.

And I think people lock into these modes of working, making, where they create this line of stuff. And then if they're making all these green paintings, and then they go red, everybody's like, "What the fuck?" I don't know. I didn't go to a school where there was any talk about the market.



Jonas Wood, *Face Painting* (2014). Courtesy of the artist and David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles. Photo: Brian Forrest.

Do you think there should be talk about the market in art school?

Well, when I was at school in 2002 at the University of Washington, my goal was to teach at a liberal arts school, have a studio on campus, have the summers off. That was probably my ideal.

But that was a different time, even in the history of the art market. You have people now finishing school with $200,000 in debt thinking they'll be great artists, yet they have no idea how to even find a gallery. So it seems like a disservice not to talk about the art market. But what else do you think they should be talking about in art school?

Well, the mental fortitude of the whole thing. Man, it's fucking tough because people say crazy shit about your work. You have to be super thick-skinned, and it's hard. That's a big part of it. I would say that you just have to take all that energy back to your studio and try to be critical in your own way and just take that criticism. Just say, "Okay, yeah, I'm going to fucking keep looking because maybe these people have a point."

But that type of shit is tough. Dealers saying crazy shit, your friends saying crazy shit, collectors saying crazy shit, having a show where you don't sell a bunch of stuff. That shit is tough.

Well you're getting a lot of positive reinforcement. There's the show in Dallas and another one now at Gagosian in New York in April.

No, it's great. Having shows is the best thing ever. I love the theater of it. I like that people don't know what they're going to see when they come. I like to surprise people. And I can't even say it's just me. It's me and my wife's whole journey together as artists. I met her [ceramicist Shio Kusaka] in Seattle. I was super young. We got married, and then it coincided with us both really wanting to make art. We share staff members and a studio and kids, of course. And we appropriate each other's work, but we actually don't make objects together. We just have created this environment together that's super creative and potent and fun and beautiful in our own way, together. We're the best because we're together.

Gempel, Natalie, "Dallas Museum of Art Opens Jonas Wood's First Major Solo Museum Exhibition," *DMagazine.com*, March 27, 2019

Dallas Museum of Art Opens Jonas Wood's First Major Solo Museum Exhibition

Go see the contemporary painter's vivid landscapes and sentimental dream worlds.

By Natalie Gempel | March 27, 2019

Jonas Wood, *Snowscape with Barn*, 2017, oil and acrylic on canvas, 106 x 120 in., Dallas Museum of Art, TWO x TWO for AIDS and Art Fund, 2018.22, courtesy the artist and David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles, photographer credit: Brian Forrest

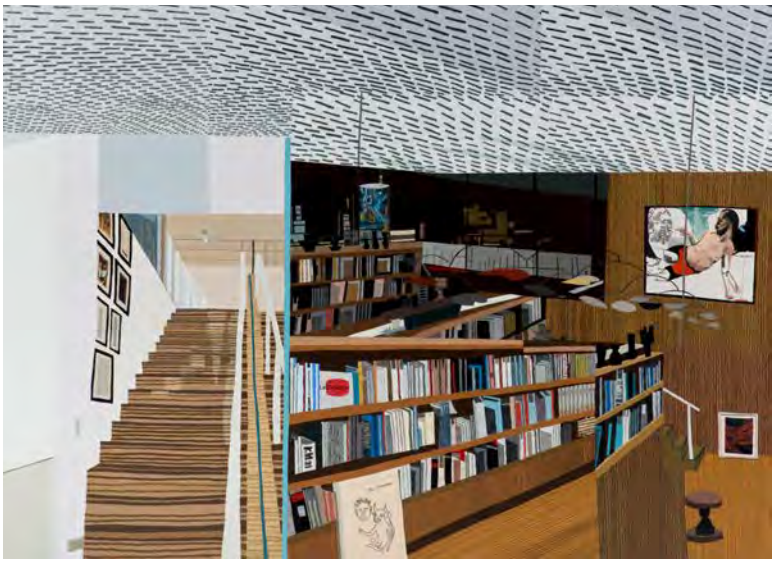
In the 13 years since quitting his day job, Jonas Wood has had a meteoric rise in the art world. The 42-year-old American painter has been collected by the Met, MOMA, LACMA, Guggenheim, and Whitney, to name a few. He generated $13.2 million in sales in 2018, claiming the top spot on the ArtNet Intelligence Report for "ultra-contemporary" artists (born after 1974). The year before that, he was in Dallas for the TWO X TWO art auction, where a single painting of his sold for $1.2 million. And this week, he celebrated the opening of his first major solo museum exhibition, a mid-career survey on view at the Dallas Museum of Art.

The exhibit is a selection of 30-something paintings, mostly large-scale works depicting everyday scenes in intense color and geometry. They are portraits of his family, images of lived-in spaces, landscapes. It reads like a journal of Wood's observations, but it's ultimately a work of fiction, made from a collage of the artist's memories, fascinations, and pictures he found online.

It's nothing revolutionary, just clean-cut contemporary art with personality and sharp taste (in one living room scene, there's a mobile by Alexander Calder, whose artwork Wood's grandfather collected). You'll appreciate it more when you discover the underlying layers of intimate details, like the portrait of his daughter in his own childhood bedroom, surrounded by toys which belonged to his sister, or the inclusion of ceramics by his wife, artist Shio Kusaka, in the paintings.

There's something wonderfully modern, maybe even on-trend, about Wood's aesthetic. It's at once sophisticated and rudimentary, sober and surreal. You'll sense the impact when you walk up to 10-foot-tall canvases. It feels nice to spend a bit of time in the artist's world, surrounded by beautiful decor and thriving house plants.

Jonas Wood is on view at the Dallas Museum of Art through July 14. It's free to attend and definitely worth the trip.



Jonas Wood, *Ovitz's Library*, 2013. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Gift, Anton Kern Gallery, New York, and the artist, 2013, 2013.55, courtesy the artist and Anton Kern Gallery, New York, photographer credit: Brian Forrest

McGregor, Michael, “Jonas Wood FaceTimed Us To Talk Exotic Coffins and the Time He Ended Up On Lebron James’s Instagram,” *InterviewMagazine.com*, March 22, 2019

Interview

JONAS WOOD FACETIMED US TO TALK EXOTIC COFFINS AND THE TIME HE ENDED UP ON LEBRON JAMES’S INSTAGRAM

By Michael McGregor | March 22, 2019

‘The Still Life,” 2007.

A child painting their own face. Tropical plants. Basketballs. Milk crates. More basketballs. These are just some of the banal exotica that appear in the work of Jonas Wood. By now, you’re just as likely to see the Los Angeles-based painter’s work on Instagram as you are in a white-walled gallery, a major museum, on the shelf at Dover Street Market, or even on Lebron James’s social media. Wood’s paintings and prints are hyper-specific tableaus of contemporary life. They ooze nonchalance. They look a bit like the way a stoned philosophy major sounds when spouting oblique references. As references go, it’s not far from how Wood sounded himself when he FaceTimed with Interview ahead of his first solo museum show, opening this weekend at the Dallas Museum of Art.

The 42-year-old is just as likely to spout off minute details regarding the composition of Alex Katz paintings as he is to make playful pajama sweatsuits with basketballs on them (which he sold, briefly, at Dover Street Market.) A self-described “artist who likes sports,” Wood’s output and interests operate according to a stupefying kind of logic. As he told us, “It’s all stuff I’m just interested in.” Moments after we picked up his FaceTime, Wood proceeded to light a joint and tilt his iPhone upwards, so he could tell us about his fetish for courtside seats, his appreciation for a Ghanaian coffin artist, and that one time he partied with the mysterious fashion icon James Goldstein — all while painting.

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MICHAEL MCGREGOR: It’s no secret you love the NBA and you love going to Lakers games. You usually sit courtside, right?

JONAS WOOD: Well, I’d like to clarify I’m not sitting fucking courtside. I prefer the elevated seats in the first bowl because of the view. I totally love seeing all the celebrities at the games, zooming in on Jimmy Goldstein. He’s this crossover freak for me because he’s an art guy, and he’s also an NBA guy. I’m not really a fashion guy per se, but he’s obviously all three of those things. He has this amazing house, you know, the house from the The Big Lebowski, the Sheats-Goldstein house where fucking Jackie Treehorn draws the fucking little dude with the dick on the pad, and then Lebowski comes over and traces it, and does the rubbing to figure out if he wrote a secret message, and it’s just a dude with a big erection. Have you ever seen the movie I’m talking about?

MCGREGOR: Yes.

WOOD: That’s that dude’s house! He’s giving it to LACMA. He’s really cool. I sat next to him at an event one time. He dresses like Prince — like Prince on fucking meth. It’s over the top. All the players wanna hang out with him. Supposedly, he has a club at his house.

MCGREGOR: It’s a real thing. Club James.

WOOD: He parties, you know? He likes the ladies. He likes the basketball players. He likes the NBA. He’s tried to buy some teams. You know what the the coolest thing about sitting courtside is? You get to touch the ball. The ball will come over to you. The referee is there. You just like put out your hand to pass the ball, and they’ll fucking pass you the ball. Not during the game, but at half time or before the game. The biggest difference between sitting on the floor and anywhere else is like the difference between being in the men’s locker room and not being in the men’s locker room. When you sit on the floor you can literally smell all these dudes fucking sweating. It’s real.

McGregor, Michael, "Jonas Wood FaceTimed Us To Talk Exotic Coffins and the Time He Ended Up On Lebron James's Instagram," *InterviewMagazine.com*, March 22, 2019

"Calais Drive," 2012.

MCGREGOR: Have you ever had any interactions with players?

WOOD: A guy sitting next to me once was friends with Draymond [Green]. I met Dray. He has giant hands. That's it. I've played poker with a couple of basketball players.

MCGREGOR: It was just announced that Space Jam 2 is in development. If you had creative control, who would you cast in the movie?

WOOD: I have to say I never saw the first Space Jam.

MCGREGOR: Oh.

WOOD: I mean, I know what it is. I'm pretty sure I've seen bits and parts of it, but I didn't really give a shit for some reason?

MCGREGOR: What's up with your basketball sweatsuit project? How'd that end up at Dover Street Market?

WOOD: One of my good friends works at Dover Street, and was like, "You should make more so we can have it in the store, just for fun." It wasn't too serious.I wasn't trying to make money, but they sold a bunch. They said, "Hey, do you want us to keep selling this for more than the two weeks we agreed? I said, "No, I'm psyched to actually be able to keep all this inventory and just like give it to people." I wanted to give it to some basketball players. One of my contacts in the fashion industry worked for Nike a while ago, and he knows the stylists for all these players. He said, "Hey, I can get this stuff in front of them. I can get their exact size, but there's no guarantee that anybody's gonna wear it."

I got the sizes for Lebron [James], Anthony Davis, Kyrie Irving, and Russell Westbrook. I delivered custom suits to them. Four days later, LeBron was making some goofy video with his wife about wearing it. So it went from I just wanna make these fucking hoodies and sweatpants to LeBron wearing them. A couple of weeks later, Anthony Davis wore during a pregame as an undershirt. It was fucking dope.

MCGREGOR: How'd you acquire a basketball-shaped coffin by Paa Joe?

WOOD: Mine's not a coffin.

MCGREGOR: Really?

WOOD: Mine is a Palanquin. Paa Joe is a novelty coffin and palanquin maker. I wanted to get a coffin, but my wife said, "You don't wanna order a coffin, you should order a Palanquin." It's a throne. Mine has a part that pops up the top, and there's a seat inside. It weighs like 600 pounds. While it'd probably take ten dudes to carry it, you're supposed to be walked into your wedding, or funeral, on one.

It's part of the tradition in Ghana to celebrate life and also celebrate death. Paa Joe actually does both. He also makes coffins which are fully buried — you don't even get to live with it. He builds this beautiful thing out of wood and you bury it.

I got this one custom made for me. It's just a big throne sculpture. It's got such a great vibe in my studio.. It feels good to have a giant basketball in my studio with some plants. It feels like it's meant to be, you know? I'm glad it's not a coffin, too.

"Sears Family Portrait," 2011.

Zara, Janelle, “An Artist on Finding Balance, and His Giant Basketball Sculpture,” *NYTimes.com*, March 22, 2019

The New York Times

An Artist on Finding Balance, and His Giant Basketball Sculpture

Ahead of two major shows, the painter Jonas Wood reflects on his early career — and the most unusual object in his studio.

By Janelle Zara | March 22, 2019

The artist Jonas Wood in his East Hollywood studio, with a giant basketball by Paa Joe, a Ghanaian artist who specializes in fantasy coffins and palanquins. Chantal Anderson

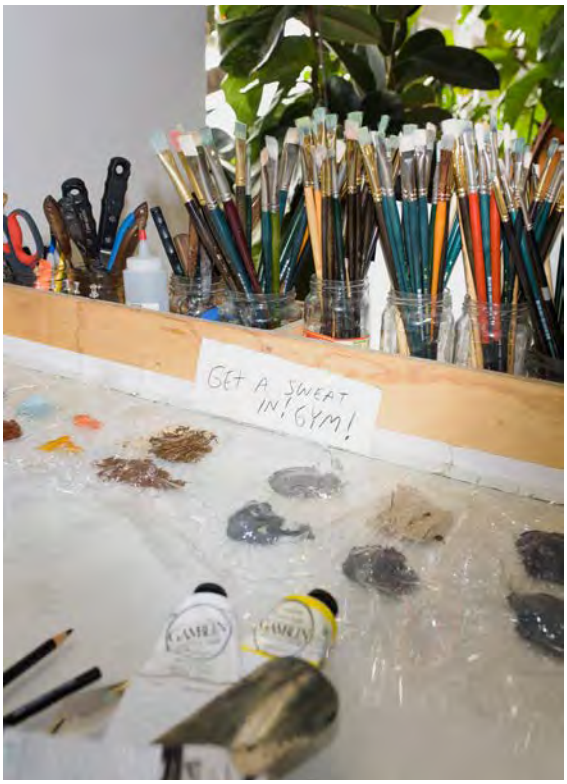
Jonas Wood’s East Hollywood studio — a refurbished industrial space hidden behind a razor-wired metal gate — is populated with the familiar objects that appear in his paintings. There are colonies of potted plants and basketball paraphernalia that ranges in size from plush couch cushions to man-sized orbs. Every room is filled with art, most notably by the ceramist Shio Kusaka, Wood’s studio mate and wife, and Kiki and Momo, their son and daughter.

But the studio is where Wood culls various photographs from the internet or his own archive and uses them as source material for his paintings — they are printed out and pinned onto walls, then flattened and distilled into blocks of color. Wood then layers these dense graphic patterns, overlapping fields of stipples and stripes, circles, squares, dots and wood grains.

Thirteen years into his career, following a year and a half of preparation, Wood is finally wrapping up preparations for the two biggest shows he’s ever done: an exhibition of new work at Gagosian in New York, opening in late April, and a survey at the Dallas Museum of Art, opening this week — his first major solo museum exhibition. Admittedly, the prospect of facing works — landscapes, interiors and portraits of family and friends — from his early career was giving Wood “a hard time sleeping.” He wondered, “Are the old paintings horrible?” and “Did I used to be a better painter and now I’m worse?” During the installation of the show at the museum last week, he had two big realizations: “I wasn’t a hack, which is a big relief,” and that now, after more than a decade of steadily producing gallery shows, he might be ready to slow down.

Nursing a can of tangerine-flavored LaCroix, Wood answered T’s Artist’s Questionnaire, which unearthed memories of the early days of his career, the first painting he ever sold — and the YouTube videos that nearly brought him to tears.

Zara, Janelle, “An Artist on Finding Balance, and His Giant Basketball Sculpture,” *NYTimes.com*, March 22, 2019



Wood’s routine workout routine involves resistance bands and a Versa-Climber. “As an older man, you’ve got to keep your butt strong,” he says. Chantal Anderson

What is your day like? How much do you sleep, and what’s your work schedule like?

I drop the kids off at school, eat some breakfast, start working a little bit, usually have a meeting, have lunch and work for a couple hours in the afternoon. Maybe I’ll work for a couple hours at night. I’m trying to sleep more. In general, in the last couple of years, I’ve been trying to balance sleeping, eating, working, working out and spending time with the family. I’ve had my head down trying to make it as an artist since 2006, and I’ve had one or two shows a year for 12 years in a row. It’s not that I want to paint less, per se, but I want to take a step back.

I’m talking about taking a step back and looking at what I’ve done, and taking a step back from the pace that I was running and changing gears. After these two exhibitions, I don’t have any booked shows coming up. It’s a big opportunity for me to rearrange the way I spend my time. I love to paint and I want to paint, but I don’t have to paint right now, this second, and I don’t have to paint all next week and miss four school events.

How many hours of creative work do you think you do in a day?

Every day, I’m super into it. I need to paint. If I go away for a couple weeks, I’ll just draw. It’s like a must for my mental health. I would have to say that I’ve been all-in on painting since I was younger, and I realized that it was because of a lot of fear that it would all go away. That’s not how I want to paint in the future. The pressure and psychology of that setup isn’t totally right. I would like to build bodies of work outside the calendar schedule of art fairs and shows for a little while. I love painting, and I think I can paint without having a giant carrot in front of me. I don’t think that I’m the best at painting, and I want to get better at it.

What’s the first piece of art you ever made?

The first painting I really cared about was probably when I was a teenager, maybe 13 or 14 years old.

What’s the worst studio you ever had?

The freezing-cold basement of my parents’ house on Martha’s Vineyard. Winter of 2002.

What’s the first work you ever sold? For how much?

I sold a painting after college for $1,000, before grad school.

When you start a new piece, where do you begin? What’s the first step?

I think there’s a certain amount of avoidance. I like to have things sit around for a while before it’s go time. I find a photograph that I like, and then I usually make drawings. Maybe half the time I paint from the drawings and the other half from photographs.

Combining various appropriated images into a single composition, the artist’s source material is vast and varied Chantal Anderson

Wood and the family dog, Robot. Chantal Anderson

I use the photo for the structure of the painting; I project out different shapes, trace it out, mix the colors and build an image, like a flat map, and then I paint all the details on top.

I like to have things just starting and just finishing and everywhere in between. I like to wake up and have choices to gravitate to.

How do you know when you’re done?

You know after a lot of looking.

How many assistants do you have?

Two.

What music do you play when you’re making art?

Mostly basketball podcasts. I listen to Howard Stern three days a week. Reggae, lots of eras of hip-hop, a variety of rock ’n’ roll.

When did you first feel comfortable saying you’re a professional artist?

I was a slow learner and a late bloomer in painting. I didn’t really put it all together until 2006. I had a show at Black Dragon Society. I made $29,000, I quit my job, and after 2006, I was a full-time painter. Making a living from being an artist and not having to do anything else usually changes a lot — something happens, sometimes it’s good, sometimes it’s bad, right? But you spend all your time doing it. You’re dedicated.

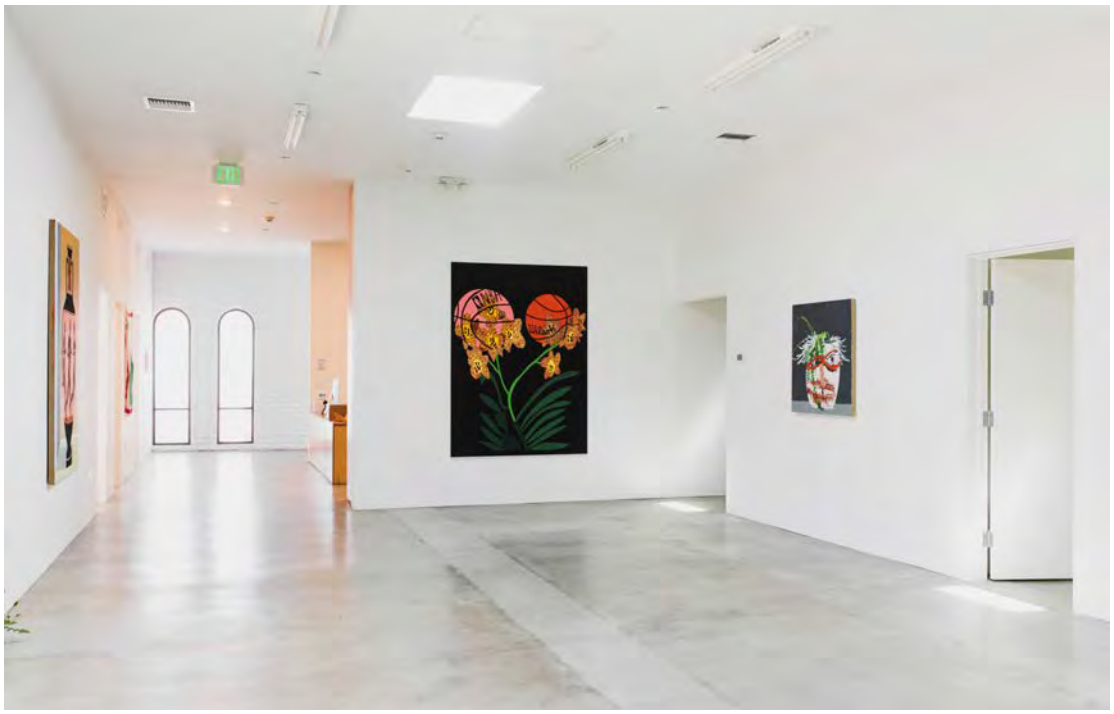
Are you bingeing on any shows right now?

Oh yeah. “Crashing,” “Million Dollar Listing,” “Vanderpump Rules.”

What’s the weirdest object in your studio?

This giant basketball is a sculpture by Paa Joe, a 72-year-old Ghanaian artist. Look him up. He makes fantasy coffins that are in most major museum collections. This was commissioned; I wanted a giant Spalding basketball, and I told him the colors and everything. I didn’t get a coffin because my wife thought it would be too morbid, so we got a throne. It’s actually called a palanquin, and you carry people around in it.

Zara, Janelle, “An Artist on Finding Balance, and His Giant Basketball Sculpture,” *NYTimes.com*, March 22, 2019



The studio glows with natural lighting, thanks to the frosted-glass windows and doors, plus numerous skylights. Chantal Anderson

How do you get your news?

I just started listening to these quick little podcasts that The New York Times does. I read The New York Times. I go to CNN a little bit and check out some weirder news, like serial-killer names and stuff like that.

What do you do when you’re procrastinating?

Play poker with friends.

What’s the last thing that made you cry?

It’s hilarious that this made me cry: The kids wanted to watch N.B.A. players flying into the stands trying to get out-of-bounds balls. I was like, “This is so cool that they’re so into basketball.” Even thinking about it makes me — it’s like happy crying. Positive. These kids want to see replays of Shaq, who’s seven feet tall, flying into the stands. You should watch it.

What do you usually wear when you work?

Gym shorts and a T-shirt, or some sort of long, funky pants. I like to feel super comfortable.

What do you buy in bulk with the most frequency?

LaCroix. I’ve got a variety of favorite flavors.

What do you pay for rent?

We don’t pay rent. We own the building.

Do you exercise?

We have a little gym. I would like to say that I’m fat and I’m also fit at the same time. I have a routine. VersaClimber and a lot of bands to strengthen the buttocks.

What’s your favorite artwork by someone else?

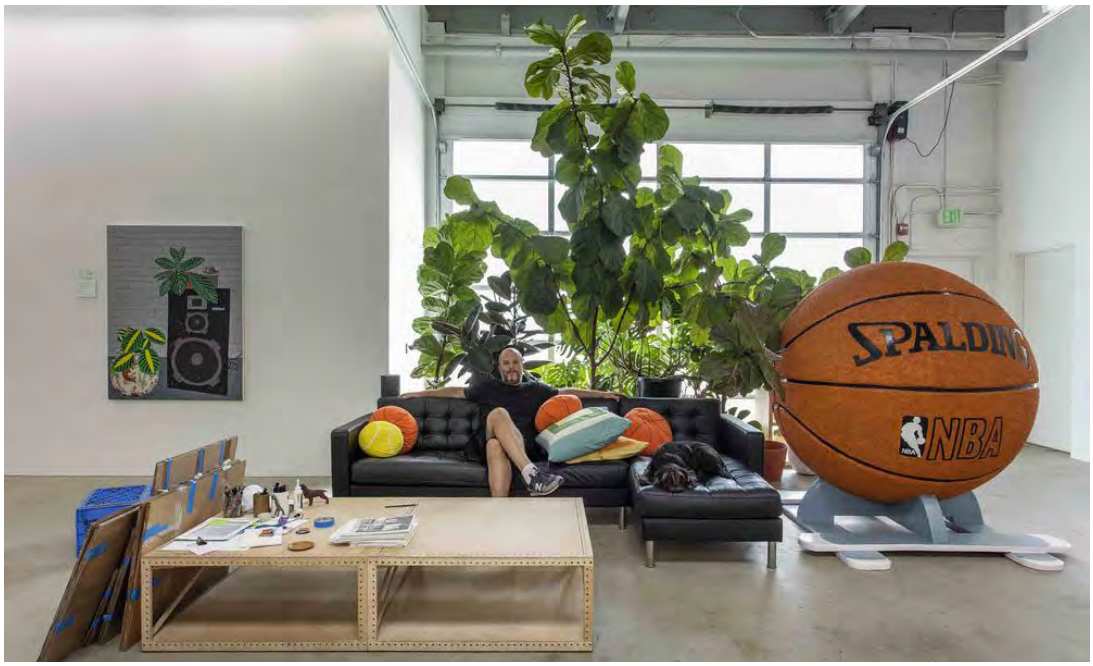
I love that Picasso goat he made out of bronze, where he uses a basket for the goat’s tummy. It’s one of the great bronze sculptures.

Kazakina, Katya, “Basketball, Poker Propel Painter to Pinnacle of the Art World,” *Bloomberg.com*, March 21, 2019

Bloomberg

Basketball, Poker Propel Painter to Pinnacle of the Art World

By Katya Kazakina | March 21, 2019



Jonas Wood in his Los Angeles studio Photo: Brian Forrest, Courtesy the artist

A 5-foot-tall basketball with a chair hidden within is the centerpiece of Jonas Wood’s Los Angeles studio -- a throne that burly men could parade around on a festive occasion.

Wood, an avid sports fan and card player whose paintings have depicted NBA Hall of Famers Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Charles Barkley and Bill Walton and poker legend Doyle Brunson, has plenty to celebrate.

His first museum survey in the U.S. opens this week at the Dallas Museum of Art with more than 30 paintings, including portraits of his family and friends. Billionaires Yusaku Maezawa and Eli Broad, Guess founders Maurice and Paul Marciano, as well as museums such as the Whitney and Guggenheim, are among those loaning works for the event.

“This is just the beginning,” said Wood, who turns 42 next week. “It’s still, in a way, an audition for greatness.”

Wood, a burly 6-foot-3, often appears in public sporting a beanie and baggy pants and has risen from obscurity to the top of the contemporary art pyramid. His auction sales generated $13.2 million last year, the most of any artist in the “ultra-contemporary” segment, according to Artnet. Next month, Gagosian gallery will stage its first solo show of his new paintings in New York, with prices for some pieces exceeding $600,000. In May, a 10-foot-tall canvas of a flower pot fetched $2.3 million at Christie’s.

“There’s a wonderful human aspect to his painting practice that makes it sophisticated yet accessible,” said Benjamin Godsill, an art adviser who has placed Wood paintings with clients. “They have wall power.”

Kazakina, Katya, “Basketball, Poker Propel Painter to Pinnacle of the Art World,” *Bloomberg.com*, March 21, 2019

JONAS WOOD *4, 1986-87 Basketball Cards*, 2009. Gouache and colored pencil on paper; in 4 parts. Source: © Jonas Wood. Photographer: Tom Van Eynde. Courtesy of the artist and Gagosian.

The “riot of colors,” rich patterns and complex forms that vacillate between realistic and abstract, the flattening and deepening of space “sets him apart and makes him the leading realistic painter of his generation,” Godsill said.

Working in traditional genres of portraiture, still life and landscape, Wood joins a lineage that stretches from modern masters like Van Gogh, Picasso and Matisse to contemporary stars David Hockney and Alex Katz.

“It’s just my range happens to be a bit wider because I say that tennis court is a landscape painting and a basketball player is a portrait,” Wood said.

Friends and relatives are as central to his work as basketball and poker.

A 1990 photo in which he appears with his parents, sisters and grandfather is the source of “The Bat/Bar Mitzvah Weekend,” a 2016 painting on display in Dallas.

Wood has “no separation” between his personal life and artistic practice, according to Sam Orlofsky, a Gagosian director.

On any given day, he may be painting while watching basketball on television and listening to a poker podcast. Nearby his kids would be drawing and these drawings would later appear on the ceramic pots made by Wood’s wife, artist Shio Kusaka, which in turn are frequent subjects of Wood’s paintings.

“It’s like Russian nesting dolls,” Orlofsky said.

Wood, who grew up outside Boston and still considers himself a Celtics fan, was profoundly influenced by his father, an architect, and his mother, a high school drama teacher. She would stage five to six plays a year and he spent a lot of his free time watching her build sets, paint backdrops and create handmade costumes.

“It was really a big deal in retrospect that I was around sets and plays and props,” he said. “Because my paintings are like that, in a way. They are not real. They have a theatrical vibe.”

As a dyslexic child, he took pride at being good at making things, too.

“But I never thought of myself as an artist then,” he said. “I knew a bunch of kids, who were 12 and were like, ‘I am an artist.’ That wasn’t me.”

Wood also was influenced by his grandfather, a pediatrician who became a collector of Andy Warhol, Francis Bacon and Roy Lichtenstein, and became an amateur artist himself later in life.

Kazakina, Katya, “Basketball, Poker Propel Painter to Pinnacle of the Art World,” *Bloomberg.com*, March 21, 2019

JONAS WOOD, *The Bat/Bar Mitzvah Weekend*, 2016. Oil and acrylic on canvas. Source: © Jonas Wood. Photo: Brian Forrest. Courtesy the artist, Anton Kern Gallery, New York, and Gagosian.

Wood realized he could become a professional artist in 2000, when he entered the master’s of fine arts program at the University of Washington in Seattle.

“It was the first time I spent all my time making art,” he said. “And I was like: ‘Maybe I’ll be a teacher at a liberal arts school and have a studio.’ That’s what I was hoping for.”

Wood and Kusaka met in Seattle and moved in 2003 to Los Angeles, where both got their start as studio assistants for more established artists. He eventually met art dealer Jeff Poe and artist Mark Grotjahn, who had become his poker buddies by the time he had his solo debut in October 2006. All of the works sold. Grotjahn, a star L.A. artist, bought a painting and tipped off his New York dealer, Anton Kern.

“I haven’t seen anything like it,” Kern said, noting the artist’s ability to bring personal history to painting rooted in modernism. “It was so fresh and unique to me that I wanted to meet him and then immediately to represent him.”

Wood, fortified by the $29,000 he made from his first show, focused on his New York debut, which came nine months later at Kern’s gallery in Chelsea.

“It was a similar thing,” Wood said. “He sold it all.”

Wood used most of the $80,000 he made to rent a new studio for $4,000 a month. “It didn’t really make a lot of sense financially,” he said. “I kept gambling with whatever money I was making and reinvesting in myself.”

He also started hosting $1,000 buy-in No Limit Texas Hold ’Em games at his studio and using poker as a subject of his paintings.

Kazakina, Katya, “Basketball, Poker Propel Painter to Pinnacle of the Art World,” *Bloomberg.com*, March 21, 2019

JONAS WOOD, *Doyle*, 2013. Oil and acrylic on linen. Source: Courtesy of the artist and Anton Kern Gallery, New York, Photo by Brian Forrest

His 2013 canvas “Doyle” depicts Brunson, a two-time winner of the World Series of Poker main event, in a cowboy hat as he sits behind bundles of cash and towers of chips, with a winning hand that has opponent Eli Elezra drawing dead.

The 13 years since Wood’s debut have been marked by an unprecedented expansion in the art market. Investment-grade art became the obsession of hedge fund billionaires and new buyers from Asia seeking fresh talent and blue-chip names.

Early collectors of Wood’s work include advertising mogul Charles Saatchi. But auction prices didn’t take off until 2015, when Gagosian staged its first show of Wood’s paintings and Kusaka’s ceramics in Hong Kong. That year, 32 Wood works hit the block, generating $5.5 million, according to Artnet.

A painting bought by Saatchi for $60,000 in 2009 at Anton Kern went on to fetch $837,449 in October 2015 at Christie’s in London.

As Wood’s star rose, he caught the collecting bug himself. The sprawling studio he shares with his wife, behind a metal gate in Los Angeles, displays paintings by Josh Smith, Math Bass, Alighiero Boetti and Tony Matelli.

“Collecting is an addiction,” Wood said.

He commissioned the giant basketball from Ghanaian artist Paa Joe, who specializes in novelty coffins.

“In his culture, if you are a shoemaker, maybe you’d be buried in a giant wood shoe,” Wood said. “I didn’t buy a coffin, because my wife thought it was pretty morbid. So I bought a basketball throne in my studio. Mine is a celebratory thing.”

August, Laura, “Painting Toward Intimacy: Jonas Wood at Dallas Museum of Art,” *ArtsandCultureTX.com*, February 12, 2019

ACTX
ARTS AND CULTURE TEXAS

PAINTING TOWARD INTIMACY: JONAS WOOD AT DALLAS MUSEUM OF ART

Laura August | February 12, 2019

Jonas Wood, *Calais Drive* (detail), 2012, oil and acrylic on canvas, 104 x 84 in., Yusaku Maezawa Collection, Chiba, Japan, courtesy the artist and David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles, photographer credit: Brian Forrest.

There’s an intimacy that comes with looking at painting, Jonas Wood tells me.

We are speaking in advance of his first major solo museum exhibition at the Dallas Museum of Art (March 24 – July 14), and I’ve asked him about sincerity in his work. Wood makes paintings of plants, ceramic vessels, basketballs, complicated interior spaces and patterns, his family members and friends—things that carry personal familiarity and significance. He doesn’t think about them in those terms, he tells me, but it would be hard to paint anything that he wasn’t sincerely interested in.

The thing he chooses to paint becomes “charged,” he says. “It’s charged in that way – in that it’s close to me. Intimacy is the picture plane, the history of painting, the viewer who is seeing something they’ve never seen before.”

“What we’re really talking about is editing,” he adds. “I basically have a giant treasure trove of source images, of things I’ve taken or found, that are part of my archive. Things people send me, and family pictures. Then I think about what I want to paint… I’m making choices based on aesthetics, but also maybe based on things that are important to me.”

Wood works from a digital archive of collected images which he looks through often. He prints out some of the images, posting them on the wall, and begins tracing, drawing, and arranging the composition for each painting. “Sometimes I’m really jazzed up to paint that thing because it already has all those things I like to paint already,” he says. “My practice of painting has its own little world.”

The world he’s describing has “a shaky but lovingly attentive feel,” writes Art Review. Wood paints pictures of rooms, still lifes, “the way people live.” Bright California light, luxurious pattern and texture, lamps and pets and friends and toys and paintings and posters and plants fill his spaces, which are at once familiar and slightly off-kilter.

A gardener from an early age, Wood once described his move to Los Angeles as a “plant epiphany,” and plants fill his interior scenes and are also individual subjects of his paintings.

“It did coincide with moving to Los Angeles and finding a lot of things growing,” he says. “From still life to taking pots out of the painting, then taking giant plants out of the painting, then making these weird scientific geometric color paintings. There’s an ebb and flow of that in my paintings in general. I can’t make super complicated paintings all the time – I need some balance. So, taking an individual thing out of a painting and isolating it – a basketball, a pot, now some weird emoji paintings – it’s just a genre of painting that’s within these different kinds of larger figurative works.”

Wood is married to ceramicist Shio Kusaka and he paints ceramic vessels, sometimes hers, sometimes from their collection. As with other things he paints, he began including ceramics as a way of learning. “Shio was working on vessels,” he says. “From painting still lifes that had pots in them, to paintings of

Jonas Wood, *Sears Family Portrait*, 2011, oil and acrylic on linen, 44 x 32 in., private collection, courtesy the artist and Anton Kern Gallery, New York, photographer credit: Thomas Müller

Jonas Wood, *Face Painting*, 2014, oil and acrylic on linen, 52 x 44 1/2 in., collection of Martin and Rebecca Eisenberg, courtesy the artist and David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles, photographer credit: Brian Forrest.

giant pots, to appropriating pots, to painting a vessel that has an image on it that tells a story, it’s a lot of things that come from spending a lot of time with each other… Being around clay more, appreciating other people’s art, all those things colliding. Now it seems more intentional, but it was just where my investigation has led me so far.”

The exhibition at the DMA is organized in groupings of Wood’s paintings since 2006, moving from exterior to interior reflections, what curator Anna Katherine Brodbeck calls “a trajectory toward intimacy.” It includes portraits, interiors, exteriors, wallpaper, clippings. One portrait room is of family; another includes portraits of artists. “…if Wood’s work immerses us in the disorienting space of this interior, and those of his own family and friends, he does so in a historical period in which the privacy of the home, the workplace, and any other space we occupy is permeated by the technology of the internet and social media, creating another level of psychological intensity,” writes Ken D. Allan. That intensity, which I see as a kind of intimacy, is warm and inviting, a life lived intensely, with good company.

In his lush yet compressed spaces filled with friends and family (or the things that represent them), Wood makes paintings rooted in Los Angeles, where he’s lived since 2003. Indeed, he calls the city a life companion. “I can’t say that it’s because of L.A. that I paint this way, but I definitely have matured and am heading toward the painter I hope to become living in this city and starting a family here,” he says. The city “was ultimate freedom to me… I feel lucky that I just randomly thought this would be better than New York and moved here.”

“I wasn’t ever thinking beyond just having a little studio and being able to paint and have a job,” he says. “Moving to L.A. was a huge event – it was another education.”

With work included in MoMA, the Guggenheim, the Whitney, the Hammer Museum, the Broad, LACMA, MOCA Los Angeles and the MCA Chicago, Wood’s career has been flourishing over the past 15 years. Now, he says, he’s working on finding balance in his life. “There’s such an incredible amount of imbalance when you start,” he says. “And people are telling you what you need to do. But you’re headed for disaster (if you work at the pace the art world encourages).” Wood finds himself in a new moment, one in which he can breathe, explore, and enjoy the benefits Los Angeles offers. “I might be the only Lakers Celtics fan in the world,” he laughs.

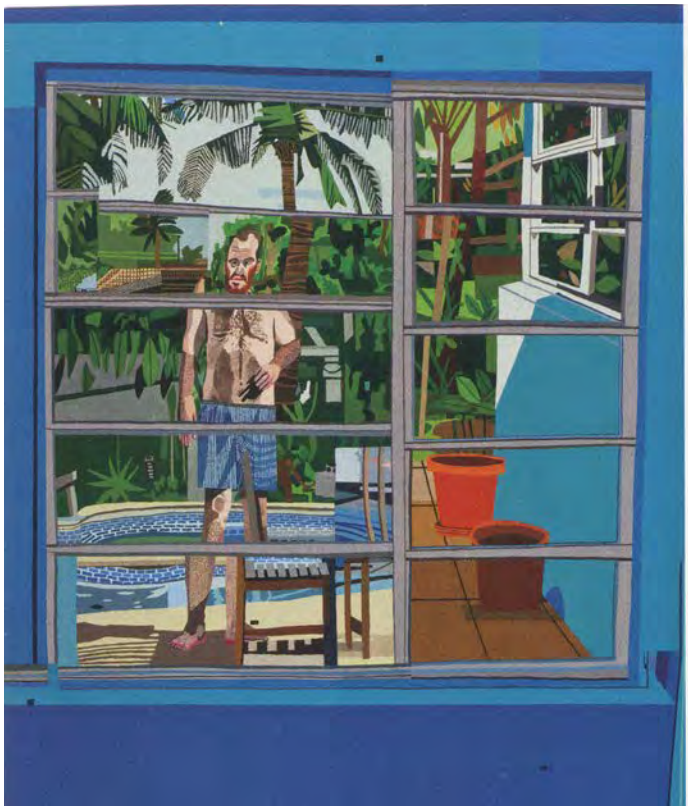
He and Kusaka are also building an impressive art collection of their own: he is interested right now in works by Sayre Gomez and Christina Forrer, and they recently acquired a drawing by Charles Burchfield and an early Ken Price drawing.

Wood’s is a painting practice rooted in seeing the surrounding world through an exuberant looking, seeing things as valuable because they are the things one sees as one moves through the world.

“A lot of people ask me two main questions – how many paintings do you make a year and how long does it take to make a painting. I think the reason people ask that is because people think that is the thing you should try to keep track of, and I feel like that is sort of anti-how I want my practice to be, which is completely uninhibited.”

What he’s trying to do, he says, is less about tracking production and more about allowing a process of learning to unfold. “I feel like painting is always opening up, and I’m also OK with repeating and going back,” he says. “I’m just always trying to get better at painting.”

Jonas Wood, The Still Life, 2007, oil on canvas, 70 1/4 x 80 1/4 in., private collection, Asia, courtesy the artist and Gagosian, photographer credit: Robert McKeever.



Jonas Wood, *Calais Drive*, 2012, oil and acrylic on canvas, 104 × 84".

JONAS WOOD

Dallas Museum of Art
March 24–July 14
Curated by Anna Katherine Brodbeck

In the clean sunlight beaming over every curling vine, fanning leaf, and flowerpot in the paintings and drawings of Jonas Wood, you can feel Southern California. For his first solo US museum exhibition in nearly a decade, featuring more than thirty works created between 2006 and the present, Wood brushes LA's cool color into strange planes and stony angles. He pulls from the hard-edge spatial manipulations of Stuart Davis, the lush homes depicted by Sylvia Sleigh, and the late cutouts of Matisse, channeling an optimistic and elemental energy into compressed and complex compositions. Meanwhile, the artist's family, friends, old heroes, and warm colleagues emerge from the flat light, a community softly shaping a life's work. The accompanying catalogue includes essays by Ken Allan and Brodbeck and an interview with the artist by Hans Ulrich Obrist.

—*Andrew Berardini*

Inaishi, Chinami, “Guest: Jonas Wood,” *GOETHE*, Vol. 7, July 2018, pp. 20-25

GOETHE

『GOETHE』に許された世界を震撼させる取材記。
水先案内人に、現代芸術振興財団ファウンダーの
前澤友作氏を迎え、女優とともに、
世界各国にいる著名アーティストの聖地を巡礼する。
愉しき現代アートの扉を、
今こそ叩いてみようではないか。

vol. 7

現代アート、聖地巡礼。

GUEST
女優
剛力彩芽

Text＝Chinami Inaishi Photograph＝GION［P20-24］
Styling＝田中トモコ Hair & Make-up＝高城裕子

画家がドキュメントする、日常生活の具象と抽象

フェデラーvs.ジョコビッチのテニス試合中継のテレビ画面を描いた作品を挟み、ポーズを取るウッドと剛力。ウッドはスポーツ好きでも知られている。

WOOD

Inaishi, Chinami, “Guest: Jonas Wood,” *GOETHE*, Vol. 7, July 2018, pp. 20-25

アメリカ現代美術界の新世代スターとして頭角を現しているジョナス・ウッド。2006年以来、毎年、世界各地の著名ギャラリーや美術館で個展が開催され、昨年のダラス美術館＆エイズ治療研究資金チャリティイベントでは芸術家名誉賞を受賞、彼の絵画が120万ドルで競り落とされた。

日々収集し続ける視覚的インスピレーション

ウッドの作品は日常的な題材や、明るい色使い、フラットでポップな画風など、一見親しみやすいものばかりなのだが、どこか次元がずれた空間表現が、見る者の心情に微かなざわつきを喚起する。それはまるで現実と非現実が共存し、時間の歪みが潜んでいるようでもある。今回、このLAを拠点に活動する新鋭アーティストのスタジオを訪れたのは、女優・剛力彩芽だ。

昨年夏に完成したばかりのウッドの新スタジオはイーストハリウッドの裏道にあった。教えられた住所の建物には、頑丈な鉄門。その門が開かれると、ウッド自らがフレンドリーな笑顔で剛力を出迎え、「これはロボット」と愛犬を紹介した。剛力は人懐っこいロボットにも挨拶をし、スタジオ内へと歩を進めた。

© Jonas Wood. Photo by Brian Forrest. Courtesy of the artist and David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles, CA

旧スタジオが背景の「ブラックウェルダーでの自画像」(2017)。自画像のほか、ウッド自身が興味を抱く人物の肖像画も多数手がける。

JONAS

Inaishi, Chinami, “Guest: Jonas Wood,” *GOETHE*, Vol. 7, July 2018, pp. 20-25

案内されたスタジオには廊下がなく、次から次へと部屋が続く設計になっていた。入ってすぐの開放的な空間は「オフィス兼ギャラリー」として機能。剛力はゆっくりと彼が手がけた肖像画やTV中継画面を描いた作品などを鑑賞する。

続く部屋はウッド個人のオフィスとフレップスタジオで、絵の制作準備をするエリアだ。「わ、すごい。写真がいっぱい！」と剛力が仰天した壁には、ウッドが撮影し、プリントした写真、目にとまったインスタグラム画像、雑誌の切り抜きなどが貼られていた。インスピレーションの源となる壁だ。

「これが作業のスタート地点。僕は常に何かを撮っているし、画像を集めているんだ。（ここにあるものは）ほんの一部で、毎日いろいろプリントする。父の昔の写真、人から送られてくる画像などをね」

ウッドは常に環境をスキャンし、ビジュアルデータとして蓄積している。彼の作品の対象にスポーツ、植物など、日常的なものが登場するのはこのためだ。

制作の次の過程は、彼が「非常に重要で、たっぷり時間をかける」という“編集”である。

「自分が描きたいと思う対象の画像や写真を緻密に選ぶんだ。

2
1
3

1.バスケットボールを器用に扱うウッド。2.洗面所の壁紙は驚きのバスケットボール柄。3.NBA選手を描いたウッドの絵に、同じくLAで活躍するアーティスト、マーク・グロッチャンが靴下を留めた作品。

JONAS WOOD

1977年生まれ。ボストン出身。アートコレクターの祖父や芸術肌の両親の元、美術に触れながら育つ。自他共に認めるスポーツファン。スタジオを共有する妻は、世界的に活躍する日本人陶芸家シオ・クサカ。

JONAS WOOD

Inaishi, Chinami, “Guest: Jonas Wood,” *GOETHE*, Vol. 7, July 2018, pp. 20-25

ここで安易なセレクトをすると後で飽きちゃうからね」

写真の被写体や表現に感じる情熱、好奇心や関心を軸に主題とする画像を決めると、ウッドはその画像の何に惹かれたのか、どう描きたいのかを追求し、さらなる編集を施すという。

「僕は写実的画家ではないから、写真をそのまま絵にすることはない。建築家が建物を設計するように、写真の要素を構造物として使うんだ。例えば被写体の形状が気に入った時、形をそっくりに描くのではなく、自分が興味を持った〝形に表現されているもの〟を抽出し、積み上げていく。写真に写っているものをあえてトレーシングしたり、配置を変更して、キャンバスの上に再構築するんだ」

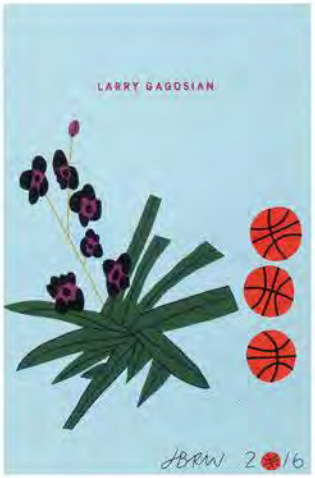
この編集作業を経ると、インスピレーション源だった写真は、ウッドが描きたいものだけを残すビジュアルとして再編集された、いわば「非現実」のものへと変貌するのである。

大学で心理学を学び、博士課程での心理学研究も検討したウッド。親しみやすいのに戸惑いを感じさせる彼の絵の〝日常〟は、写真に記録された現実ではなく、複雑な視点や心情、相反する時間軸もが共存する「ウッドが描きたい日常」だったのだ。

4.美術館展示室のように広々としたギャラリー。4.ウッドが主に制作作業を行う部屋。6.剛力が一目惚れした日本庭園モチーフの作品。隣にはインスピレーション源の写真が貼られている。7.緑の絵の具のバリエーション。8.美術館模型で来年の個展のシミュレーションを行う。9.仲良くなった剛力とウッド、愛犬ロボット。

Inaishi, Chinami, “Guest: Jonas Wood,” *GOETHE*, Vol. 7, July 2018, pp. 20-25

Inaishi, Chinami, “Guest: Jonas Wood,” *GOETHE*, Vol. 7, July 2018, pp. 20-25



All artworks: © Jonas Wood 1: Photo by Wood Kusaka Studios. Courtesy of the artist 2: Photo by Brian Forrest. Courtesy of the artist and Gagosian 3: Photo by Elon Schoenholz. Courtesy of The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles 4: Photo by Tom Van Eynde. Courtesy of the artist and Shane Campbell Gallery, Chicago, IL 5: Photo by Brian Forrest. Courtesy of the artist and Gagosian

1.「P ガストン」(2006)。抽象表現主義の画家フィリップ・ガストンの肖像画。2.「風景画鉢のナイトブルーム」(2014) では植木鉢の表面に風景画を描いた。3.「二羽の鳥のいる静止画（MOCA）」(2016)。LA現代美術館の外壁に期間限定で施された壁画。4.スポーツカードシリーズから「1986〜87年 4 月バスケットボールカード（ジョーダン詳細）」(2009)。ジョーダンの勇姿と対照的に描かれた観衆。5.「LG NPP #2」(2017) は、ガゴシアンギャラリー代表のラリー・ガゴシアンの名前が入ったメモ用紙が発想源になっている。

前澤氏所有のコレクション、初公開
Yusaku Maezawa Collection

Photo by Brian Forrest. Courtesy of the artist and David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles, CA

Japanese Garden（2017）

スタジオにも制作途中の作品があった日本庭園シリーズから。1 枚の写真を元にウッドが再構築している。LAアーティストの発掘とレップに定評のあるデヴィッド・コーダンスキーギャラリーから購入。キャンバスに油彩、アクリル。236.2×236.2×3.8cm。

スタジオの一番奥にある、ウッドが実際に絵を描く部屋には制作中の作品が複数あり、一連の制作過程を垣間見ることができた。例えば、日本庭園の写真と、その隣に並べられた絵。まず写真を絵に描き、さらにその絵を撮影した写真で気になる形状や要素のみを鉛筆でトレーシングし、部分的に配置を換えて新たな構図に仕上げる。そこにはウッドの描きたい要素のみが残り、あとはガッシュや油・アクリル絵の具をさまざまな技法で使いながら、最終的にフラットでカラフルな表面に仕上げていくのだ。

「いろんな塗り方があり、見え方も全然違う。絵を描くってすごく根気がいるんですね。疲れちゃうんじゃないかな。でも情熱や、好きという感情から始まることって長続きする。私も好きなことを仕事にさせてもらっているので、よくわかります」

制作過程の複雑な説明を受けながらも、剛力は自身に通じる何かを感じたようだ。

またウッドは「僕はアートコレクターでもあるんだ」と言う。

「名作には美しさや特別なもの、挑戦してくるような何かがある。だから好きな芸術家の代表作と呼ばれる作品を持ちたいんだ」

美術史にも詳しいウッドがマティスの名画やフリムケスといった現代芸術家の作品、画家の肖像を絵のテーマにするのも、彼が感じる美術へのたゆみない情熱や尊敬を主観的に表現せずにはいられないからだ。

「結婚してアーティストとして変わったことってありますか？」

アトリエを共有する妻、陶芸家のシオさんを紹介された剛力が、最後にウッドにたずねた。

「シオがミューズになったこと。異なる視点で物事を見るようになったことかな。結婚してから絵が上手くなったんだから、シオの存在が貢献していると思う」

独自の感性で、興味の対象だけを探求し表現し続けるウッドが明るく自信ありげに笑った。

Samuel, Jacob, “Nonstop: Jonas Wood Speaks with Jacob Samuel,” *Art in Print*, May - June 2018, pp. cover, 9-16

Art in Print

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Nonstop: Jonas Wood Speaks with Jacob Samuel

Jonas Wood signing the screenprint, ***Landscape Pot with Plant*** *(2017) in his studio, Culver City, CA. Image courtesy of Wood Kusaka Studios.*

Jonas Wood is a Los Angeles-based painter and printmaker working across a variety of techniques and publishing formats. With the intaglio master printer Jacob Samuel, who has collaborated with Wood since 2013, the artist reflects on his learning curves, ambitions and inspirations drawn from Picasso, Piranesi and the Boston Red Sox.

Jacob Samuel In 2013, when we started working on our first collaboration, *8 Etchings* [2014], you brought in a very large book from 1970 of Picasso's 347 etching series [1968] to the studio that your grandfather had given you.[1]

Jonas Wood Yes. He was a collector and he had a lot of books. When he started getting older, he asked us to think about what art or books we might want. He had this giant box that said "Picasso" and I knew I wanted it, but I don't think I even knew what was inside. Years later I inherited it and it had all of these etchings. Interestingly, I bought a Picasso etching about a year ago, only to realize later that it is in that catalog.

JS You grew up around Boston. Did you go to museums when you were young? Which ones did you like?

JW Well, certainly the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. I was interested in figuration and I tried to paint or draw the figure, but I was never really accurate. The modern masters were interesting because they had created their own language in figuration. I remember seeing a lot of Alexander Calder and a lot of art from Asia, like Japanese scrolls.

My father was an architect and my mother was a drama teacher. We went to a lot of interesting buildings, like Walter Gropius's house. We went to the [Isabella Stewart] Gardner Museum and the deCordova [Sculpture Park and] Museum, and my parents would take us to New York, where we would visit MoMA, the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Whitney.

And because my grandfather collected, I grew up with art. That was kind of a big deal for me. He had a giant Francis Bacon painting, Picasso prints and Calder drawings. My parents had Andy Warhol's pink and green cow prints, which felt important, but really it was an open-edition wallpaper that came in a couple of different colors. We had this downstairs all 18 years that I lived in my parents' house. And we had Matisse prints, editions from the 1940s and '50s.

JS My next question was going to be about your first encounter with printed artwork. But if you're living in a house with Warhol and Matisse prints . . .

JW And there was a Rauschenberg print that we grew up with too. I have that in

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*Jonas Wood, **8 Etchings** (2014), series of eight etchings on Japanese paper, 16 x 14 inches each. Edition of 10. Printed and published by Edition Jacob Samuel, Santa Monica, CA. Courtesy of the artist and Edition Jacob Samuel, Santa Monica, CA. Photo: Brian Forrest.*

my studio, inherited from my grandfather, and one Calder drawing from 1962.

JS In one of the prints in the *8 Etchings* portfolio, there's a poster of the Cure on the wall. That was also something you grew up with—in your sister's room?

JW Yes, she's about six years older than me and she had this giant the Cure poster up in her room forever. I made a painting of it later and found the same poster at a yard sale in Mar Vista, California. Now it hangs in a closet in my studio.

JS Did you get a BFA?

JW No, I got a BA in psychology, but my minor was studio art. I wanted to be a doctor, then I took a year off and it became clear that I really didn't want to be a doctor. So in my senior year I started taking art seriously, really learning how to paint. After college, I had a studio and then decided to get an MFA at the University of Washington in Seattle.

JS Did you make prints there?

JW I made some etchings, but I was just messing around. I had made things in silkscreen—psychedelic stuff—right out of college in 1999. Then I made Red Sox T-shirts with my friends that we would sell outside of games. They were based on our favorite player, whose nickname was El Guapo; he was the closer for the Red Sox.[2] At one playoff game we had these big black plastic trash bags full of T-shirts that we were selling for like ten bucks each, but then my friend almost got arrested. He got a ticket instead, but they took the shirts. Later, he fought the ticket and they gave him the shirts back.

JS Glad to hear that. Do you still have one of those shirts?

JW I might have one and my dad might have one. When I was growing up in Massachusetts, everybody would say the Red Sox were cursed because we traded Babe Ruth for a bag of prunes or something. In 2004, when the Red Sox won the World Series, I made a *Wicked Curse Reversed* poster with my friend, the artist Matt Johnson.[3] We made an edition of 86 because that's how many years it had been since they'd won a World Series.

JS So that's your first limited-edition print.

JW A couple of years later I screenprinted Larry Bird T-shirts, and printed a couple on paper.[4] I never really editioned them though. Anything I made in grad school was only scratching the surface of the materials.

Maybe I was a late bloomer. When I moved to Los Angeles in 2004 I learned a lot because I had exposure to other artists—seeing other artists' studios, working for artists . . .

JS In my experience as a teacher, I can see it's really difficult for students to retain the technical information about etching. Often when they do something great, they are not really sure how they've done it, because they've only done it once. It takes prolonged exposure and experience to really figure things out.

JW But to start making stuff that transcends learning about the materials and to have it be personal, your own sort of story—that's what's been really interesting to me about making prints for the last five or six years.

When we started the *8 Etchings*, you wanted me to make a bunch of my old work into etchings, and my first question was, how are we going to make all these flat areas of color work? And you were like, "Well, we're going to make those

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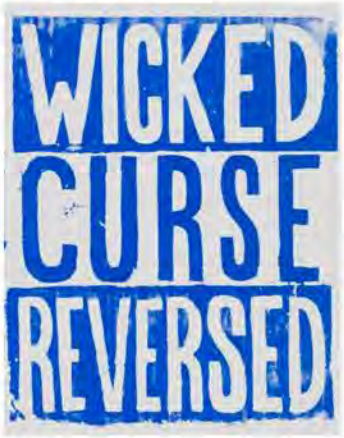


*Jonas Wood and Matt Johnson, **Wicked Curse Reversed** (2004), screenprint, 24 x 19 inches. Edition of 86. Printed and published by the artists, Los Angeles, CA. Courtesy of the artists. Photo: Brian Forrest*

with line." I was dumbfounded. But then you said something really interesting. You said that I have a very particular line.

JS I would say idiosyncratic. In the best possible sense. Your line is so personal.

JW Being limited to only using line was a real challenge. But it was way better to start with the line and the accumulation of the lines. Like Piranesi—how everything he made was drawn out of a line. There are no flat shapes.

JS Well, that's one of the beautiful things about studying your precedents, old masters like Albrecht Dürer. I think of Dürer as being very formal and stylized, like Piranesi. They created amazing volume and beautiful shape only using line.

JW Also just black and white.

JS I imagine that was a huge challenge for you. You're known for your color, so to start out with a monochromatic palette must have been hard.

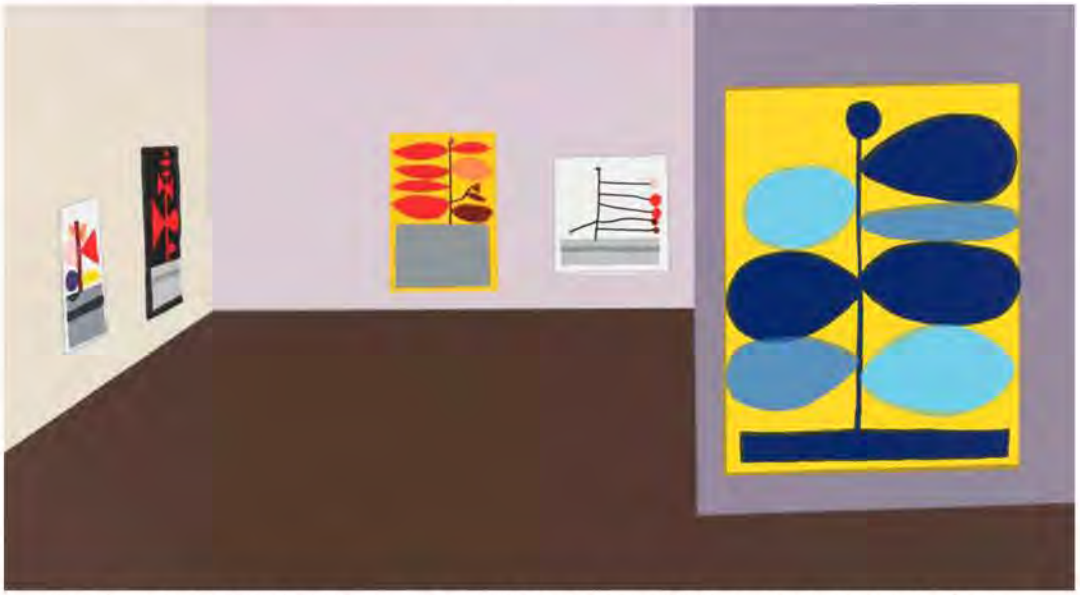
JW It was good though.

JS At this point do you look at print media as ways to explore aspects of your paintings? In other words, can you hone in on certain things, like, "Oh, I think this might be interesting as a litho, or maybe this would be good as an etching, or I could explore this as a screenprint"?

JW Well, I've been thinking about that more and more. When we first started in 2014 it felt like a tutorial, and it was great to have you pushing me into certain things because I didn't really see my work through this lens of printmaking. A couple of years into it, I started realizing that etching and mark-making came into my paintings. After that I started to realize that the way I painted was almost an accumulation of different printing methods.

Recently you mentioned that we should try a 25-color screenprint because it relates so well to how I paint. That prompted me to want to explore printmaking based on how I layer things, how I incorporate underpaint and then overpaint details on top. And in the last few years I've made a couple prints with Cirrus that delve into the collage aspect of my practice, using a lithograph of a photograph and screenprint on top of that, which really synced up with my sensibility and how I see things.

I've also started to collect prints and look at prints, and see how other people have made prints—I just got this Lichtenstein print, a brushstroke one. And when I started examining it, I discovered how amazing it was that he could translate his work so directly into printmaking. So yes, it really opens up—a few years after we started I realized that drawing had always informed my painting; then I saw how collage had informed it. But once printmaking entered the equation, that also started informing my painting and



*Jonas Wood, **Hammer Interior** (2016), 18-color letterpress print, 11 1/4 x 20 3/4 inches. Edition of 20. Printed and published by Leslie Ross-Robertson, Wavelength Press, Los Angeles, CA. Courtesy of the artist and Wavelength Press, Los Angeles, CA. Photo: Brian Forrest.*

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Left: *Jonas Wood,* ***Landscape Pot with Plant*** *(2017), 16-color screenprint, 39 x 29 1/2 inches. Edition of 100. Printed by Coriander Studio, London. Published by Counter Editions, London. Courtesy of the artist and Counter Editions, London. Photo: Mariell Lind Hansen.* ***Right:*** *Jonas Wood,* ***Untitled*** *(2014), lithograph and 11-color screenprint, 48 x 37 inches. Edition of 50. Printed and published by Cirrus Gallery & Cirrus Editions Ltd., Los Angeles, CA. Courtesy of the artist and Cirrus Gallery & Cirrus Editions Ltd., Los Angeles, CA. Photo: Douglas M. Parker Studio.*

JS Their history goes all the way back to the Tamarind workshop, when Tamarind Institute was in LA.

JW Yes, exactly. Ed Ruscha had actually bought some of the monoprints I had made at Cirrus. He asked me if I was interested in meeting Ed Hamilton, so I went to the studio, and it's smoky and amazing and there is all this history—he's made some of the most amazing Ruscha prints in the last 25 years.

JS Yes, the definitive Ed Ruscha lithos are via Hamilton.

JW The first thing I wanted to do was to re-create a drawing of white pencil on black paper. But Ed [Hamilton], who has a vast knowledge of different papers and how the paper functions as part of the print, said, "Well, I think we should print on blue paper." And it really looked the way I wanted it to.

The way they do business was a shift for me: they would take care of everything and just give me half of the edition to keep. Around this time Ed Ruscha had told me that he kept a lot of his prints. That was eye-opening. There's a lot of power in keeping things because you're able to amass a whole archive of your own work.

Then, in 2014, we made a second print of an interior.

JS I remember this one.

JW Ed Hamilton came to my studio and saw a black-and-white drawing of my parents' Martha's Vineyard house and he loved it. He suggested using three different colors of paper but the exact same ink colors, to create three different times of day in the same room.

JS That's really smart.

JW It's just the way his mind works. He realizes a gray piece of paper is going to feel like dusk, a reddish piece of paper is going to feel like dawn, and a brighter white piece of paper is going to feel like noon.

The next project, in 2015, was based on making a couple of my wife's [Shio Kusaka] Greek dinosaur pots as prints. He picked this really interesting green paper and suggested a gradient of color in the pot that gave the print a whole new depth even though we're dealing with a lot of flatness.

In 2017, we made double basketball orchids; I wanted a cream-colored paper and thought to print on a black background as well.

JW The more recent prints with Hamilton were a couple sets of notepad doodles. I sketch painting ideas on notepads in my studio and I wanted to make oversize notepad prints with the painting ideas on them. This was the first time I was making a print of a casual drawing as opposed to a super sharp, specific image.

JS You know, the fact that these are 14-color lithographs takes them out of the realm of casual drawing. It really becomes a substantial piece of art. You've given it so much richness and depth by applying so many different colors and layers.

Brower, Alison and Laura van Straaten, "'An Overlap of Influence': How Hollywood and the Fine Art World Are Collaborating and (at Times) Colliding," *HollywoodReporter.com*, February 14, 2019

The Hollywood Reporter

"An Overlap of Influence": How Hollywood and the Fine Art World Are Collaborating and (at Times) Colliding

By Alison Brower and Laura van Straaten | February 14, 2019

Dia Dipasupil/Getty Images for J. Paul Getty Trust; Randy Shropshire/Getty Images for LACMA; Cindy Ord/Getty Images for SiriusXM. From left: Eli Broad, Naima Keith and Cheech Marin

Artists, patrons, producers and curators (and a few skeptics) discuss how the two creative universes of Los Angeles feed each other and explore the backstory of L.A.'s booming art scene. "My thing is with the L.A. art scene is: Why did it take everybody so long to recognize L.A. as an art mecca?" asks David Hoberman, the Mandeville Films founder and collector. By "so long," Hoberman means "until now," as L.A. experiences its most robust arts week ever with the inaugural Frieze. The first West Coast iteration of the London-based art fair — in which Endeavor took a majority stake in 2016 — opens its doors to VIPs at Paramount Studios on Feb. 14 and is open to the ticketed public Friday through Sunday.

While Frieze L.A. comes with a tide of Hollywood support (THR is a media partner), the fair also will bring a new class of international collectors to a city whose booming art scene is uniquely poised to welcome them — which is why other fairs quickly aligned with it: 10-year-old Art Los Angeles Contemporary moved from its usual January slot to coincide with Frieze L.A., and former UPN CEO Dean Valentine chose the same weekend to launch his homegrown Felix art fair. Several smaller fairs also have sprouted up around town on the same dates, along with a packed calendar of exhibits and art-related walks, talks and soirees.

THR surveyed more than 40 stakeholders — artists, gallerists, collectors, museum directors and curators (including a few skeptics) — about the increasing crossover between Hollywood and the art world, via collecting and collaboration, and the backstory behind the city's booming art scene.

CULTURAL CROSSOVER

DAVID KORDANSKY (GALLERIST) Then there's the way that artists Alex Israel and Kathryn Andrews have used the idealized perspective, almost playing with the way the outsiders perceive Hollywood, the fantasy.

LAUREN HALSEY (ARTIST) Growing up in L.A., Hollywood was mythic, but for me it was hanging out on the boulevard in my 20s and loving the grime. What made Hollywood cool was the mess, the dark performances I'd see on the street, the stuff that's the opposite of how Hollywood is portrayed in the world. There are multiple art worlds in LA. In this book by Kellie Jones called South of Pico she described how the artists here in L.A. in the '60s and '70s before my time were navigating all these spaces: showing poolside in Hollywood, in the back yard, art for TV shows, showing in Leimert Park, at church. I remember trying to sell my work at Venice Beach. There is that art world at Venice Beach, the galleries are one world, there is one on the corner somewhere, a million in downtown L.A., in Leimert Park, one in Watts. High, low, and everything in between. L.A. is a splurge of all these things at once. Navigating all those spaces at once without saying "Oh, this has a market" and "This does not" is important to me as an artist.

JONAS WOOD (ARTIST) When I first started showing in L.A. and living here [in the early 2000s], I always heard that gallerists in New York dissuaded people from showing art here in L.A. because they didn't think there was an audience. The theory when I moved here was that if you had a chance to show in New York, you would show your best work there and not here. I feel like that is changing. It hasn't still changed for everyone. It's still changing. And I think the feeling that you could launch a very prestigious large art fair like Frieze in L.A. and make it work in 2004 and 2005, it would never have happened.

JW I agree, but at the same time it still has the casual vibe to it. It's a very specific and beautiful print, but ultimately, it's a print of a painting idea.

JS You've also made full-color prints with a letterpress, which is unusual.

JW My friend Leslie Ross-Robertson owns a letterpress company, Wavelength Press, that makes artists' prints, but she also makes stationery and other things like that.

I was fascinated by the technique because the paper actually takes the embossed form of the plate at the same time it takes the color. The first thing we made in 2012 was a tennis court print. The result was spectacular—wish we'd made more in the edition. It was only 8 by 11 inches because her press is small, and it's printed in four colors with four passes. A couple of years later, we made an 18-color, 19-pass letterpress print, which she said was unheard of.

JS It's a beauty.

JW This one is around 11 by 20 inches and based on a painting show I had in 2010 at the Hammer Museum of my Calder plant paintings. I definitely want to make more prints with her. Her ability to match the colors is amazing and I love working with somebody who doesn't work with artists all the time. She's a one-woman team with a little shop at the back of her house.

JS Maybe we could talk about your relationship with Karma in New York?

JW Yes, Brendan Dugan is a good friend who runs Karma [bookseller/art gallery] and An Art Service [graphic design/art direction firm], and I've made four—soon to be five—books with him. In the last couple of years, he has started to publish prints, including *Four Majors*, which are four tennis court prints we are making together. It's fun because we're using a company in New York that works with artists but also silkscreens posters and clothing, which is different from working with Hamilton Press, Cirrus or other master printers.

JS Speaking of books, you and Shio have self-published a series of books on other artists.

JW Yes, my grandfather owned these mini-books, published by a French company, ABC Tudor Publishing Co., on Van Gogh, Monet, etc. They weren't deep, historical books—more like something you'd buy on the street in front of a museum for five bucks.

JS I know the ones you're talking about.

JW I inherited them. Later I had an idea about appropriating them. There's so much appropriation in my work already, it felt natural to appropriate these mini-books, but pick artists working today. We copied the format, the scale and used black-and-white pictures in the essays. We made books on Shio, Matt Johnson, Ry Rocklen, Amanda Ross-Ho, Tony Matelli, Mark Grotjahn, Anne Collier, Brian Sharp, William J. O'Brien. The project's been on a hiatus for three or four years but I'm ready to pick it back up. They were fun and I liked the idea that we were publishing historical art books with younger artists. We sold them for $14 or less, so it was affordable.

JS You also did a screenprint with Counter Editions in London.

Left: *Jonas Wood,* ***Double Basketball Orchid (State I)*** *(2017), 10-color lithograph, 34 1/2 x 27 inches. Edition of 26. Printed and published by Hamilton Press, Venice, CA. Courtesy of the artist and Hamilton Press, Venice, CA.* ***Right:*** *Jonas Wood,* ***Double Basketball Orchid (State II)*** *(2017), 11-color lithograph, 30 1/4 x 27 inches. Edition of 15. Printed and published by Hamilton Press, Venice, CA. Courtesy of the artist and Hamilton Press, Venice, CA. Photos: Alan Shaffer.*

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Screenprinting in the studio, Culver City, CA, 2009. Image courtesy of Wood Kusaka Studios.

JW Yes, and we're going to make another one pretty soon. I was approached by Carl Freedman, who has a gallery and also has a print house. They've made some really nice things. I made a mash-up of a landscape pot painting from 2014—this is probably the print that's most connected to a painting. I think it's a 16-color silkscreen. I made all the vellums in LA and sent them to London. And Carl does something really cool where he—he's actually going to start printing in-house now—but he used to have all these different silkscreeners in London he worked with to make the prints. The printers we worked with were great. A couple of vellums got messed up in shipping and they fixed them perfectly. We did everything through the mail, email and pictures. And the finished product was spectacular. It is the most detailed print, and has the most color, and it's among the biggest I've made—around 40 by 30 inches.

It got closer to what you and I had been discussing for a while, which is complicated, multi-screened silkscreen prints, because that's really connected with my practice.

JS Exactly. Most people interested in screenprinting know the name Jeff Wasserman . . .

JW We worked together right at the end, when he was closing down. He did an amazing project—I made basketball wallpaper for Miami Art Basel in 2013 and my original idea was to have it all silkscreened and handmade. He made it but used a kind of paint that, when we tried to attach it to the wall, the color started leaking out of it. Later we took the silkscreens and scanned them to make digital wallpaper. So while my first idea was to have silkscreened wallpaper, I love this trompe l'oeil wallpaper. It's digitally printed, but it looks exactly like a silkscreen.

Later I made tennis ball wallpaper myself from drawings of tennis balls that we scanned. So it's all digitally printed but the tennis balls looked like drawings and the basketballs looked like silkscreen.

We haven't really talked about it, but in the last couple of years, you helped me start my own print house, WKS Editions. We were thinking about setting up a whole silkscreen studio, and then realized that it's probably best to find people who are excellent at this, who we could—not collaborate with—but outsource the work to. So now we are working with Kevin Giffen and Daniel Wlazlak. Kevin was Jeff Wasserman's apprentice. In the last year we've been making very detailed prints, around 30 colors, of red Matisse pots. We're recreating works of mine that already exist,

*Jonas Wood. **Matisse Pot 1** (2017), 29-color screenprint from a set of three prints, 27 1/2 x 28 inches. Edition of 50. Printed and published by WKS Editions, Los Angeles. Courtesy of the artist. Photo: Brian Forrest.*

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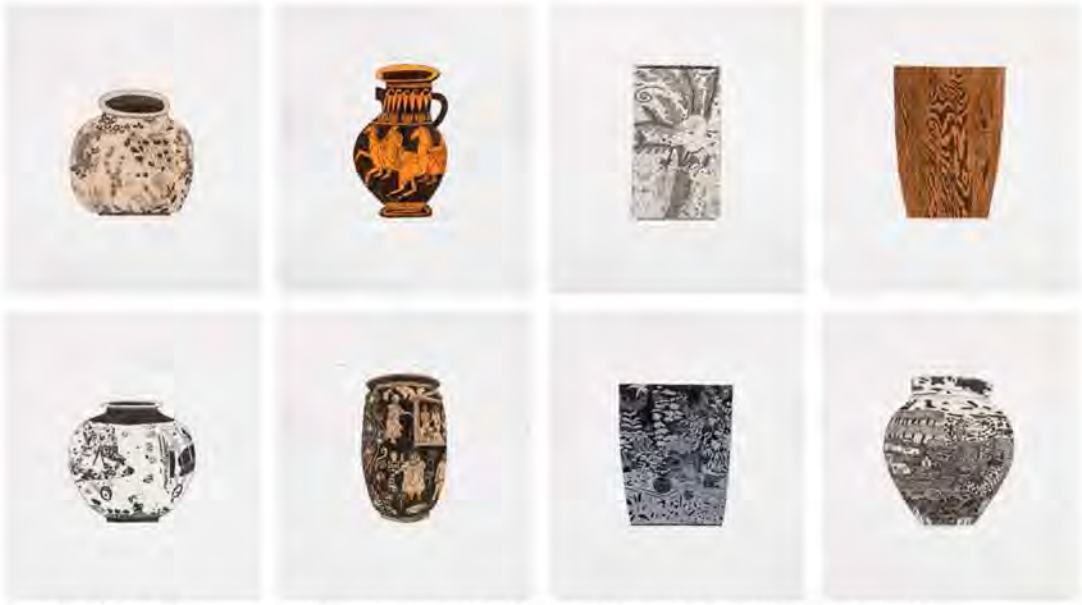

*Jonas Wood, **8 Pots** (2017), series of eight etchings with chine collé, 16 x 14 inches each. Edition of 15. Printed and published by WKS Editions, Los Angeles, CA. Courtesy of the artist. Photo: Brian Forrest.*

but making hybrid versions with more immediate drawing on top.

JS Well, one of the great things about printmaking is that you can edit. You can add and subtract.

JW Exactly. So it's perfect because now we've started to work with them, and we can use their studio to make my prints. The only thing that I had to set up was the etching studio, and I started working with your apprentice Sam Gessow. That was when you and I decided to work together and you became my spiritual and professional printmaking guru.

JS Exactly.

JW You became my print studio advisor and we started printing just my work, not other artists. We had Sam working on this *8 Pots* [2017] set for a year.

JS Also, one cutting print and a notepad print.

JW Yes we made an orchid and a little doodle etching that was more in line with the prints I made with Hamilton. Sam finished off the year with the *Jungle Kitchen* [2017] etching, based on the painting in my last show at David Kordansky Gallery. That was everything I've learned with you in one print. When we first started, my inclination was to try to figure out how to make flat planes, and then we ended up doing this last print with a series of eight to ten aquatint planes, all gray tonalities on top of the hard-ground etching.

JS There's also soft-ground etching there as well, so it's hard ground, soft ground and aquatint.

JW That's right. Before 2017, I had never done soft ground, I had never done aquatinting. And there's so many other things that I haven't learned about yet. It just seems like there's a big world ahead of me in printmaking.

There's not a lot of young people making prints. And I like the idea of establishing that for myself, but also hopefully for other people in the future as time goes on, so I can do the same thing for a young artist that Ruscha did for me.

JS We've got to start some new stuff up.

JW Well, that takes us to where we're at right now. We've been talking about making a couple more interiors with this kind of density and then maybe even some landscapes. And we've just started dabbling with color in the small orchid and the doodle, which is new.

JS We need to do some color aquatint as well.

JW Yes. That's the plan. We can't stop. ■

Jonas Wood is a Los Angeles-based painter and printmaker. A survey of his prints is on view at Gagosian Madison Avenue until 25 May 2018.

Jacob Samuel has been printing etchings for 42 years.

Notes:

1. Picasso 347: 347 Engravings That Picasso Executed At Mougins from March 16th to October 5th, 1968. Two volumes (New York: Random House/Maecenas Press, 1970.

2. Rich Garces, who played for the Red Sox from 1996 to 2002.

3. The Boston Red Sox did not win a World Series between 1918 and 2004. It is the third-longest dry spell in baseball history, superseded only by those of the Chicago White Sox (87 seasons) and the Chicago Cubs (107 seasons).

4. Larry Bird played for the Boston Celtics from 1979 to 1992.

Popescu, Adam, “Andy Warhol in the Powder Room. Christopher Wool on the Floor.,” *NYTimes.com*, May 29, 2018

The New York Times

Andy Warhol in the Powder Room. Christopher Wool on the Floor.

By Adam Popescu | May 29, 2018

Inside their sprawing studio, Jonas Wood and Shio Kusaka, husband and wife artists, display works from their private collection. Here, they posed before works by Ed Ruscha (left), Ruby Neri (center) and Evan Holloway (right). Credit Coley Brown for The New York Times

LOS ANGELES — Where Koreatown and Silver Lake meet Historic Filipinotown — beyond a construction site and a tent city and behind a thick metal gate — lies a Shangri-La, the 22,000-square-foot studio of the husband and wife artists Jonas Wood and Shio Kusaka.

Mr. Wood, 41, a Massachusetts-born painter known for bucolic David Hockneyesque still-life interiors and abstract depictions of sport, and Ms. Kusaka, 46, a Japanese master of porcelain ceramics, bought this space a year ago.

Inside, they have dedicated most of the space to their extensive art collection, including nearly three dozen ceramic pieces by Magdalena Suarez Frimkess and Michael Frimkess. There is also room for personal studios and offices studded with their own work.

Wild-bearded and wild-eyed, Mr. Wood is unabashed in his love for collecting. Speedwalking through the complex, with the couple’s spaniel-mix, Robot, trotting behind, Mr. Wood stops on a dime and points out a signed Larry Bird jersey hanging from a lofty ceiling. “I’m a huge N.B.A. fan,” he explains.

The gym features a Richard Prince Instagram portrait, “Untitled (portrait)”, and a suggestive print of Paris Hilton by the Norwegian photographer Torbjorn Rodland among the free weights and machines. The bathroom has an Andy Warhol sketch alongside comic-book work from Raymond Pettibon and a lithograph by Robert Heinecken.

With so many stimuli, it’s easy to miss details, like the green stalks sprouting from the floor.

There’s a loft with beds, couches and a TV for when work runs late, and toys to keep the couple’s two children happy. Screenprints from Ed Ruscha and Roy Lichtenstein frame the room, but it’s the hand-knotted silk Christopher Wool rug that ties it together, despite a painterly black stain that might give the Big Lebowski pause. Finishing the second-floor tour with a brief stop in a bedroom, we glimpse an erotic Picasso etching — like an Easter egg in a video game — before Mr. Wood switches off the light. Then he’s whizzing downstairs where a vintage poster of a chimpanzee poker dealer by Michael Wilkinson keeps company with a washer and dryer.

More downstairs pieces include Alex Israel’s silk-screen collage of the license plate from “Back to the Future,” a “Mountain Print” lithograph by Mr. Ruscha and ceramics by Ruby Neri, Ry Rocklen and Akio Takamori.

In a conference room, two works by Los Angeles-based artists face off: Will Boone’s acrylic “Jason Mask” and Calvin Marcus’s “Green Calvin,” a mushroom-tongued ceramic devil on green hardboard. “It’s actually painted clay mounted on a painting,” Mr. Wood explains.

These are edited excerpts from the conversation.

What are some of your favorite pieces?

JONAS WOOD We’re really into the Frimkesses, who are Los Angeles ceramists. He threw these vessels, the ones on the top shelf, and she painted them. I’ve made drawings of paintings out of their pots and included them in larger still-life paintings.

And their work is similar to your own process?

WOOD We don’t really collaborate, but we both include each other’s work in our work. More an appropriation, a shared imagery. What’s interesting, too, about this couple is that they also appropriated their practice for these works in particular. Michael, the husband, chose these based on historical vessels.

Jonas Wood clowns with Matt Johnson’s “*Bread Figure (Recumbent)*,” 2017. Credit Coley Brown for The New York Times

SHIO KUSAKA She had this whole book set that somebody gave her — the history of Japanese pottery.

WOOD In pottery a lot of times people make up their own shape, but he’s mimicking a form from an ancient vessel.

KUSAKA And she paints.

WOOD She paints from postcards she finds. So it’s pretty similar to both of our practices, because I work from photographs or postcards; she works based on thrown vessels, much like Michael.

KUSAKA Because I have the same book, I know those images.

And there’s playful stuff on the ceramics: Betty Boop, Popeye, Minnie Mouse.

WOOD Yeah, all appropriations. And over here we’ve got Mark Grotjahn, Joe Bradley, this is a Peter Saul painting, and that’s a Boetti canvas.

Tell me about the weed growing out of the floor.

WOOD This is Tony Matelli, an artist from New York. If you remember on the High Line, there was a sculpture of a sleepwalking man. That’s this guy. We just thought this would look cool here, because it looks like it just broke out of the ground because this is how dandelions would grow in nature.

Schwabsky, Barry "Jonas Wood," *Border Crossings*, Volume 37, Number 1, March 2018, pp. 98-99

VISUAL ART

Jonas Wood

by Barry Schwabsky

The sense of freshness and clarity conveyed by Jonas Wood's paintings, and by their emotionally cool and unruffled air, have sometimes prevented them from being taken quite as seriously as they should be. And that was true right from the beginning—for instance, when the *New Yorker* ran an unsigned notice of the Angeleno's first New York exhibition in 2007, saying, "Wood's paintings are extremely likable—although 'reassuring' might be an equally apt description. Like fashion designers or musicians who draw on styles of earlier eras, Wood has hit on a formula that is at once familiar and fresh." That's not exactly a bashing by any means, but still, according to the art world's implicit value system, "likable" and "reassuring" are not positive characteristics, and neither is "formula." "Edgy," "critical," "confrontational" are the things to be. Wood is talented, was the implication, but lightweight, maybe even superficial.

What was it that gave that impression of superficiality? Part of it might be his subject matter, often tied to middle-class heteronormative domesticity, sometimes to a stereotypically male fascination with sports. Another part might be his style: crisp and undemonstrative paint handling, lots of high-keyed colour and a tropism away from deep space toward planarity. Today, a century and a half after Manet, people still imagine that pictorial flatness and shallow space equate to shallow thought and flat emotion. In Wood's paintings, there's no *Sturm und Drang*, no expressionist melodrama, but still less is there any of the offhand slackerism or Bartleby-like avoidance of effort that was considered elegant, for example, in the Cologne of the 1990s. Wood's self-effacing craftsmanship made it easy to overlook how complicated his paintings are—how hard he could be on himself. That's the problem with making things look straightforward: people tend to believe it.

Making intricate pictures, Wood takes chances, and not all of them work out; the paintings in the last show I saw of his, "Portraits" (at the Anton Kern Gallery, New York, 2016), were full of awkwardnesses unresolved by his always-evident compositional finesse. Actually, that was as close as I've ever seen his work to anything like "reassuring." It reassured me that in most of his other paintings, he was really pulling the rug out from under himself—and then landing on his feet with a dancer's poise—as regularly as I thought, and wasn't just pretending. It's a good thing, too, because my having the formal gawkiness of the portraits in mind made it all the easier for me to overcome the usual first impression of mere facility given by the paintings in Wood's most recent show this past fall, "Interiors and Landscapes," at David Kordansky Gallery in LA.

The show consisted of 13 works, all painted in 2017 and mostly of considerable dimensions (the smallest, *Romancing the Stone*, is a 65-inch square; the largest, *Vegas*, measures 110 x 132 inches). All the paintings are filled with understated compositional complexities and enigmatic self-contradictions. Whether the scene is set at home or out in the world, some unease lurks behind the lively surface. Wood's method—not a formula—is perhaps most evident in *Scholl Canyon 2*. The painting's lower half shows a hill and valley with some utility poles and transmission towers on the horizon. The terrain is rendered as a dappled array of interlocking colour zones with sinuous contours,

1

2

mostly in many shades of green. The sky above is composed of large rectangular blocks of bright blue, two different lighter, whiter blues (with clouds) and grey—as if collaged together from photographs taken on three days with distinctly different weather. The evident constructedness of this part of the painting calls the viewer's

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1. Jonas Wood, *Blackwelder Self Portait*, 2017, oil and acrylic on canvas, 120 x 97 x 1.5 inches. Photos: Brian Forrest. All images courtesy the artist and David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles.
2. *Jungle Kitchen*, 2017, oil and acrylic on canvas, 100 x 93 x 1.5 inches.
3. Installation view, "Interiors and Landscapes," 2017, David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles.

attention to the less obvious fact that the verdant landscape, too, has been composed of mismatched geometrical zones—the intricacy of the enmeshed forms camouflaged this, which is a funny thing to realize because it makes you see that the dappled greens and earth colours could as easily have been sourced from camouflage patterns as from any observation of the landscape. The painted landscape camouflages its own artificiality.

And then you notice that the poles and towers are completely out of scale with everything else—many times the height of the trees nearby. This is a self-evidently false image of nature, and the reason for that became clear to me when I Googled "Scholl Canyon" and discovered that this paintings shows an area that includes a golf course (and there's the little red golf flag, bottom centre-left) that's been constructed on top of a landfill that contains, it says, "such waste as segregated asphalt, municipal solid and inert waste, clean dirt, manure, segregated uncontaminated green waste, scrap tires, and construction/demolition and industrial material." Not only is the painting an artificial image of nature—so is the landscape it pictures.

Each in a different way, the other paintings in "Interiors and Landscapes" all contain comparable slippages and tensions built into them, creating a sort of density of implications that belies its seemingly banal subject matter and workmanlike manner. You can look at Wood's paintings and come away reassured, if that's your inclination, but his complex surfaces repay a longer look that may not be so comfortable. ∎

"Interiors and Landscapes" was exhibited at David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles, from November 3 to December 16, 2017.

Barry Schwabsky's recent books are The Perpetual Guest: Art in the Unfinished Present *(Verso, 2016) and* Heretics of Language *(Black Square Editions, 2017). He is editing a new series of monographs on contemporary painters for the British publisher Lund Humphries.*

Griffin, Jonathan, “The Competitor,” *Cultured*, Fall 2017, pp. 156-161

THE COMPETITOR

These days, he is as famous for his paintings of orchids in pots as he is for his paintings of basketball stars and tennis courts. **Jonas Wood** reveals why he is more than just a "jock dude."

BY JONATHAN GRIFFIN

PORTRAIT BY STEVEN PERILLOUX

Griffin, Jonathan, “The Competitor,” *Cultured*, Fall 2017, pp. 156-161

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"I'm using these images as a vehicle for practicing painting. I think of painting as an accumulation of practice. It's technical. It's scientific."

—Jonas Wood

In the art world I thought I knew, no one would publicly admit to an interest in golf, least of all a young painter who was just making his name. But that is exactly what Jonas Wood did, a decade ago, when he made a painting of the golf course in Glendale where he was learning to play. Now, 10 years later, he is revisiting the subject in his latest show at David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles, which will take over both spaces (and viewing room) of the imposing gallery in November. It does not matter to Wood that the subject of these paintings is the squarest, most buttoned-up, bourgeois weekend pastime going.

"I don't really think about that," he tells me in his Culver City studio, one of three in the neighborhood that he and his wife, the ceramicist Shio Kusaka, share. "I don't really care. I just think about, what am I interested in?"

Wood paints what he loves—or at least what he cares about—and he strives to make us care about it too. He has painted boxers and basketball players, his friends and family, his home and scenes from his childhood. His wife's pots feature frequently; he and Kusaka have a joint exhibition at the new Museum Voorlinden in the Netherlands opening September 30. As his paintings get bigger (the biggest in the Kordansky show is ten feet tall), he says that if he is not "in love with that image and in love with that idea," it is "really, really difficult" to maintain focus.

A recent painting, *Head Up* (2013), showed a televised poker tournament. "I paint paintings of poker players because I like to play poker," Wood explains, deadpan. "And also because the images are super interesting." Poker is a game not noted for its visual spectacle, but here the action (if one can call it that) unfolds against a hot pink carpet.

Wood's big break in L.A. was partly down to poker. Arriving in the city in 2003, he worked as an assistant for the only artist he knew, the sculptor Matt Johnson, a classmate of Wood's from high school in Massachusetts who was represented by Blum & Poe (and still is). Wood and Johnson regularly played poker with gallerist Jeff Poe and another gallery artist, the painter Mark Grotjahn. Wood became friendly with Grotjahn too after he bought one of Wood's paintings from his first solo show at L.A. Black Dragon Society, in 2006. Grotjahn, who had not previously realized that Wood was an artist, introduced him to Anton Kern, his New York gallerist. Straightaway, Kern offered Wood an exhibition in summer 2007, which sold out.

Wood fast became known for paintings that were unaffected in their almost childlike charm, but also sophisticated in their adaptation of traditional genres and their witty take on appropriation. Alongside the golf course painting (*Scholl Canyon*, 2007) hung still lifes featuring potted plants from around Wood's house and studio, and portraits of baseball and basketball players copied from trading cards. *Guest Room* (2007) depicted his childhood home, incorporating Wood's versions of the portraits that hung on the walls.

Wood grew up around art. His grandfather, a pediatrician, began collecting after he became wealthy during the post-War baby boom, and also thanks to some early investments in IBM. Wood remembers being profoundly impressed by the works by Bacon, Rauschenberg, Motherwell and Lichtenstein he saw on his grandparents' walls. A

PHOTO BY BRIAN FORREST; COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND DAVID KORDANSKY GALLERY, LOS ANGELES, CA

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couple of these—a 1962 watercolor by Calder and a Rauschenberg print—now hang in Wood's studio, alongside pieces from his own ever-growing collection.

"When I started showing, I started buying art," Wood says. "I don't really trade that often. I prefer to buy from someone's show, because I know that it's their best stuff. Trading is tough because I don't just want some token thing, I want something good. And I have a hard time letting go of my own stuff."

As soon as I walk through the door of his studio, Wood is showing me his collection, which includes a relief painting by Gina Beavers, a weaving by Christina Forrer, drawings by Joe Bradley, Laura Owens and Josh Smith, ceramics by Ry Rocklen, Patrick Jackson and Michael and Magdalena Suarez Frimkess. Often, pieces he owns wind up in his paintings—as, for example, with the decorated pots made by the Frimkesses, which he paints with imaginary plants growing out of them. Everything in Wood's collection seems to relate somehow to his own work; when he shows me a landscape by Jake Longstreth featuring tennis courts beneath mountains, he comments that it's almost like one of his own paintings of tennis courts.

Much has been written about the psychology of collecting, most of it not worth rehashing here. There nevertheless seems to be among many collectors a compulsion to simultaneously construct and possess an ideal world, of which they are at the center. All the best collections I've known have such a point of view—an approach that borders on artistic authorship even if the collector does not, in fact, call him or herself an artist.

Wood admits he is competitive, as one might expect from a sports fanatic. His inclination to return to previous subjects—to appropriate his own work—might be explained by his drive to improve. "I'm using these images as a vehicle for practicing painting," he says. "I think of painting as an accumulation of practice. It's technical. It's scientific.

"I'm super competitive with myself, and with dead painters, and with a couple of living painters that I really like." Like who? "I love Hockney, I love Alex Katz," he replies. I suspect that there are others too, and that this competitiveness fires his acquisitive habit.

Posing for our photographer in a cap with a BBB logo, Wood narrates the backstory behind LaVar Ball's line of Big Baller Brand merchandise, which capitalizes on the basketball careers of his three sons Lonzo, LiAngelo and LaMelo. Wood describes himself, self-deprecatingly, as "much more of a jock dude who likes to do non-art things, who just also happens to do art." This is the impression that I (and, I suspect, many others) had on first encountering Wood at art events in L.A., who usually stood out as the only burly white guy in the room dressed in a basketball jersey. But for me—and, I'm certain, many others—the more that Wood reveals of himself through his work, the more that image becomes superseded by something more nuanced and surprising.

David Kordansky, who has worked with Wood since 2012, admits that he shared these initial impressions, but, "he totally upended my expectations, and the image I held in my head, of how an artist should look, talk, and be." Kordansky calls him "one of the most sensitive, generous and loving people I know," someone who "bridges worlds."

Wood's broad appeal will be acknowledged this month when he is honored at the TWO x TWO for AIDS and Art gala in Dallas. In an era in which bad news seems to flood our news feeds on an hourly basis, Wood's paintings offer an escape from politics. "I feel like I'm adding something," he says. "Like if you're having a shitty day, maybe you could look at my painting and it would bring you some happiness."

"When I started showing, I started buying art. I don't really trade that often. I prefer to buy from someone's show, because I know that it's their best stuff. Trading is tough because I don't just want some token thing, I want something good. And I have a hard time letting go of my own stuff."

—Jonas Wood

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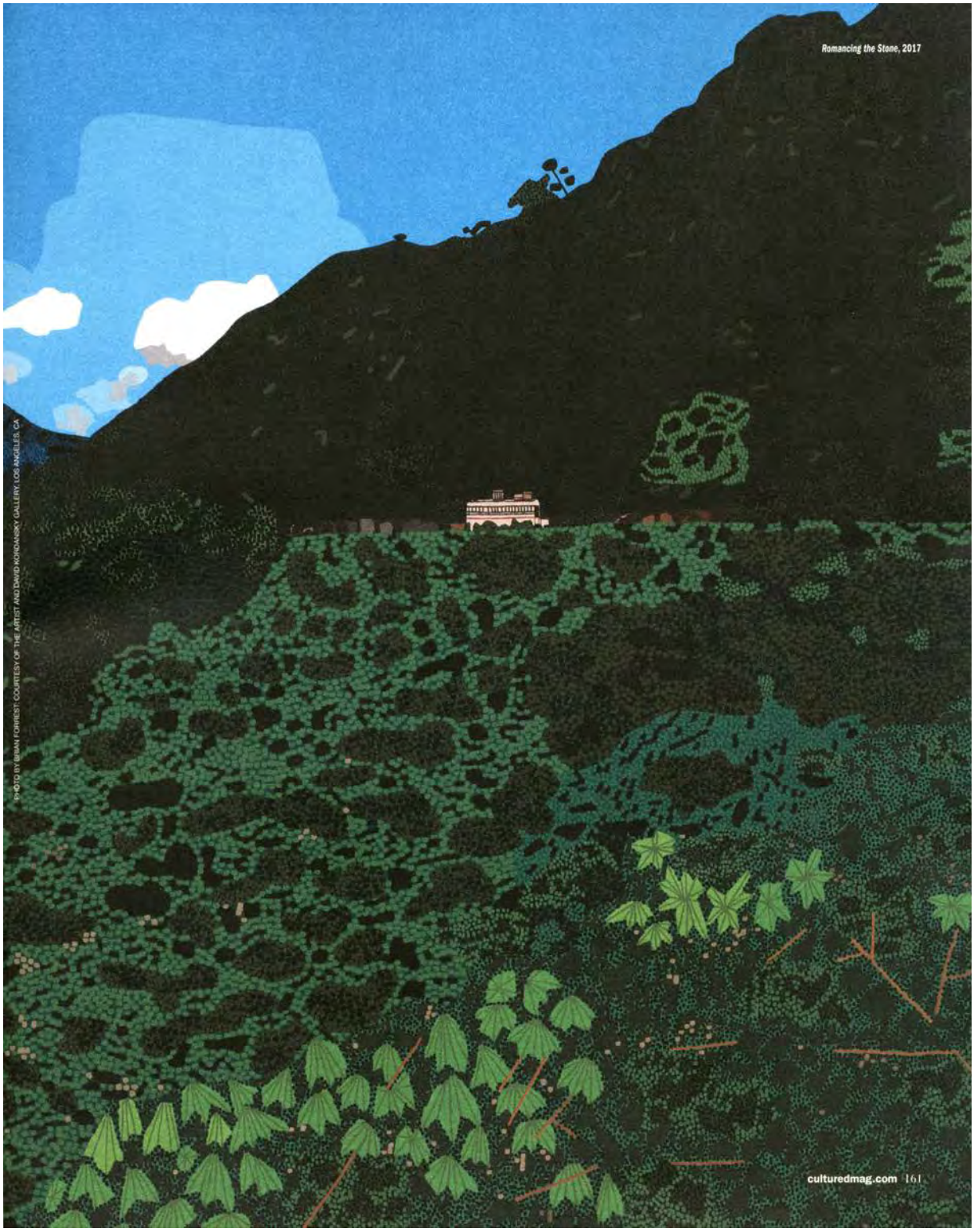

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whitewall

Portrait by Manfredi Gioacchini.

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JONAS WOOD

BY KATY DONOGHUE

Jonas Wood
Pink Plant Patio Landscape Pot
2016
Oil and acrylic on canvas
118 x 90 inches
Photo by Brian Forrest
Courtesy of the artist, Anton Kern Gallery, New York; David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles; Gagosian Gallery; and Shane Campbell Gallery, Chicago

Donoghue, Katy, "Jonas Wood," *Whitewall*, Fall 2017, pp. 110-117

This October, Jonas Wood will be celebrated as the 2017 honoree artist at the 19th annual TWO x TWO for AIDS and Art Gala in Dallas. The event, hosted by collectors Howard and Cindy Rachofsky, benefits amfAR and the Dallas Museum of Art, and has raised over $68 million to date.

In advance of TWO x TWO, *Whitewall* spoke with the Los Angeles–based Wood. He was preparing to move out of his studio, which he happened to rent from artist Ed Ruscha and share with his wife, artist Shio Kusaka. Wood primarily paints while Kusaka works in ceramics, but, working nearly side by side, the two have been appropriating each other's work for years. The result is part of a current show at Museum Voorlinden in the Netherlands, "Shio Kusaka and Jonas Wood" (on view through January 7, 2018).

Wood's colorful, flat paintings depict interiors, landscapes, vessels, plants, and other images the artist enjoys—like basketballs, baseball cards, portraits, and more. When we spoke with him, he related his work to abstract painting and finding balance in shape, color, and pattern. He works from a range of sourced images, which are sometimes personal, sometimes not. This November, his solo show "Interiors and Landscapes" opens at David Kordansky Gallery in Los Angeles.

WHITEWALL: *Congrats on being named the 2017 honoree artist for TWO x TWO. Can you tell us about the painting you made for TWO x TWO*, Pink Plant Patio Landscape Pot*?*

JONAS WOOD: It's a landscape pot painting I made in late 2016, and it is from a series of paintings I've been making for the last couple of years that combine a clipped-out plant with a make-believe pot. The pot is an image from an interiors magazine that's cut into the shape of a pot. The image has a bunch of plants and chairs and tables in it. It's like a dual plant-on-plant situation.

WW: *Have you participated in TWO x TWO before?*

JW: Yes, a couple of times. This is going to be the third time I donated a work.

WW: *Last year's honoree, Laura Owens, you're close with, too, right?*

JW: I worked for her when I first moved to Los Angeles and now we're friends. She's awesome.

WW: *This fall you have a couple of shows coming up, in September and November. Let's start with the one in September at Museum Voorlinden, which is a show of your and your wife's work.*

JW: It's about how our work intersects. I make a lot of still lifes that include my wife's pots and singular paintings that are based on some of her pots. So there are a few places where our work coincides.

WW: *Have you shown with her before?*

JW: Yes, first we did a show together in Hong Kong at Gagosian. Brendan Dugan at Karma in New York made a really amazing book, and so then we did a follow-up show at his gallery. So this will be the third time we've shown together. This feels much bigger—it's 10,000-plus square feet.

WW: *Your studios are right next to each other. What's that like?*

JW: We share a studio and I've been appropriating her pots for a while, using them as still life objects. Once in a while I would make up a new pot with a pattern on it and she would copy it. It was mostly a one-way appropriation for a while. But in the last couple of years, she started appropriating my work a lot more. She made basketball pots and then she started making Greek pot vessels with dinosaurs, which coincided with my interest in making Greek pots. She made some witch pots based on collaborative drawings of witches I made with my daughter during Halloween. She's put other doodles of mine and painting references of mine on her pots as well.

It goes back to when we first got together. Before I met her, I would only look at painting in museums. I wouldn't look at vessels or pottery. But after we got together she introduced me to pottery and I started looking at it more. I became interested in using it as a subject in paintings. We've never made a collaborative work. The ideas are collaborative, but we haven't physically gone back and forth and worked on the same objects.

WW: *Do you see that happening in the future?*

JW: I totally want to make some paintings physically on her pots.

WW: *When she started introducing you to looking at pottery, what did you like about vessels? What made you want to paint them?*

JW: We went to New York when I first started showing there in 2007. I went to The Met and started looking at pots with my wife, and was really into Greek pots, especially the orange-and-black ones and the simplified language on them. I started making sketches of those. I thought they were interesting; they have a Matisse quality to them, too. Everything is flat because there is no rendering, which is also relatable to my painting because there's not much rendering in my painting. It's very flat. I got back to my studio and made more drawings and paintings. That's how all my work works, really. I paint

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Jonas Wood
Children's Garden
2015
Oil and acrylic on canvas
93 x 93 inches
Photo by Brian Forrest
Courtesy of the artist and Gagosian Gallery

Jonas Wood
Night Bloom Still Life
2015
Oil and acrylic on canvas
90 x 80 inches
Photo by Brian Forrest
Courtesy of the artist and Gagosian Gallery

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Donoghue, Katy, “Jonas Wood,” *Whitewall*, Fall 2017, pp. 110-117

Jonas Wood
Romancing the Stone
2017
Oil and acrylic on canvas
65 x 65 inches
Photo by Brian Forrest
Courtesy of the artist and David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles, CA

“I LIKE THE IDEA OF SOMETHING JUST ABOUT TO BE FINISHED AND SOMETHING JUST ABOUT TO BE STARTED”

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things that I'm attracted to or that interest me.

WW: *In November you have a show at David Kordansky, "Interiors and Landscapes." You've done those kinds of paintings before, but is there a new approach to this series?*

JW: That is all new work. It's going to be 13 paintings—six landscapes, six interiors, and one self-portrait that's also an exterior. And it'll be in all three of the gallery's spaces.

I've worked in these genres before. I think the new thing, in general, is that my way of painting is ever-evolving. It's not exactly the same. I'm always thinking about how I can paint things differently. How is my idea about applying the paint changing? That's not easy to put into words. What is new is that I'm doing a themed show of just these two kinds of subjects, which I've never done before. It's focused. I'm excited to see them all together.

WW: *When you're working on them, are you focused like that?*

JW: I work on a lot of things at once because I don't like to be forced to finish one thing at a time. I like to be able to pick and choose what I want to do each day so it feels fresh. I think it's just natural for my style or my personality to be able to wake up and think about what is going to inspire me the most that day.

I like the idea of something just about to be finished and something just about to be started—it feels very natural. I do paint series of works, but I don't paint things start to stop in a series.

WW: *You paint a good deal from sourced images. Can you tell me about how you source images and how you edit them?*

JW: I work from photos and sourced images. So for this show, I conceived the idea of doing a bunch of landscapes and interiors. The first step is just to look at all the pictures I've been collecting or pinning up on my wall. And then I start to edit them down to just a few of each. There isn't an overall theme; it's more that aesthetically these six landscapes or interiors will be interesting together.

Some of them are from parts of my life and childhood, family photos; others are found sourced images. There's a photo of the interior of my wife's studio next to mine. And there's a snowy landscape from when I grew up, at my parent's house in their backyard.

I compile tons of images, take pictures, print things out I find, and then a big part is editing and sorting. I don't make 20 paintings and destroy 10. I look through thousands of photos and meditate on images and pick things that I know that I'm going to love before I start them. My paintings aren't freestyle—they're more like constructing a building. You want to have a good foundation. I make a lot of drawings of paintings before I make them into paintings.

WW: *Is drawing for you, then, your way of working stuff out before the painting?*

JW: Yeah, but I make very well-rendered drawings of paintings and sometimes the drawings turn out so well I use the drawing as the model for the painting. The other half of the time I'm using source images as models. It goes back and forth.

WW: *In a few past interviews, you've talked about the challenge of color and in seeing color, that a plant is maybe more blue than green, for instance, and then the challenge of pattern, too. You related that to wanting to make those difficult things enjoyable for you. Is that what draws you to the colors you choose and how you work with pattern?*

JW: I use photos and source material to make my paintings, but I'm not a photorealist. I'm using the shapes of the different planes and the spacing of how things are laid out in the photo. I'm referencing some patterns that are in there or making things simpler. I think it's more about invention. It's almost more like an abstract painting. There's no image to reference in an abstract painting—it's about color, balance, pattern, and technique. So even though I'm painting something realistic (it's obviously a creation of an idea of

Jonas Wood
Spiritual Warrior
2016
Oil and acrylic on canvas
88 x 98 inches
Photo by Brian Forrest
Courtesy of the artist and Anton Kern Gallery, New York, NY

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Jonas Wood
Jungle Kitchen
2017
Oil and acrylic on canvas
100 x 93 inches
Photo by Brian Forrest
Courtesy of the artist and David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles, CA

something that's real), I'm relying on the balance of color and geometry and pattern-making to be able to have things work. My paintings are super-flat, so this involves micro-patterns and shapes and colors that all come together with your eye to create an image.

WW: *Your recent show at Gagosian in San Francisco, "Notepads, Holograms and Books" [March 30–June 17] was of paintings on blown-up notepads. Can you tell me about putting together that exhibition, which was a dual show with Ed Ruscha, who is also your landlord, right?*

JW: Yup, he's my landlord. I'm about to move out of this building, but I've been renting from him for almost 11 years. We bought a building on a different side of town we've been fixing up that's going to be a big compound. I've known Ed for a long time, but I never really wanted to bug him. We became friendly over the years and then I started showing with Gagosian and I talked to Ed about it a little bit. He supported my work for years and he introduced me to printmakers. About a year and a half ago, one of the people I work with at the gallery was like, "Do you want to do a show with Ed?" And I was like, "Of course! As long as that's what he wants to do, I would love to!" And they said they'd talk to him. He was super-nice and was like, "Yeah, that sounds good. Why don't I come over and talk to you about it?"

He came over and I told him I was making these notepad paintings, and I said, "What would be really cool is if you showed some books." It was an interesting overlap, I thought. Luckily, he was like, "Let's do something," and we started talking about how to curate the show.

WW: *What was the idea behind the notepad paintings?*

JW: When I was going to The Met and making those drawings in 2007, I was staying at a hotel in New York and I would use the hotel's stationery every day to draw. And they would replenish it every morning. I came back to L.A. with several pads of paper and used them in the studio to make notes and doodles. And that developed into me appropriating that notepad and turning it into the Wood Kusaka Studio notepad. Then I started collecting notepads from my dealers and had the idea to make giant versions of my notepad doodles. I made 100 of them, printed them all out, and made these large notepads by silkscreening the logo onto a canvas and stretching it. Basically, I just made giant versions of the notepads that I had, re-creating drawings in this shorthand doodle painting style.

It was an amazing experience. The show was the day after my birthday. So the night before the opening we went out to an amazing Chinese restaurant in San Francisco with Ed, and the people from the gallery and some of my friends came up. It was a pretty amazing, memorable life experience.

WW: *You grew up outside Boston and your grandparents were collectors. You are a collector now and have said, "I love living with really good art . . . it gives me energy and makes me excited about making stuff." Do you see collecting as a connection to your grandfather?*

JW: Yeah, I definitely have the collecting addiction, but in a good way. I grew up in environments with pretty powerful things, and when I started to show and make a little money I started collecting things I liked. I like to collect stuff and live with stuff and look at it and get excited about it and feel its energy and power. But as an artist who sells work to make a living, I think collecting is also an interesting way to get a deeper understanding of how the whole business works. If you're an artist, you can't really go buy young people's work and then wait for it to go up in value and sell it like half the collectors do these days. I'm going to collect and give to museums or my kids or appreciate it. And the only work that I sell is my own work.

I like to support young artists I find interesting. I like discovering new work that I haven't seen before and learning from it. I don't trade that often, because I think it's really hard to get an A-plus work in a trade. It's easier to get an A-plus work in a show or at auction. I'm not into trading just to say I have somebody's work. I want the good shit.

Delahunty, Gavin, “Mark Maker,” *Patron*, October/November 2017, cover, pp. 66-73

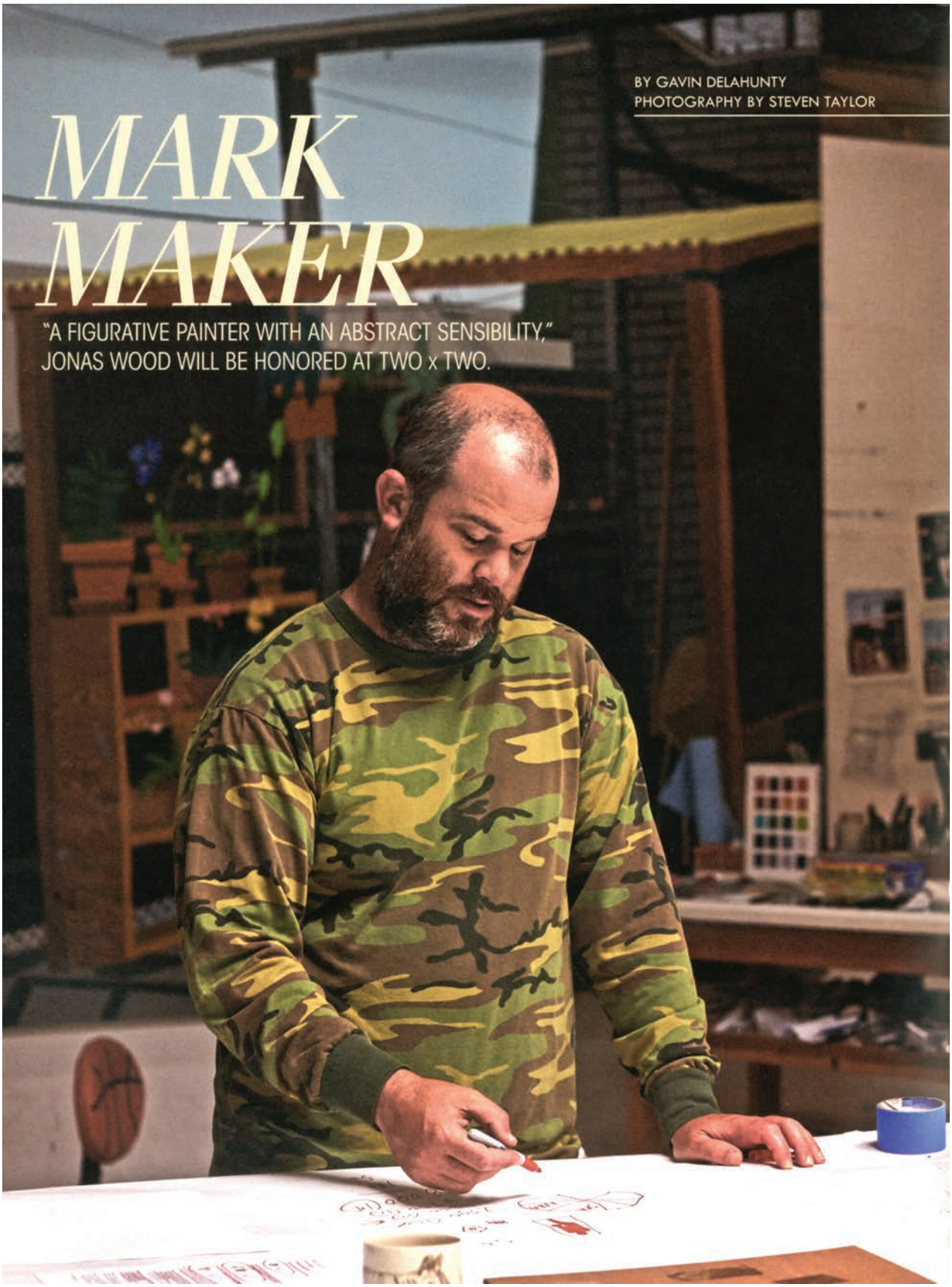
PATRON

ART / CULTURE / DESIGN

6TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

JONAS WOOD
TWO x TWO
ARTIST HONOREE

Delahunty, Gavin, “Mark Maker,” *Patron*, October/November 2017, cover, pp. 66-73



BY GAVIN DELAHUNTY
PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEVEN TAYLOR

MARK MAKER

“A FIGURATIVE PAINTER WITH AN ABSTRACT SENSIBILITY,” JONAS WOOD WILL BE HONORED AT TWO x TWO.

Delahunty, Gavin, “Mark Maker,” *Patron*, October/November 2017, cover, pp. 66-73

Jonas Wood's signature style is an uncanny blend of realism and abstraction that distorts the subject and adds a new level of meaning. His practice encompasses multiple genres, piecing together and layering a collage of memories, places, people, heroes, and art objects.

–Gavin Delahunty,
Hoffman Family Senior Curator of Contemporary Art, Dallas Museum of Art

This page: Jonas Wood, *Blue Rug Still Life*, 2014, oil and acrylic on canvas, 105 x 103 in. Photograph by Brian Forrest.
Courtesy of the artist and David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles, CA. Opposite: Jonas Wood pictured in his studio. Photograph by Steven Taylor.

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This page: Jonas Wood, *Ovitz's Library*, 2013, oil and acrylic on canvas, 100 x 132 in. Photograph by Brian Forrest. Courtesy of the artist and Anton Kern Gallery, New York, NY. Opposite: Jonas Wood, *Shio's Studio on Blackwelder*, 2017, oil and acrylic on canvas, 93 x 100 in. Photograph by Brian Forrest. Courtesy of the artist and David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles, CA.

Delahunty, Gavin, "Mark Maker," *Patron*, October/November 2017, cover, pp. 66-73

The final weekend of October, Jonas Wood will be honored at TWO x TWO for AIDS and Art. Of the 2017 TWO x TWO Artist Honoree, co-founder Howard Rachofsky says, "Jonas is an incredibly generous and successful young artist and one of the wonderful art darlings in the world today."

Wood's *Pink Plant Patio Landscape Pot* featured on *Patron*'s cover will be live auctioned on October 28 during the TWO x TWO auction and gala. "You couldn't envision a more perfect example of his craft." The "pot" or vase being a favorite subject matter of the artist, Rachofsky describes, "He takes an everyday object—an object that's been painted for thousands of years—and gives it relevance and sense of place in today's popular culture environment. This is classic imagery employed by Jonas to tell his story that fits him into the context of art history."

Gavin Delahunty is working in close partnership with the artist on a major survey of Wood's work for the DMA. Here, Delahunty, the Hoffman Family Senior Curator of Contemporary Art at the Dallas Museum of Art, visits with Jonas Wood via telephone in late August during the height of their summer travels from opposite sides of the globe.

Gavin Delahunty: *Hi, Jonas. Can I start by asking you to provide us with some basic biographical information—where you were brought up, and where you studied, for instance?*

Jonas Wood: Okay, cool. I was born in Boston, Massachusetts, and I went to college in upstate New York to study science and psychology, minoring in studio art. I thought I was going to be a psychologist, so I worked in a hospital. Later I decided to return to grad school to study painting, so I moved to Washington. That's where I met my wife, and that's where I lived before L.A. I went from Seattle to L.A.

GD: *How long have you been a resident in L.A.?*

JW: I've been in L.A. since 2003. I worked in Laura Owens's studio for two years, and Shio Kusaka (my wife) worked for Charles Ray for four years.

GD: *And you met Shio before you moved to L.A.?*

JW: Yeah, we met in Seattle. She was an undergrad in the ceramics program when I was in grad school. She worked at the art

Jonas Wood, *Spiritual Warrior*, 2016, oil and acrylic on canvas, 88 x 98 in. Photograph by Brian Forrest. Courtesy of the artist and Anton Kern Gallery, New York, NY.
Opposite: Jonas Wood, *Robin and Ptolemy*, 2013, oil and acrylic on linen, 25 x 18.5 in. Photograph by Brian Forrest.
Courtesy of the artist, Dallas Museum of Art, TWO x TWO for AIDS and Art Fund, 2017/13.

library. I took out a lot of books and talked with her. Grad school was my first time seriously taking art. It occupied all my time; before that it was more like a hobby. So when I went to grad school in 2000, after the first week I said, "Okay, I'll be an artist," and that was the first time that I spent 24 hours a day trying to study and think about art. I didn't really know that much about art history before then.

GD: *Can you describe an average day in the life of Jonas Wood?*

JW: Okay, average day. Shio and I take it in turns to wake up the kids, and then drop them off at school. I work from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., then back home, hang out, playtime, homework, then dinner. After the kids go to bed I return to the studio for two to three hours. I'm trying to work less at night because it's not conducive to raising kids. It used to be that I'd work till whenever, sleep till whenever. But that is changing.

GD: *I have always detected a certain melancholy in your work—for instance, paintings of office spaces, or storage spaces, or desolate landscapes. Could you talk a little bit about this?*

JW: The subject matter that you choose has to be important to you. I guess it's obvious. When I choose something that is emotionally charged, like an old bedroom, a family member, or a landscape, it keeps me focused. I had a pretty difficult time growing up, personally and in terms of my relationship with my family, in particular with my mother. So when I paint a picture of my mom, it is my way to create a more beautiful, peaceful memory.

GD: *Where do sports, as a subject matter, fit in? Your paintings of athletes often depict them as exhausted, undernourished, or even freakish. I find them compelling and at the same time difficult to look at. Do you approach those subjects differently than let's say a family portrait?*

JW: I'm really into sports. It turns me on. I think most of my figurative works are distorted in some way. I like to paint unusual-looking athletes because I am searching for interesting things to paint. Freakishly large hands for example. I'm also turned on by their uniforms and the uniformity of sportswear in general. You

Delahunty, Gavin, “Mark Maker,” *Patron*, October/November 2017, cover, pp. 66-73

"Jonas is one of those artists who manifests a maturity beyond his years, and he loves art for its own sake. He explores art as a narrative but with his own particular point of view that's quite distinct. How nice to be able to honor an artist with a major survey exhibition coming to the Dallas Museum of Art. This is a magic moment to highlight and showcase a new generation."

– Howard Rachofsky,
Co-founder TWO x TWO for AIDS and Art

Delahunty, Gavin, “Mark Maker,” *Patron*, October/November 2017, cover, pp. 66-73

Jonas Wood, *Jungle Kitchen*, 2017, oil and acrylic on canvas, 100 x 93 in. Photograph by Brian Forrest. Courtesy of the artist and David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles, CA.

know, in sports photography, to avoid capturing spectators in the background, they capture the athlete in focus while keeping the background out of focus. I am interested in this abstraction. If you look closely at the background of some of my sports portraits there is a playfulness with color and abstract shapes.

GD: *I guess it's less emotionally draining to paint an anonymous sports star than it is to paint your mother? You can still practice your painting but with an important emotional distance.*

JW: Yes, exactly. It is a different kind of pressure. It is fun to think about pure color and shape as opposed to personal relationships. With the sports pictures, I was looking for something that would be challenging to paint on a technical level.

GD: *It is well documented that collage as an artistic technique plays an important role in how you compose your pictures. However, I wonder if you could speak about collage in terms of thought process, in the way that we recall memories, for instance?*

JW: In grad school I was painting from life because that was how I was taught. If you wanted to be a painter of things and everyday life, you had to paint from there. So I tried that for a little while, and that wasn't my thing. I wasn't bad at it; I just didn't have the patience for it. So I started working from photos. I would find photos that I wanted to use and chop them up. They were crudely chopped and ultimately had a certain violence because of the haphazard way I would put them back together. After 10 or 15

years, everything is much more intentional. I collage to bend space in a certain way.

GD: *Are there technological drivers that have enabled your distinctive style?*

JW: I wouldn't say any current technologies, but I am very interested in printmaking. It is a new language for me. I don't do digital. I like to cut it out, move it around, and glue it down.

GD: *You're analog.*

JW: Yes, definitely. It's not like I couldn't do it on my computer; it's not that, but I like the manual process. I've been printmaking for eight years now. When I discovered it, I was like, "Wow, this totally relates to how I paint." When you make a silkscreen, for instance, you have to work from the back to the front of the image. If you look at my paintings after 2013, there's so much that I've learned from making etchings also. A certain mark-making and line quality that wasn't there before. You can see it in the large TWO x TWO painting.

GD: *The "Pink Plant Patio Landscape Pot"?*

JW: Yeah, the whole pot, the way it's painted. It is a combination of what I was doing before I started printmaking, which was a lot of flat planes on top of each other with some line work and some mark-making—I am more conscious of those marks now. So printmaking as a technology has been really important to me.

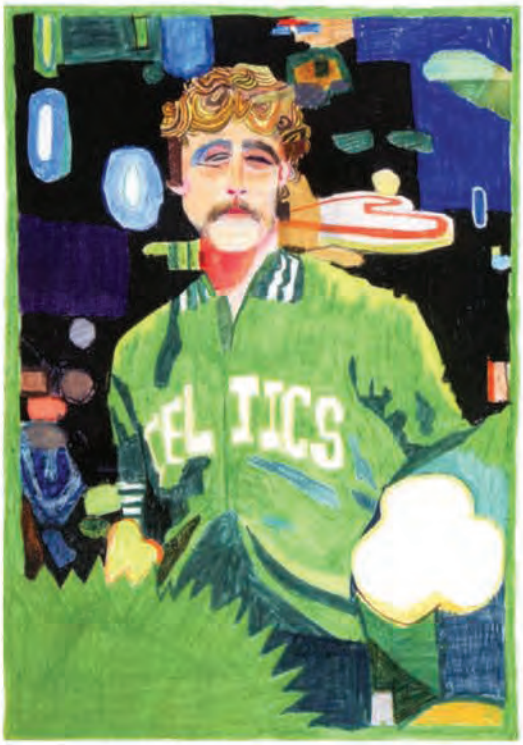
GD: *You're mining a technique in the same way you are excavating your personal archive, a strategy for dealing with the past and the present simultaneously.*

JW: Yes, I guess.

GD: *Final question. I always felt your work applied a certain pressure to a "conventional" distinction between abstraction and representation. Could you talk about that?*

JW: Well, I definitely have bodies of work where I want the experience of viewing to approach abstract painting. I'm thinking about the tennis court paintings or basketball paintings. A dominant color, some lines, and an emblem or logo. It does relate to what I mentioned earlier, you know, identifying something that is interesting for me to paint. With the tennis court there was like, "Oh, this is something I can keep going back to." It's very meditative and compositionally minimal. I think of myself as a figurative painter, but I come to it from an abstract painter's sensibility. I'm just trying to figure out the right balance that works for me.

Wood is included in the permanent collections of the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; The Broad, Los Angeles; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; and Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago. His work is currently part of a two-person show, *Shio Kusaka and Jonas Wood*, at Museum Voorlinden, Wassenaar, The Netherlands. **P**



Above, right: Jonas Wood, *Birds Card*, 2005, colored pencil and crayon on paper, 30 x 22 in. Photograph by Thomas Müller. Courtesy of the artist and Anton Kern Gallery, New York, New York. Below, right: Jonas Wood, *Wimbledon I*, 2013, oil and acrylic on linen, 88 x 60 in. Photograph by Brian Forrest. Courtesy of the artist and Anton Kern Gallery, New York, New York.

Cochran, Sam, “Step Inside L.A. Art Star Jonas Wood’s Magical World,” *ArchitecturalDigest.com*, Art, November 4, 2017

ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST

Step Inside L.A. Art Star Jonas Wood’s Magical World

For a major new show of his work, the painter delves into his love of landscapes and interiors

TEXT BY SAM COCHRAN | PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRIAN FORREST
COURTESY OF JONAS WOOD AND DAVID KORDANSKY GALLERY
NOVEMBER 4, 2017

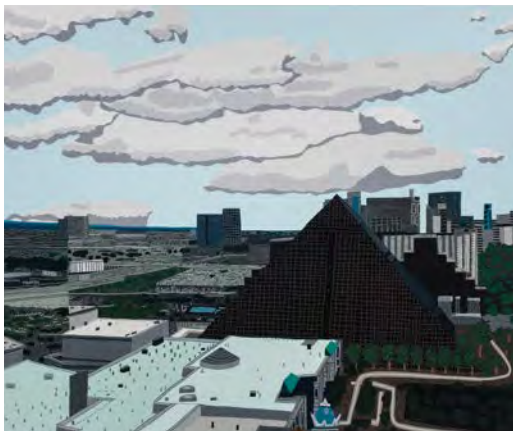
Detail of *Jungle Kitchen*, 2017, 100 x 93 inches

Jonas Wood tends to stockpile images. The Los Angeles painter finds them on Instagram and the internet; he receives them from friends, who text him pictures they think he’ll like; and he creates many of his own, snapping photographs on vacation or just over the course of an average day. “I’m a clipper,” he tells me on the phone. “I have a lot of photos on my computer. I have books and magazines I’ve collected. I get into modes where I’m researching my sources.”

For his new solo show, now on view at David Kordansky Gallery in Los Angeles, Wood delved deep into two favorite genres: landscapes and interiors. Photos of everything from movie scenes to golf courses and personal spaces (among them the studio of his wife, Shio Kusaka) have served as potent source material for large-scale paintings. Rendered in his signature representational style, with pointillist dots, dense patterns, and fauvist palettes, the intricately composed works fill both of the vast exhibition rooms at David Kordansky, creating conversations of color and pattern beneath the gallery’s exposed wooden trusses.

“I am pretty much making a variety of paintings all the time,” says Wood, reflecting on the show’s focus. Coming off his 2016 show of portraits at New York’s Anton Kern Gallery, however, he found himself freshly inspired by interiors and landscapes. “This show was born out of a desire to make a bunch of them at the same time, as well as show them at the same time,” he says. Those who have carefully followed the art star’s booming career may sense a shift in rooms portrayed. “I’ve always painted interiors, but these feel new, more tightly constructed than when I was younger,” says Wood. “I am trying to push the boundaries of how colors work and how things work compositionally.” At the time of our phone call, Wood is coming off a big weekend. Just days before, he was the artist honoree at Two x Two for AIDS and Art, the annual Dallas fundraiser benefitting amFAR and the Dallas Museum of Art. There, actor Armie Hammer wielded an auction hammer, conducting a bidding war over one of Wood’s paintings that ultimately fetched a whopping $1.2 million. Those who lost out, of course, can take solace knowing that there are more beauties to be had in L.A. Here, the artist walks us through just some of the highlights from his new show at David Kordansky Gallery.

Cochran, Sam, “Step Inside L.A. Art Star Jonas Wood’s Magical World,” *ArchitecturalDigest.com*, Art, November 4, 2017



Vegas, 2017
110 x 132 inches

“The photos that I used for this painting were taken at Mandalay Bay ten years ago. I was staying at the hotel for my friend’s bachelor party. It was five in the morning and the sun was coming up, giving off this crazy vibe. I made a collage of the photos soon after that, so it’s been around for a decade. But I finished the painting just before the Las Vegas shooting. If you look at the painting, just at the right is where the shooting took place.

Eames House Interior, 2017
100 x 93 inches

My father is an architect, so when he comes to L.A., he likes to look at buildings. I’ve been with him to Schindler houses, Neutra houses. About ten years ago we went to the Eames house and I took this photo.”

Blackwelder Self Portrait, 2017
120 x 97 inches

“This is based on a picture taken by Aubrey Mayer, an amazing photographer who takes portraits of artists—that’s his practice. It was of me wearing white pants and a white T-shirt. A friend of mine sent me a picture of DJ Khaled wearing this insane jacket, and I decided to paint myself in the jacket. So I appropriated Aubrey’s photo; I appropriated DJ Khaled’s jacket. I took all the plants out and put in plants that I had already painted, plants that I had minimalized in other bodies of work.”

Cochran, Sam, “Step Inside L.A. Art Star Jonas Wood’s Magical World,” *ArchitecturalDigest.com*, Art, November 4, 2017

Shio’s Studio on Blackwelder, 2017
93 x 100 inches

“Obviously I’m not a photo-realist, but this painting is completely literal. It’s a photo of Shio’s studio that I took four years ago. To store all of her work she makes these cardboard boxes with pictures on the outside. I love that idea, probably more than anything. Just a bunch of boxes—plus the Roe Ethridge photograph on the wall.”

Jungle Kitchen, 2017
100 x 93 inches

“This image was originally from an interior-design magazine. Someone had painted Rousseau leaves all across their ’80s kitchen. I saw it posted on Instagram and did a search to find it. But I’m not beholden to the images I choose. Sometimes they’re very accurately depicted. Sometimes it’s loose. I could easily add or omit something and you would never know. And I’m okay if you think I made it all up. In the end it’s just a painting. That’s the goal—to make a good painting.”

“Jonas Wood: Interiors and Landscapes” is on view at David Kordansky Gallery in Los Angeles from November 3 through December 16; davidkordanskygallery.com.

Miranda, Carolina, A., “Painter Jonas Wood turns Arata Isozaki’s MOCA exterior into building-sized art canvas,” *LATimes.com*, December 20, 2016

Los Angeles Times

Painter Jonas Wood turns Arata Isozaki’s MOCA exterior into building-sized art canvas

Artist Jonas Wood stands before his rising mural at the Museum of Contemporary Art on Grand Avenue. (Christina House / For The Times)

The building that Japanese architect Arata Isozaki designed for the Museum of Contemporary Art on Grand Avenue is known for its quieter qualities: the sunken levels and the demure, red sandstone facade. That facade is now getting a makeover courtesy of painter Jonas Wood.

Wood, a Los Angeles painter known for his brightly hued portraits and still-lifes that play with blocky layers of color, is in the process of covering the museum’s 5,400 square-foot facade with a vinyl reproduction of his painting *“Still Life With Two Owls”* from 2014.

“It’s going to be pretty exuberant,” he says, as he observes a team of workers moving a set of industrial lifts into place. “As the light shifts, it’ll get a great light on it. The colors will really come to life.”

The vinyls adhere to the museum’s surface without damaging it. In roughly a year, they will be removed to make way for a piece by another artist. The idea, says a spokesperson from MOCA, is to feature work by a rotating selection of artists on the museum’s exterior.

Miranda, Carolina, A., “Painter Jonas Wood turns Arata Isozaki’s MOCA exterior into building-sized art canvas,” *LATimes.com,* December 20, 2016

A rendering of Jonas Wood’s “*Still Life with Two Owls (MOCA)”* in downtown Los Angeles. (MOCA Los Angeles)

“It’s a cool opportunity to have a Los Angeles artist share an image,” says Wood, “and perhaps get some more people to come to the museum.”
Like a lot of Wood’s still lifes, the image for the museum — officially titled “Still Life With Two Owls (MOCA)” — features long-running themes in his work. There are the depictions of ceramics, which often capture pieces created by ceramist Shio Kusaka (who happens to be the painter’s wife). And there are the plants, which Wood often repaints from one canvas to the next.

“They are like recurring characters,” he says. “I make a ton of still lifes and repeat them.”

The work isn’t his first large-scale piece. Wood has completed a building-sized mural for LAXart and did a billboard adjacent to New York’s High Line park in 2014.

Installation at MOCA is expected to be complete by Thursday.

Check in for updated images of the completed mural in the days to come.

Bierman, Fred, "Drawn to Athletes From Every Angle," *The New York Times*, Sports, October 22, 2016, p. B9

'I was really into this Dwayne card because of the wood grain, as well as his extreme look. I painted his head upside down because I don't like to paint high on a ladder. I flip the canvas and the image, and then paint.

I don't always know of the athletes I paint, and in this case, I had never heard of Dwayne. I was turned on to it when a good friend showed me the image. I purchased the card and had it for a few years before I painted it.'

JONAS WOOD, OIL AND ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 110 X 82 INCHES

DWAYNE SCHINTZIUS, 2016

Drawn to Athletes From Every Angle

By FRED BIERMAN

It is not often that David Hockney and Dwayne Schintzius come up in the same conversation.

The art of Jonas Wood, however, is one of the rare places that Hockney, the British pop-art pioneer, and Schintzius, the N.B.A. journeyman who died in 2012, can coexist.

Wood's brand of off-kilter realism is often compared to Hockney's work, and Wood cites Hockney as one of his major influences. Yet Wood's current show of portraits at the Anton Kern Gallery in Chelsea is dominated by an enormous painting of an early-1990s San Antonio Spurs basketball card featuring Schintzius and his legendary mullet (nicknamed the Lobster).

Sports has always played an outsize role in Wood's work. His love of portraiture drew him to sports cards, whose bold typography and abstract backgrounds are elements that Wood loves to experiment with. He is also fascinated by Manute Bol — he has painted the 7-foot-7 former basketball center numerous times. From the lighting and composition of a televised poker match to a floating basketball to the confrontational stare in a promotional boxing poster, Wood has found inspiration in the unlikeliest corners of the sports world.

He was born outside Boston, and grew up idolizing Larry Bird and rooting for the local teams. After college, he moved to Los Angeles, where he adopted the Clippers and matured as an artist. The New York Times critic Roberta Smith said his work "presents a highly personal but impersonally observed reality." Museums like the Guggenheim and the Museum of Modern Art feature his work in their collections, and paintings of his have sold for six figures at auction. Through it all, Wood continues to use sports as one of his major themes.

Wood was asked to select some of his favorite sports-theme paintings and explain what drew him to his subjects. Needless to say, it is not often that Patrick Ewing and Chinese scroll paintings come up in the same conversation, either.

Wood's show at the Anton Kern Gallery is up through Oct. 29.

'I watch and play a lot of poker, and I stream live high-buy-in tournaments. This was from a photo I took of my computer while watching the Aussie Millions 250K buy-in. I was super into the stage lights and the pink glow. When choosing what to paint, it has a lot to do with if I am attracted to the image on a variety of levels: subject matter, color, composition and so on.'

'I love Manute. I think I have made eight to 10 portraits of him. He is unique, strange and magical to me.'

JONAS WOOD, OIL AND ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 120 X 86 INCHES

MANUTE, 2014

Bierman, Fred, “Drawn to Athletes From Every Angle,” *The New York Times*, Sports, October 22, 2016, p. B9

JONAS WOOD, OIL AND ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 89 X 105 INCHES

HEAD UP, 2013

JONAS WOOD, OIL AND ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 78 X 58 INCHES

OREL, 2014

‘For me, sports cards are ready-made portraits. They’re so accessible to my practice because they are flat, have bright colors and have lettering. Also, the backgrounds are always blurry, which is exciting because they are abstract, and I have to figure out a way to interpret them.’

JONAS WOOD, OIL ON CANVAS, 88 X 48 INCHES

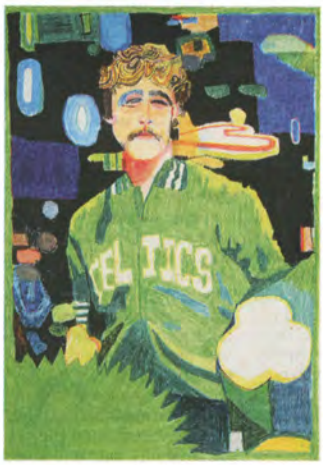
SCHOLL CANYON, 2007

‘Scholl Canyon is where I learned how to play golf when I first moved to L.A. I had never played golf before moving to the West Coast in 2003. I really wanted this painting to be flat, like an old Chinese scroll painting. This was in my first show in N.Y.C.’

JONAS WOOD, OIL AND ACRYLIC ON LINEN, 33 X 23 INCHES

BLUE HITMAN HEARNS, 2012

‘I always loved boxing, and when I started to make paintings of sports players, I was attracted to these fighters’ poses in the promotional images. They would stare right at you, which I think is powerful.’



JONAS WOOD, COLORED PENCIL AND CRAYON ON PAPER, 30 X 22 INCHES

BIRDS CARD, 2005

‘This is the first sports card I ever made. I stayed up all night and made it without stopping. I made a similar one of Patrick Ewing the next day. Larry Bird was a childhood idol of mine. There was a lot of love and emotion put into this drawing.’

Bagley, Christopher, “Creative Coupling,” *W*, October 2016, pp. 62-65

Creative Coupling

When two artists fall in love, things can get intense—for better or worse. Christopher Bagley plays art world couples therapist.

In the pantheon of tragically doomed couples, there will always be a place for the sculptor Carl Andre and his third wife, the Cuban artist Ana Mendieta. From the day they met, in 1979, their relationship had all the hallmarks of a tortured-artists pairing: not only the deep attraction but also the violent arguments, the drinking, the alleged affairs. Late one night in 1985, during a screaming match in their New York apartment, Mendieta “fell” out of their bedroom window, plunging 34 floors to her death. (Reportedly, a doorman on the street below heard her scream, “No, no, no, no!” just beforehand.) Andre was charged with murder, but after a three-year legal battle he was fully acquitted.

Although the trial sparked much outrage in the art world, as people took sides, to some the episode was just the latest extreme example of an age-old phenomenon. From Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera’s tempestuous exploits (his affair with her younger sister almost drove

Bagley, Christopher, “Creative Coupling,” *W*, October 2016, pp. 62-65

Kahlo to suicide) to Marina Abramovic's filmed breakup-cum-performance piece on the Great Wall of China with fellow performance artist Ulay, art world couplings often pack enough conflict and drama to fill several seasons' worth of telenovelas. On the plus side, of course, these relationships have also inspired some of the most important artworks of all time. What would Jackson Pollock and Lee Krasner have painted—or not painted—without each other's influence? Would both Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns have helped change the trajectory of postwar contemporary art if they hadn't been lovers?

Today's visual artists are pairing off as frequently as ever, and they're using a wide range of strategies to navigate the perils and the pleasures that come with the territory. Rule No. 1: Try not to choose a partner who works in the same medium as you do. This approach has worked very well for the sculptor Rachel Feinstein and the painter John Currin, who have been together for 22 years, but a few couples have had to figure it out the hard way. The painter Jonas Wood, 39, and his wife, the potter Shio Kusaka, 44, who live in Los Angeles, hit a rough patch early in their relationship, in part because Kusaka began dabbling in painting. Wood recalls getting a bit "angsty" as Kusaka ventured onto his turf, a reaction that he now chalks up to his immaturity at the time. But in Kusaka's opinion, Wood's distress was fully justified. "I'm a serious artist, but I wasn't a serious painter," she says. "And I think Jonas, who is a real painter, could tell that. It was really hard for him to see me just kind of experimenting, and I started feeling weird about it, too."

Wood and Kusaka's 2015 joint show at Gagosian gallery in Hong Kong is evidence of how far they've come since then. Their practices, while still distinct, are remarkably intertwined: Wood's large still lifes often depict Kusaka's ceramic vessels, and his interpretations of her pieces, in turn, propel Kusaka in new directions; occasionally, their children's drawings even make their way into the work. "It was never really discussed—it just happened in a natural way," Wood says. His paintings began to catch on almost a decade ago, at a time when ceramics was considered a lesser medium. Nowadays, Kusaka is also getting solo shows, at top galleries like Los Angeles's Blum & Poe.

Most artists, whatever their medium, agree that they could never fall in love with a person whose work they didn't also love. To anyone who saw last year's exhibition "Ugo Rondinone: I ❤ John Giorno," a tribute created by the Swiss artist Ugo Rondinone to his longtime partner, the American poet-artist, at the Palais de Tokyo, in Paris, it was clear that John Giorno's profound influence on an array of contemporary artists paled by comparison to the spell he cast on Rondinone himself. "As an artist, you're kind of a freak, doing this strange thing that everyone tells you is impractical or impossible," says the sculptor Mark Handforth, 47, who's been married to the film-video artist Dara Friedman, 48, for 22 years. "It's nice to be with someone who's on the same journey."

Friedman and Handforth met at Städelschule art school, in Frankfurt, Germany. As Handforth puts it, Friedman was "an extraordinary, total free spirit"; he was the uptight Englishman whom she initially dismissed as uninteresting. (She pointedly didn't invite him to a party that she hosted at a mutual friend's house; he showed up anyway.) Now, she says, "the admiration is mutual, and that's thrilling because there's nothing better than making something together." The two maintain separate practices, but he often holds the mike or drives the van during shoots for her films and videos, and she helps drag materials around their Florida property for his monumental sculptures. Still, for art couples, as for all couples, the trickiest conflicts often center around ego, or its close cousin, ambition. Friedman remembers an incident in 1997 when they were driving and she told Handforth about her idea for the video *Total*, in which footage of her destroying a hotel room is presented in reverse. "He kind of pooh-poohed the idea," she recalls. "I was so angry, I almost turned the car over. It was like, 'Okay, game on; I will absolutely prove you wrong.'"

Any artist's yearnings for critical acclaim or financial success can

Opposite: Shio Kusaka, Jonas Wood, and their children, Momo and Kiki, at home in Los Angeles. This page, clockwise, from top left: John Giorno and Ugo Rondinone, at Paris's Palais de Tokyo for the "I ❤ John Giorno" exhibition, 2015; Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns, in Los Angeles, 1980; John Currin and Rachel Feinstein, at home in SoHo, 2011; Marina Abramovic and Ulay in their work *Relation in Time*, 1977; Lee Krasner and Jackson Pollock, 1949.

KUSAKA, WOOD, AND CHILDREN: MANFREDI GIOACCHINI; GIORNO AND RONDINONE: ALEX CRETEY SYSTERMANS; RAUSCHENBERG AND JOHNS: TERRY VAN BRUNT/COURTESY OF ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG FOUNDATION; CURRIN AND FEINSTEIN: LEE FOWLER; RELATION IN TIME: VBK, WIEN; KRASNER AND POLLOCK: MARTHA HOLMES/GETTY IMAGES

Bagley, Christopher, "Creative Coupling," *W*, October 2016, pp. 62-65

be an endless source of anxiety; add a partner and the potential for trouble increases exponentially, since it's rare that any two careers peak at the same time. As much as Friedman and Handforth have learned to be proud of each other's achievements, "it's tough sometimes," Handforth concedes. "When I won the Rome Prize, in 2000, Mark came to Rome with me for several months as 'the spouse,'" Friedman recalls. "That was motivating for him, to say the least." As Handforth sees it, "There are going to be times when one of you is doing the biennial and the other isn't. But, in a way, it's all right—when the other one is on fire, it gives you a moment to breathe a bit." (Occasionally, a couple's distinct career trajectories can intersect by chance: The Brant Foundation Art Study Center, in Connecticut, showcased Rob Pruitt's work in the spring of 2015, and that of his partner, Jonathan Horowitz, this past May.)

Anyone who's ever participated in an art-school group crit (not to mention a couples-therapy session) won't be surprised to hear that honest communication between partners is both a holy grail and a hornet's nest. The painter Lesley Vance, 39, and her husband, the sculptor Ricky Swallow, 41, who live and work in Los Angeles, have developed their own approach through trial and error. "One of the things we both try to avoid is offering unsolicited commentary or criticism," Swallow says. "But sometimes it's hard. And you can't always control your facial expressions when you're looking at something." Ultimately, most artists recognize that no matter how much they're tempted to pontificate about their partner's work, their opinion might have little impact anyway. Several artists told me that when they ask their spouse or partner for input, they're mainly looking to reaffirm something they already know.

MOST ARTISTS AGREE THAT THEY COULD NEVER FALL IN LOVE WITH A PERSON WHOSE WORK THEY DIDN'T ALSO LOVE.

Though it may not be apparent from histrionic biopics such as *Camille Claudel*, about Auguste Rodin's conflicted lover, artist couples do not spend every waking moment in hypersensitive states of creative torment. "We try to keep it in the studio," Vance says. "It's rare that we're at home or out to dinner and really talking about our work." And given that even mundane topics such as home decor can take on an operatic importance for two cohabiting artists (*Honey, do you really think we should hang your new rusted-aluminum sculpture in the bedroom?*), the house that Vance, Swallow, and their young son share, in Laurel Canyon, contains very few of their own pieces but is full of works they've collected together, including a prized 1983 Richard Tuttle.

So what role does gender play in all this? Ask heterosexual couples about the sexism factor and you'll likely get a knowing laugh or a

This page, from top: Mark Handforth and Dara Friedman, at their studio in Miami, 2014; Etel Adnan and Simone Fattal, at home in Paris, 2016. Opposite, from top: Ricky Swallow and Lesley Vance, at home in Los Angeles, 2016; Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo, in Mexico City, 1939; Jason Fox and Huma Bhabha, in New York, early 1990s; Jonathan Horowitz and Rob Pruitt, 2010.

Bagley, Christopher, "Creative Coupling," *W*, October 2016, pp. 62-65

long pregnant pause. "*Oooh*, huge can of worms," says Friedman, who notes that even if an individual couple is evolved enough for both spouses to stay on equal footing, many intractable biases remain in society at large, including in the art market. Vance concurs, noting, "I do think it's more tricky for the woman. My husband and I influence each other equally—it's really 50-50. But I wonder if when people look at a couple's work together, they see the husband's influence on the wife more than vice versa."

Coincidentally or not, one of the least overtly competitive couples I interviewed was the painter Etel Adnan, 91, and the sculptor Simone Fattal, two women who live in Paris and have been together since 1972. Adnan was working as an editor in Beirut when she first met Fattal, who at that time was a painter. Since Adnan didn't have a studio, she often used Fattal's space, along with her paints, brushes, and canvases. Today, while Adnan is enjoying a surge of late-career fame (her paintings were a critical favorite at the Whitney Museum of American Art's 2014 biennial), the Syrian-born Fattal, who now works primarily in sculpture, remains lesser known and accepts that fact cheerily. "It doesn't mean anything," she says, noting that market forces are beyond any artist's control.

Two years ago, when works by Adnan and Fattal were grouped together in "Here and Elsewhere," a survey of contemporary art from and about the Arab world, at the New Museum, in New York, both women were surprised at how many viewers noted the "obvious" connections between their practices, which they themselves hadn't perceived. Adnan believes that if they've been influencing each other's work over the past four decades, it's primarily because they have been sitting across from each other at the breakfast table. "We go to museums all the time together," she says. "We share a life. You both can't help but be deeply impacted by that." Indeed, Fattal may owe her choice of sculpture as a medium to an offhand comment Adnan made many years ago in the kitchen. Though Fattal was still painting back then, Adnan noticed something interesting about the way Fattal was holding a pair of eggplants. "It's hard to explain," Adnan says. "But one day I just saw it—that she had a sense of volume, a relationship between her hand and an object." Adnan wondered aloud if Fattal might actually be a sculptor. Fattal said nothing, but years later she picked up some wax in a friend's studio and began shaping abstract forms, similar to the larger bronze and ceramic pieces she does today.

The painter Jason Fox, 51, and the Pakistani-born sculptor Huma Bhabha, 54, who live in a converted firehouse in upstate New York, also see little room for one-upmanship in their marriage, a fact that Fox attributes partly to the long years they both worked in relative obscurity. When Fox's subversive paintings and sculptures first got noticed, in the 1990s, Bhabha didn't have gallery representation; through the years, they each held a string of menial jobs. A decade ago, when her striking pseudo-primitive sculptures started earning her solo shows, any potential jealousy on his part was eclipsed by the joyful realization that they could both finally afford health insurance: "I thought, This is like winning the lottery!" Fox says.

Today, Fox and Bhabha are hardly ever seen apart and even share a single e-mail address—rare for a couple in any field. "As an artist, it's such a difficult balance to maintain, between absolute self-confidence and absolute self-loathing," Fox says. "You're always oscillating between those two poles, and it's easy to get off-kilter. So to have someone there who really knows you and can say, 'No, that piece is not done yet,' that's very appreciated." Still, even for Fox and Bhabha, there's one non-negotiable boundary: They work on separate floors of their building. "I'm really not supposed to go into Jason's studio while he's working," Bhabha says with a laugh. "He's much more particular about that than I am."

Will any artist couple ever find a studio space that strikes a perfect balance between independence and togetherness? Much like a perfect relationship, it's an elusive ideal. Kusaka and Wood have shared a large building in Los Angeles for several years, but, in 2014, craving more room as well as more privacy, they each found annexes nearby. Currently, they're preparing another move, to a building in East Los Angeles. Crucially for both, their work spaces will remain entirely separate. But Kusaka notes she's glad that she'll again be spending most days under the same roof as her husband. "Having the private spaces is good," she says. "But I kind of miss him." ◆

Pritchard, Saara, “Different strokes: Jonas Wood,” *Christie’s Magazine*, January-February 2016, pp. 28-31

Different strokes

Saara Pritchard of Christie’s picks three artists grappling with the idea of what constitutes painting in the 21st century. Report by Claire Wrathall

Pritchard, Saara, “Different strokes: Jonas Wood,” *Christie’s Magazine*, January-February 2016, pp. 28-31

Jonas Wood

It’s oddly pleasing to discover that the painter Jonas Wood has, for the past eight years, worked alongside his wife, the Japanese ceramic artist Shio Kusaka, in a Los Angeles studio owned by Ed Ruscha. (‘We’re friendly, but I try not to super-fan-out on him,’ Wood told *Art News* last winter. ‘Plus he gave me a great deal on the building.’) Both Wood and Ruscha find inspiration in everyday American life, producing work that, though clearly figurative, also has an abstract quality. Wood’s interior scenes, mostly rendered in oil and acrylic on canvas, seem to depict domestic spaces. Yet they also have a flatness, a collage-like character that makes you look again at the ostensibly familiar objects depicted, as though they are not quite what you thought they were. His focus falls less on the significance than on the shape of things. It’s no surprise to learn that he tends to paint interiors from photographs rather than life. »

Installation view of Jonas Wood’s façade for LAXART in LA, 2014

Pritchard, Saara, “Different strokes: Jonas Wood,” *Christie’s Magazine*, January-February 2016, pp. 28-31

Jonas Wood at the David Kordansky Gallery in LA with, from left, *Maritime Hotel Pot with Aloe*, 2014, and *Black Landscape Pot with Kiwi Plant*, 2014

Like Ruscha’s gas-station paintings, Wood’s work has drawn comparisons with Edward Hopper, even Grant Wood, but the main influences he cites are self-evidently David Hockney, Alex Katz and, less obviously, Lucian Freud. Pierre Bonnard and Henri Matisse also tend to come up. (Born in 1977, Wood grew up in Boston in a home with a couple of Matisse prints from the cutout series; he also had a grandfather who collected Bacon, Calder, Lichtenstein and Rauschenberg.) A painting such as *Hammer Storage*, 2011, gives the impression that he is something of a magpie, referencing both Matisse’s seaweed fronds and Hockney’s cross-hatching – even Wood’s own 2010 painting *Untitled (Blue on White)*, this time in grey, in the foreground on the right.

Wood has works in several US public collections, notably the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago. However, he hadn’t exhibited in London until last autumn, when Gagosian presented a show of new paintings, notably a series of large-scale ‘portraits’ of pots. These ranged from classical Attic amphorae (rendered so as to be both recognisable as such and reminiscent of Picasso jugs) to the black-and-white jars painted with dinosaurs made by Wood’s wife Kusaka for the 2014 Whitney Biennial.

Also on show in that exhibition was a group of the stylised interior scenes for which Wood is perhaps best known. For example: in *Shio’s Studio on Palms*, a painting of his wife’s ceramics workshop, Wood exaggerates the patterns he finds in the grain of a plywood cabinet, the geometry of the rafters and boards in the roof, the way the poured concrete floor has been marked by wear, and the starbursts formed by the spokes of the bike wheels. And there again are the details he’s appropriated from elsewhere. Look at the cardboard carton in the foreground and the banana logo it’s stickered with, and one can’t help recalling Andy Warhol’s 1967 banana album cover for The Velvet Underground.

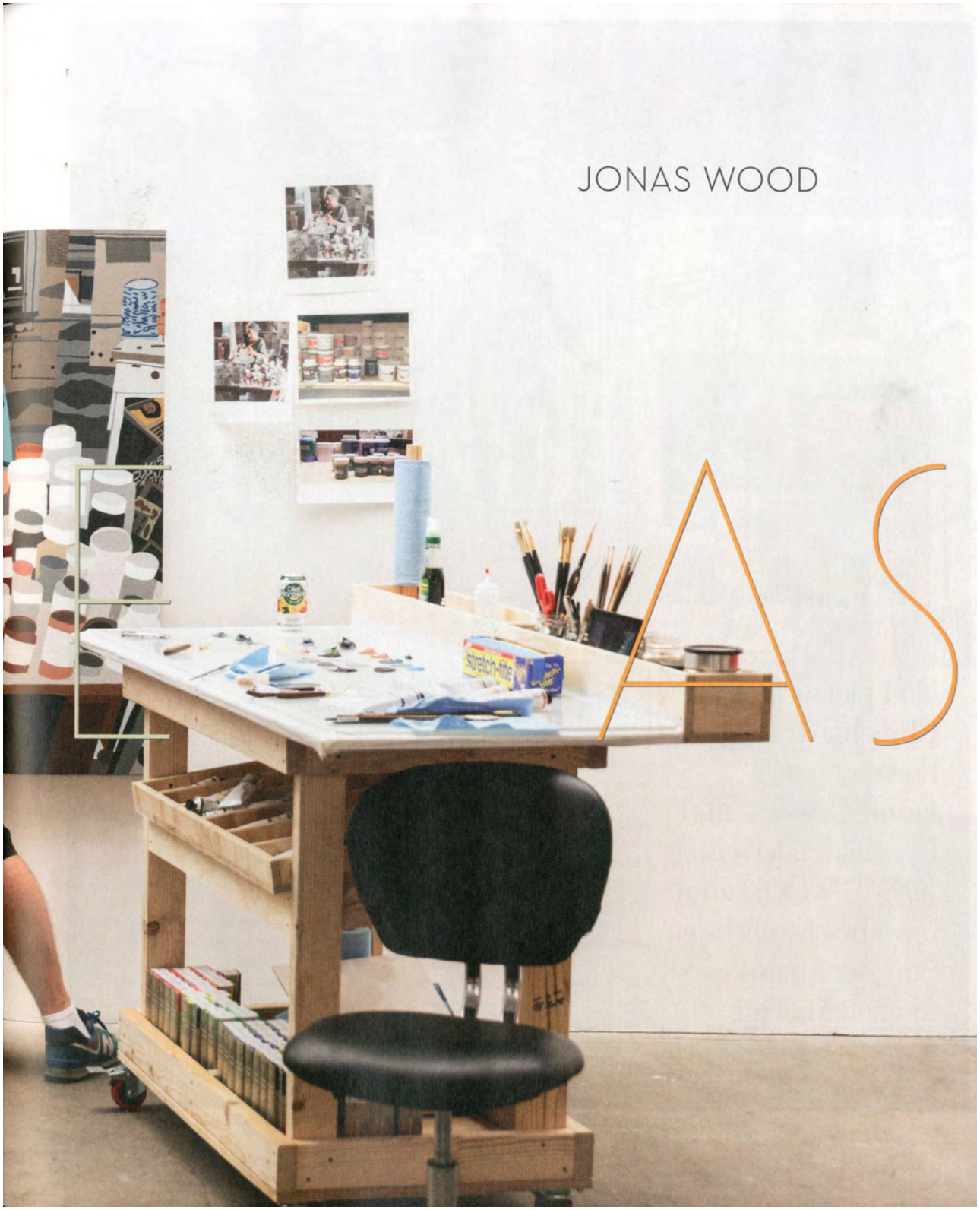
www.gagosian.com, www.davidkordanskygallery.com

Jonas Wood, 2014, at David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles , CA, USA. © Jonas Wood. Courtesy of the artist and David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles, CA. Photograph: Brian Forrest. All © Jonas Wood. Courtesy of the artist and David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles, CA. Photographs: Brian Forrest. Previous pages: Jonas Wood, 2014, LAXART, Los Angeles, CA. Installation view. © Jonas Wood. Courtesy of the artist, LAXART, Los Angeles, and Gagosian Gallery. Photograph: Michael Underwood

Pritchard, Saara, “Different strokes: Jonas Wood,” *Christie’s Magazine*, January-February 2016, pp. 28-31

Clockwise from top left: *Shio’s Studio on Palms*, 2015; *Greek Pot with Green Leaves*, 2011; *Hammer Storage*, 2011

Tittel, Cornelius, “As Simple As That,” *Blau Magazine*, Issue No. 5, October 2015, p. 9, 32-41



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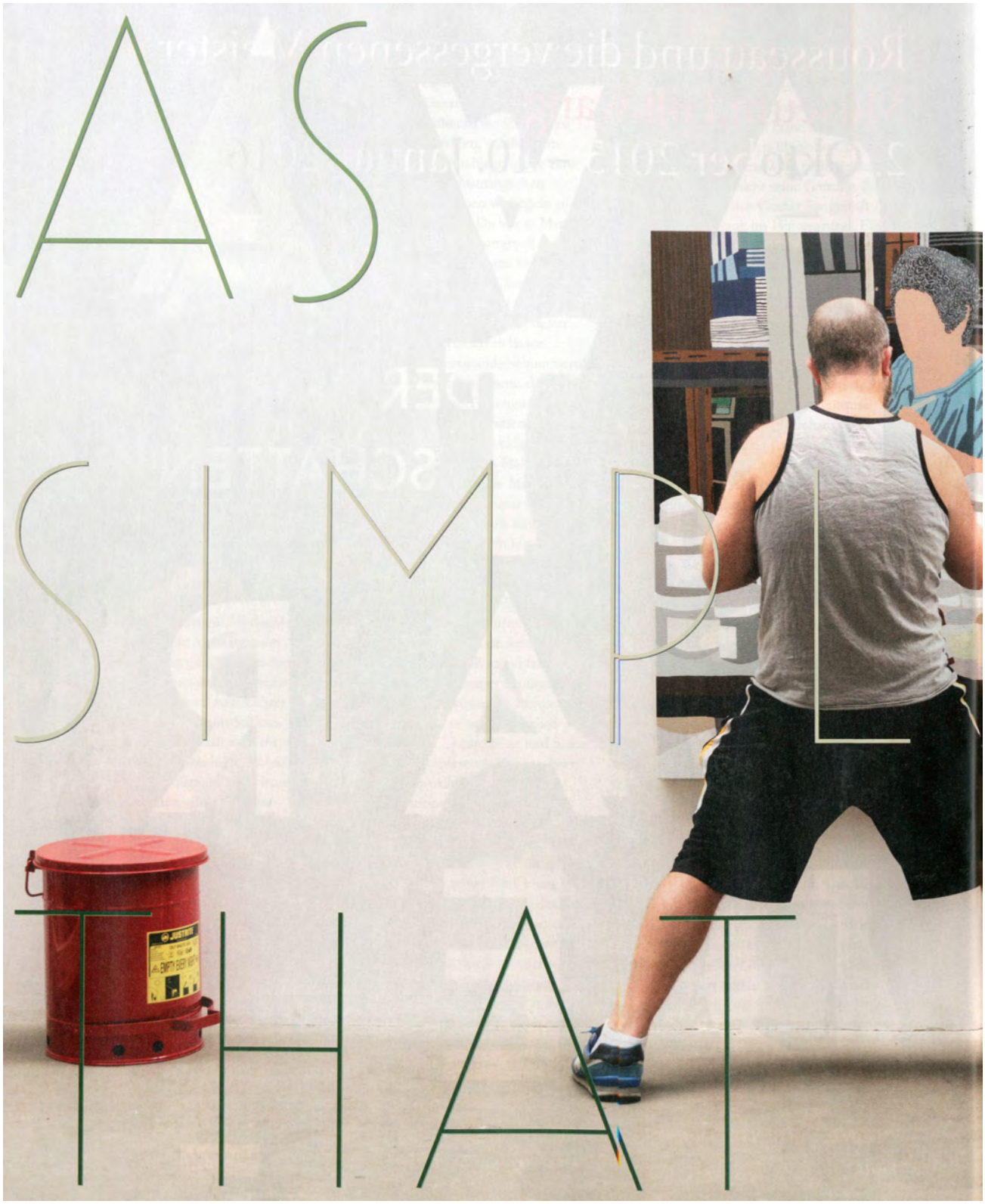


Tittel, Cornelius, “As Simple As That,” *Blau Magazine*, Issue No. 5, October 2015, p. 9, 32-41

DER EINDRUCK TÄUSCHT: NOCH LIEBER ALS SEILSPRINGEN MAG JONAS WOOD SPORTÜBERTRAGUNGEN IM FERNSEHEN

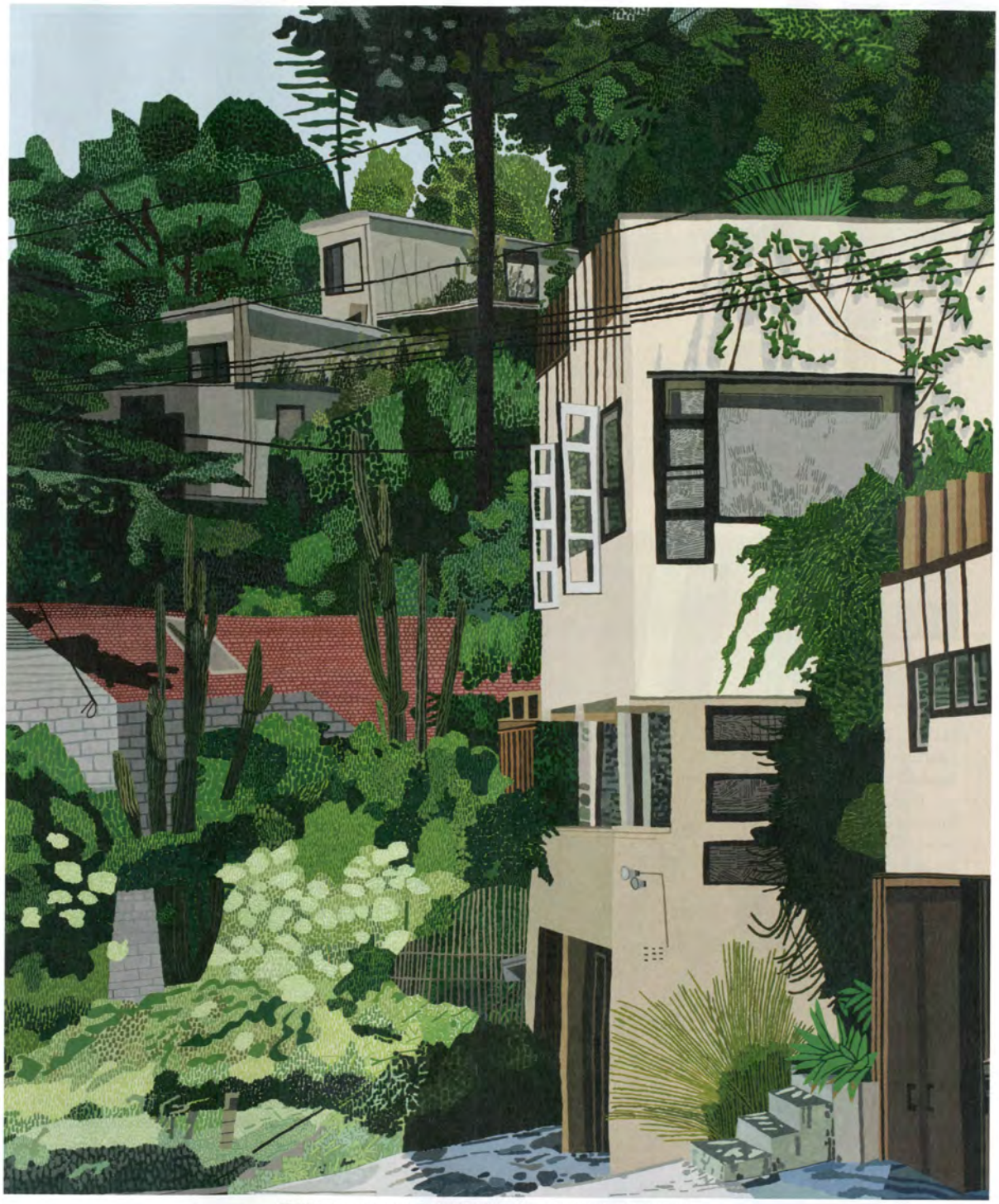
Und plötzlich diese Ehrlichkeit: Mit Porträts seiner Familie, Sport- und Pflanzenbildern ist JONAS WOOD zum unwahrscheinlichsten Star der amerikanischen Malerei avanciert. Ein Besuch in Los Angeles

Immer dicker wird sie, die Krankenakte der zeitgenössischen Malerei. Tot ist sie noch nicht, aber glaubt man den Diagnosen der meisten Kuratoren, so sollte sie sich schon mal um einen Platz im Hospiz bemühen. Noch gelten lässt man Vertreter, die in der Malerei einen vermeintlichen „Endkampf“ ausfechten (Christopher Wool) oder sie zumindest einem „konstanten Stresstest“ unterziehen (Albert Oehlen). Junge abstrakte Maler überlässt man lieber ganz dem Markt, schließlich sind sie allesamt „Zombie-Formalisten“ – und untot zu sein, ist bekanntlich ähnlich schlimm wie tot. Fast schon versöhnlich klingt es bei solch moribunder Rhetorik, wenn Peter Schjeldahl im *New Yorker* feststellt, das Genre erlebe vor allem deshalb eine Ära des Niedergangs, weil man von ihm keinerlei Erneuerung der Kunst mehr erwarte.

Was also tun, außer die Erwartungen runterzuschrauben? Vielleicht hilft ein Besuch bei Jonas Wood in Culver City, Los Angeles, um sich daran zu erinnern, was Malerei einmal war und immer noch sein kann. Wood, der 38 Jahre alt ist, und sich hier unweit des La Cienega Boulevards ein Atelier mit seiner Frau Shio Kusaka teilt, erlebt gerade einen beispielhaften Aufstieg. Seine Preise scheinen sich im Halbjahrestakt zu verdoppeln und kein Geringerer als Larry Gagosian überlässt ihm während der Frieze Art Fair die Londoner Groß-Dependance in der Britannia Street. Unwahrscheinlich ist sein Aufstieg schon deshalb, weil die Art Malerei, die er praktiziert, die allerletzte ist, von der man Innovation, geschweige denn Revolution erwarten würde.

Die fällt auch heute aus, nicht nur weil Wood sich an diesem hochsommerlichen Vormittag bereits das zweite Mal einen Joint anzündet und sich beim Malen die Wiederholung eines French-Open-Matches anschaut. Sie fällt auch aus, weil er Tag für Tag die ältesten Hüte anprobiert, die die

Tittel, Cornelius, “As Simple As That,” *Blau Magazine*, Issue No. 5, October 2015, p. 9, 32-41



SCHINDLER APTS, 2013, ÖL UND ACRYL AUF LEINWAND, 335×285 CM

Tittel, Cornelius, “As Simple As That,” *Blau Magazine*, Issue No. 5, October 2015, p. 9, 32-41

BBALL STUDIO, 2012, ÖL UND ACRYL AUF LEINWAND, 267×351 CM

Malereigeschichte zu bieten hat: Porträts, Interieurs, Stillleben, wahlweise mit Buntstift auf Papier oder Öl auf Leinwand.

Gerade arbeitet er an einem großen Familienporträt, das ihn mit seinen Geschwistern und Eltern am Tag seiner Bar Mizwa zeigt. Gegenüber hängt das unfertige Bild eines Garagen-Interieurs mit Kinderfahrrad. „Ich versuche, ehrlich zu sein“, sagt Jonas Wood. „Ich versuche, das zu malen, was mir wichtig ist, ob es Menschen sind oder Räume, in denen ich aufgewachsen bin. Ich könnte so viele verschiedene Dinge malen. Also muss ich eine ehrliche Wahl treffen. Vieles, was für den Betrachter banal wirken mag, ist für mich hochemotional.“ Wenn er zum Beispiel Bilder aus seiner Kindheit male, dann sei das ein Weg für ihn, diese Zeit zu verarbeiten. Und das kleine Gemälde eines fliegenden Basketballs, das neben dem Garagen-Interieur hängt? „Ich liebe Basketball“, sagt er. „So einfach ist das.“

Jonas Wood wird 1977 in Boston geboren. Der Großvater sammelt Kunst, verehrt Richard Neutra und Rudolph Schindler und lässt sich in den 50er-Jahren in Upstate New York ein modernistisches Haus für sich und seine Sammlung bauen. Mit dem Verkauf eines Gemäldes von Francis Bacon wird er später seinen Enkeln die College-Ausbildung finanzieren. Woods Vater ist Architekt, seine Mutter Theaterregisseurin und Schauspiellehrerin.

„Ich war ein unglückliches Kind in einem idealen Setting“, sagt Wood heute. „Ein Spätzünder, schüchtern, nicht sehr beliebt in der Schule. Und ich hatte starke Lernbehinderungen, womit meine Eltern nicht umgehen konnten.“ Er sei alles andere als selbstbewusst gewesen, sagt er, während auf dem Flatscreen gerade Roger Federer zwei Asse in Folge schlägt. Aber er sei von Künstlern umgeben gewesen, von Leuten, die ihm die Grundlagen der modernen Kunst erklärten, die ihn mit in Museen nahmen und ihm Picasso, Matisse, Bonnard und Monet zeigten.

„Ich wollte lernen, wie das geht, zu malen. Also begann ich, es wie Picasso und Matisse zu machen, ich malte Landschaften, Porträts, Stillleben und Interieurs. Ich hatte diesen simplen Gedanken: Wenn ich lernen will, besser zu malen, dann so. Ein anderer Weg ist mir nicht in den Sinn gekommen. Bis heute nicht.“

Wood malt und malt, sieben Tage die Woche – und will doch Psychologie studieren. Er habe sich keine Illusionen darüber gemacht, Künstler zu werden, geschweige denn, je davon leben zu können. Erst als er nach Los Angeles zieht und dort neben dem Studium für, wie er es nennt, „richtige Künstler“ wie Laura Owens und Matt Johnson arbeitet, beginnt er daran zu glauben, selbst eine Chance zu haben.

„Ich habe mich umgeschaut. Und irgendwann hatte ich genug Selbstvertrauen,

Tittel, Cornelius, “As Simple As That,” *Blau Magazine*, Issue No. 5, October 2015, p. 9, 32-41

zu sagen: ‚Meine Arbeit ist gut genug, ich will eine Show.‘“ Drei Jahre arbeitet er an seiner ersten Ausstellung, die 2006 in der Black Dragon Society stattfindet – und bei Zeitzeugen bleibenden Eindruck hinterlässt.

Mark Grotjahn etwa, heute einer der berühmtesten Maler unserer Zeit, kann sich genau an die Show erinnern. „Ich hatte Jonas schon vorher getroffen“, erzählt Grotjahn einen Tag zuvor in seinem Atelier, das nur einen Steinwurf von Woods Studio entfernt liegt. „Es war bei einem Pokerspiel im Hinterzimmer der Blum & Poe Gallery und ich ahnte nicht, dass er Künstler ist. Matt Johnson hatte Jonas mitgebracht und ehrlich gesagt, war er mir sofort unsympathisch. Weil Matt auch aus Boston kommt, dachte ich, Jonas sei ein Jugendfreund, irgendein Straßenkid aus Boston.“ Wenig später habe er dann dieses Poster für eine Ausstellung gesehen mit einem Basketballspieler drauf. Er habe sofort den Galeristen gefragt, wer dieses Genie sei, und der antwortete nur: „Du kennst ihn vom Pokern: Jonas, der Freund von Matt.“

Schon das Poster habe ihn zum Fan gemacht, sagt Grotjahn heute. „Und in der Ausstellung sah ich dann Bilder von seinem Großvater, Bilder von Baseballkarten, die er als Kind gesammelt hatte, eine Gruppe von Freunden bei einer Bandprobe. Ich hatte wirklich das Gefühl, ihn durch diese Bilder kennenzulernen, seine Persönlichkeit, und wie er die Welt sieht. Und ich wusste, dass ich mich getäuscht hatte. Der Mann, der diese Bilder gemalt hatte, konnte kein Arschloch sein.“

Mark Grotjahn kauft ein Pflanzenbild und erzählt seinen Galeristen und wichtigsten Sammlern von Wood. Anton Kern bietet Wood daraufhin seine erste Ausstellung in New York an, Shane Campbell lädt ihn wenig später nach Chicago ein. „Es war fantastisch“, erinnert sich Wood. „Ich meine, jeder Maler in L. A. war damals in Grotjahns Werk verliebt und ist es heute noch. Wer es nicht bedingungslos liebt, ist zumindest sehr, sehr neidisch auf ihn. Und plötzlich bekomme ich diesen Support. Es hat mich bestätigt, es hat mir Sicherheit gegeben. So sehr vielleicht, dass ich zehn Jahre später immer noch meine Familie und Stillleben male.“ Wood lacht und nimmt einen letzten Zug an seinem Joint. „Der einzige Unterschied ist, dass ich inzwischen eigene Kinder habe, die ich malen kann.“

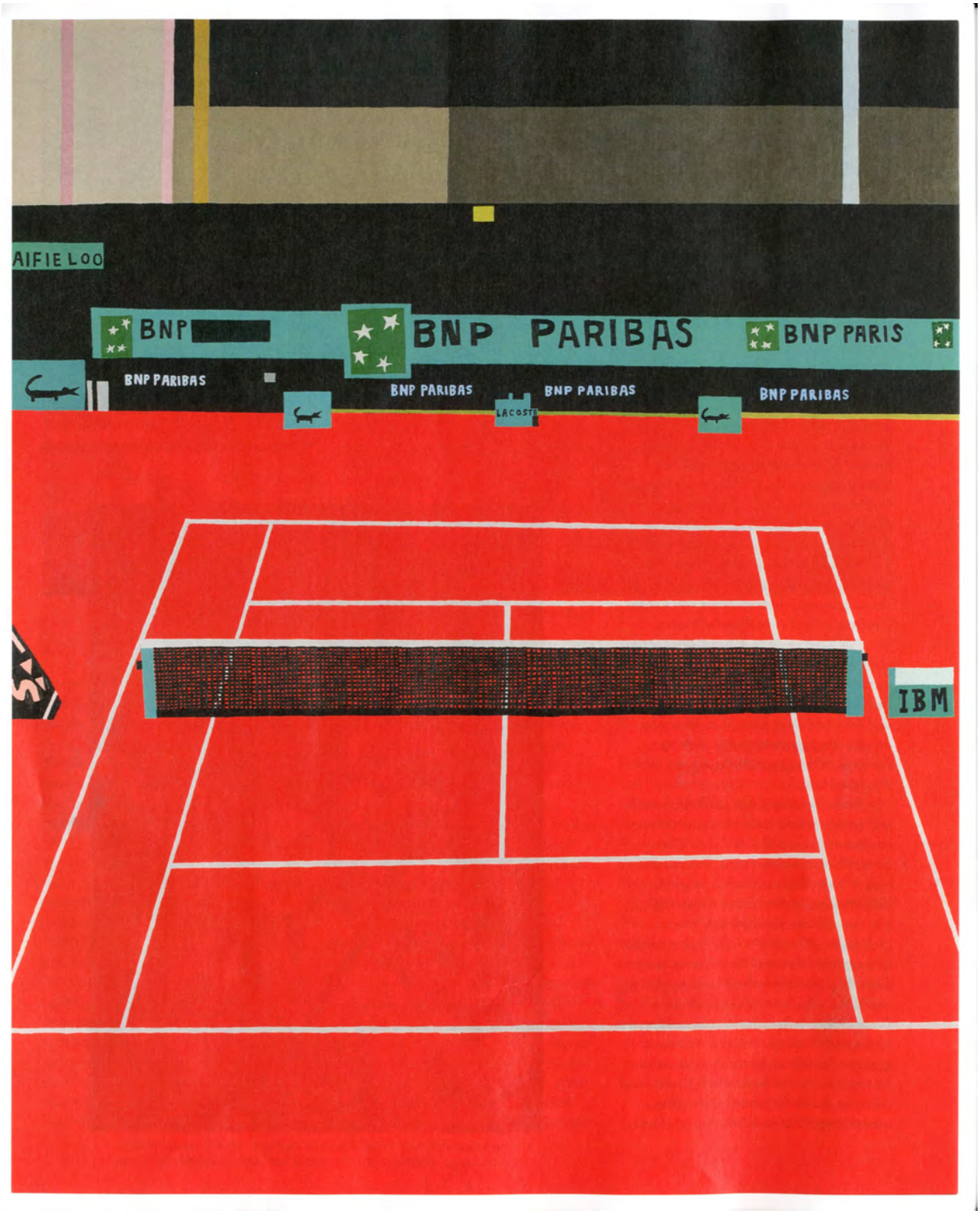
Es ist Zeit fürs Mittagessen. Wir wechseln in den hinteren Teil des Studiokomplexes, in dem seine Frau Shio Kusaka an ihren Keramiken arbeitet, die unter anderem auf der letzten Whitney Biennale zu sehen waren. Zurzeit sind es vor allem griechisch-antik anmutende Vasen, die sie mit Dinosaurier-Motiven verziert und die – genau wie die gemeinsamen Kinder Kiki und Momo – regelmäßig Auftritte in den Gemälden ihres Mannes haben. Aber auch Woods Malerei findet Eingang in Kusakas Werk. Während eine Studioassistentin, die täglich für das gesamte Team kocht, Rinder-Tagliata mit gegrilltem Wildbrokkoli serviert, zeigt mir Kusaka eine ihrer Vasen in Form eines Basketballs.

Während des Essens reden wir über ihren geplanten Umzug. Auch wenn sie mit Ed Ruscha einen ebenso legendären wie entspannten Vermieter haben – ein weiteres Gebäude nebenan nutzt Ruscha als Lager –, suchen sie größere Räume. Zumindest so groß, dass man den Lunch nicht mehr auf Hockern an einem von Kusakas Arbeitstischen zu sich nehmen muss, und dass die Kinder nachmittags genug Platz zum Spielen haben, während die Eltern noch arbeiten.

Dass man malt, was man liebt, ist das eine, wie man malt, das andere. Einen Espresso später zeigt Wood seine Methode, erklärt, wie er aus Fotos verschiedener Topfpflanzen ein Bild collagiert, daraus eine Zeichnung entsteht, aus der wiederum ein Gemälde wird. Wie er Raumdetails aus leicht verschiedenen Perspektiven fotografiert und

DIE HAND DES KÜNSTLERS RUHT AUF DER SCHULTER SEINER MUTTER: *SEARS FAMILY PORTRAIT*, 2011, ÖL UND ACRYL AUF LEINWAND, 112×81 CM

Tittel, Cornelius, “As Simple As That,” *Blau Magazine*, Issue No. 5, October 2015, p. 9, 32-41



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„IT IS ME TRYING TO BE HONEST“: IMMER WIEDER MALT SICH JONAS WOOD IM SPIEGEL, *CALAIS DRIVE, 2012*, ÖL UND ACRYL AUF LEINWAND, 264×213 CM. Linke Seite: „TENNISSPIELER“, SAGT ER, „MALE ICH NIE. ABER ICH LIEBE ES, TENNISPLÄTZE ZU MALEN. ES SIND, WENN MAN SO WILL, MEINE ABSTRAKTEN BILDER.“: *FRENCH OPEN 2*, 2011, ÖL UND ACRYL AUF LEINEN, 218×178 CM

Tittel, Cornelius, “As Simple As That,” *Blau Magazine*, Issue No. 5, October 2015, p. 9, 32-41

MOMO WITH STUFFED ANIMALS, 2011, ÖL UND ACRYL AUF LEINWAND, 184×183 CM

BULLETS, 2007, ÖL AUF LEINEN, 183×132 CM

diese Fotos anschließend so montiert, dass sie wieder ein Ganzes ergeben – was den leicht kubistisch-verzerrten Effekt erklärt, den einige seiner Gemälde haben. Woods Vorarbeiten erinnern an die Fotocollagen von David Hockney, mit dem er immer wieder verglichen wird. Ein großer Einfluss, wie er zugibt, aber eher, weil Hockney sich, anders als fast alle seiner Generationsgenossen, auf die Meister der Moderne berufen habe. „Er hat nach Matisse gemalt, er hat nach Van Gogh gemalt. Wie er das gemacht hat, davon habe ich gelernt.“

Überhaupt: Lernen. Es ist neben Ehrlichkeit das Wort, das Jonas Wood am häufigsten benutzt. So sehr sein Werk von ihm und seiner Welt handelt, so sehr dreht es sich auch darum, wie er sagt, „ein besserer Maler zu werden“. „Nimm die Pflanzenbilder. Natürlich liebe ich Pflanzen. Aber es ist eben auch so, dass sich Pflanzen in viele verschiedene flache Formen runterbrechen lassen. So wie meine Bilder. Es gibt diese Symmetrie, die Formen werden mit leichten Unterschieden wieder und wieder repliziert. Ein Regal voller Farne und Palmen zu malen, zwingt mich dazu, weiter an meinen Fähigkeiten zu arbeiten.“

Wenn Wood seine Pflanzen in gemusterten Töpfen stehen lässt, die wiederum auf gemusterten Teppichen ruhen, dann praktiziert er immer auch Malerei über Malerei. Muster über Muster müssen gemeistert werden, auf dass der Künstler immerfort lernt und der Betrachter bei bester Laune gehalten wird. So wie sich Pierre Bonnard einst an den Tapeten seiner Interieurs nicht sattsehen konnte, an den drapierten Stoffen und Tischdecken der Salons, so versenkt sich Wood 100 Jahre später in die Brust- und Rückenbehaarung eines Schwergewichtsboxers oder in das Fell einer Plüschgiraffe im Arm der schlafenden Tochter.

„Ich kann die Leute verstehen, die meine Bilder zu traditionell finden, die das Ganze für eine überkommende Idee halten.“ Sollen sie doch, sagt er. Solange es sich für ihn selbst neu anfühlt – Fläche für Fläche, Strich für Strich –, sei das in Ordnung.

Wood muss jetzt weitermalen, so konzentriert, wie es ihm die Boxübertragung erlaubt, auf die er nach Federers Drei-Satz-Sieg umgeschaltet hat. Die Räume von Gagosian sind ziemlich groß, sagt er noch und malt zum Abschied einen Basketball in seinen jüngsten Katalog.

Zurück in Berlin zeigt mir meine Tochter drei neue Bilder. Ein Porträt ihres Großvaters, der gerade zu Besuch war. Das Haus, in dem wir wohnen. Und eine Koppel mit Pferden. Sie liebt Pferde, so einfach ist das.

TEXT: CORNELIUS TITTEL
FOTOS: NICHOLAS HAGGARD

JONAS WOOD, 13. OKTOBER BIS 19. DEZEMBER 2015, GAGOSIAN GALLERY, LONDON, BRITANNIA STREET

Tittel, Cornelius, “As Simple As That,” *Blau Magazine*, Issue No. 5, October 2015, p. 9, 32-41

MUSTER ÜBER MUSTER MÜSSEN GEMEISTERT WERDEN: *BLUE RUG STILL LIFE*, 2014, ÖL UND ACRYL AUF LEINWAND, 267 × 262 CM. LINKS UNTEN IM BILD HAT ER EINE DER NEUEN DINOSAURIER-VASEN SEINER FRAU SHIO KUSAKA VEREWIGT

Chang, Ian, “Art history meets domestic life in the paintings of Jonas Wood,” *Frieze*, Issue 174, September 2015, p. 232-237

ROOM WITH A VIEW

Art history meets domestic life in the paintings of **Jonas Wood**

by Ian Chang

The paintings of Jonas Wood vibrate with the kind of explicit pleasure that can make a viewer look around the room guiltily. The fear is that someone present might be sober enough to remember that painting's licence to thrill was supposed to have been revoked. With their bright colours and off-kilter intervals, the paintings are richly representational: the evidence of the artist's hand is in every wavering line. They contain only gestures toward narrative, or even human relations, but their pictorialism ought to feel as stagey as an old pin-up. Instead, they are brazen illustrations of the proposition that the way we once thought about painting can be renewed.

Wood's practice divides, consciously if not neatly, into traditional genres: still lifes, portraits, interiors and landscapes. He gleans photographic bits of his life – family photos, vintage magazines, baseball cards, other people's art – as source material that he then carefully splices into large paintings. His bricolage is as formal as it is subjective: he collects variations on pattern and shape – woodgrain, pottery silhouettes, jungle prints – as well as subjects such as childhood, male heroism and the artist's milieu. The context matters less than his attraction. His own past paintings, work by his wife, the potter Shio Kusaka: everything is fair game for cut-and-paste; compositions recur, figures are transposed and pots reappear from one painting to another.

Wood, who grew up literally surrounded by modern art – his grandfather collected works by the likes of Francis Bacon, Alexander Calder and Helen Frankenthaler – has dedicated his practice to the service of a surprisingly unreconstructed mission of purity and rigour, born out of that modernist inheritance. The goal, he says, is 'chasing painting down', with such practices as drawing and printmaking. Behind his distinctively cheeky style lie the obsessive and dead-earnest production methods of another era – and volumes of studies, cut-outs and collages. Whether you will credit Wood's sincerity may depend, therefore, on how badly you miss the great modernist project of protecting the innocent experience of looking: a quest that would have verged on the sentimental had its results not been so shocking. This project – to which, legend has it, painting was driven by photography, and which Wood seeks to recapitulate – wielded the new against the real, disjunction against decoration, obsession against commercialism, pure colour against local colour, and hard labour against bourgeois complacency.

If you are still carrying that torch, however, beware, because Wood's work may begin to niggle. Your discomfort may start with the way he crops, then shoehorns, Henri Matisse's famous *L'Atelier Rouge* (The Red Studio, 1911) onto the outside of a pot in one of his giant paintings (*Red Studio Pot*, 2014), setting adrift the original's miraculously integrated components and causing you to wonder: what sort of homage is this? Or it may begin when you notice that, however the paintings are made, their effect is not derived from draftsmanship but photography. They invariably have an intriguing composition and a sense of spatial and chromatic risk. They often have passages of striking power and subtlety – the drawing is, indeed, good – but they are not essentially *experiential*. They

Chang, Ian, “Art history meets domestic life in the paintings of Jonas Wood,” *Frieze*, Issue 174, September 2015, p. 232-237

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Wood's work pushes past pop. It ignores hierarchies of high and low, and has no particular fear of middlebrow taste.

contain no hierarchy of desire. In them, all visions are photographs, all plants are potted (often succulents and bromeliads – themselves clippings), all space is unstable and a basketball player is no more or less conflicted than a shower curtain. A creeping affect of nervous, winking anomie haunts these images, not quite irony but not quite belief either, suggesting Wood is up to something more current, and perhaps more deflating, than modernism.

His variations in mode and perspective have earned his work comparisons to cubism and pop art. But where cubism deployed shifts to create structure and presence, Wood's distortions, artefacts of photographic cuts and limited palette are agnostic; they confess their vulnerabilities, their artifice, but not while genuflecting to a higher power. Take his portrait of the great ceramicist *Akio Takamori* (2014), in which the artist is depicted at work. The pot he is painting is actually a replacement, slightly enlarged and cropped, of the original in the source photograph. The dropped-in pot is a self-portrait by Takamori, rendering Wood's painting a double portrait in which the ceramicist is upstaged by his own work. Then, one notices that Takamori, with a mottled, painted-on face, is also upstaged by the exaggerated woodgrain of his worktable, the scale and height of the shelves, the words printed on paint labels. He is dwarfed in size and vividness by the very furniture of the world. This is no cubist portraiture: it is something far more dispassionate.

Wood's work also pushes past pop. It ignores hierarchies of high and low, and has no particular fear of middlebrow taste. But, unlike the pop lineage from Richard Hamilton and Andy Warhol to, say, Sigmar Polke, it is synthetic rather than analytic, a peacemaker not a provocateur – if not to

Previous page
Schindler Apts, 2013,
oil and acrylic on canvas,
3.4 × 2.8 m

This page
Ovitz's Library, 2013,
oil and acrylic on canvas,
2.5 × 3.4 m

All images courtesy
the artist, David Kordansky
Gallery, Los Angeles,
Anton Kern Gallery, New York,
Shane Campbell
Gallery, Chicago, and
Gagosian Gallery

Chang, Ian, “Art history meets domestic life in the paintings of Jonas Wood,” *Frieze*, Issue 174, September 2015, p. 232-237

the point of politeness or naiveté, then at least with a bluff good nature. It does not quite reject authority but ingratiates itself by means of a coherent view. The flatness of Wood's surface, the indelicate reduction of his line, and the summary averaging of his colour do not exactly refer to recognizable modes of production. His source material is often private or murky, the abstraction strictly local to the structures and surfaces of identifiable but mostly unbranded objects. The exception is when he's lifting from famous paintings or sports cards or television stills. In those cases, the pop influence is clearer but also renders the works either slightly callow or niche, as far as his practice goes. Pop is old now and its irony tires easily. Laura Owens and other postmodernists have learned to do without the irony, but they also seem to have little use for the 'unification' – of life and looking – that Wood says he is aiming at. Wood gives due respect to, but mostly eschews, the nomadic branding of Warhol, the cool discipline of Alex Katz and David Hockney, the arch political proteanism of Polke and Gerhard Richter, and even the liberated-from-everything blitheness of Owens.

Thus, Wood's paintings operate in a paradoxically contemporary space between established forces. They want the authenticity of auteur heroics and the currency of a time when neither vision nor technique, no matter how monumental, can much impress. Wood's brushwork, though hand-executed, is more graphic than painterly, and his subjects suggest personality without really containing it. The artist described his subjects to me, referring to the empty rooms in his paintings (which are, as often as not, focused on upper corners, where people not only are not, but cannot go) as 'humanity without the humanity'. This lack sometimes feels less like the absence in a room after someone has left than the view from a surveillance camera with an eye for colour. Interior disjunctions of space – as in *Jeremy* (2014) or *Kitchen with Jade and Aloe Plants* (2013) or, especially, *Ovitz's Library* (2013) and *Studio Hallway* (2010) – reinforce the effect.

This split aesthetic may be why Wood's paintings of people – even the often-brilliant self-portraits, such as *Calais Drive* (2012) or the creepy and monumentally American *The Hypnotist* (2011) – actually seem to discomfit the most. And it also provides a key to why a painter caught between Picasso and Polke might seem so of-the-moment. When paintings advertise an old-fashioned way of looking, it is disturbing to find the painter observing things in the way we look now – at surfaces, surveillance, selfies – and not only finding nothing more alive than information but also not getting too upset about it.

Wood's modernism is a modernism of the screenshot, though it requires neither computer nor camera; the artist, seeing like one, becomes the device. His process takes Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres's definition of drawing as 'the probity of art', but uses it to stitch together the wound of our attention deficits, doing its level best (or unlevel, as the case may be, given Wood's style of drawing) to integrate, if not understand, the cropped-out parts, quantized surfaces, fleeting chroma and meta-level disorientation of contemporary life. Though he neither relies on nor explicitly refers to the computer, his brushstrokes resemble bitmap graphics, or Hockney's iPad art. They reproduce beautifully; so long as the machines are properly calibrated, a print is as good as the original, because they are already copies from copies, in process and in essence.

Which brings us back to that pleasure. Only the dourest scrooge won't find beauty somewhere in Wood's work. For me, it started with the quirky engineering of *Children's Garden* (2015), the lovely shadowplay of *Studio Exterior* (2014). Soon enough, even the Matisse references seem like good fun and *The Hypnotist* starts to offer a better riff on *L'Atelier Rouge* than any appropriation. In an image glut, why worry about which ones count? Shape and colour remain fresh even to our jaded eyes, and reality hardly ever seems real anyway. Absorption in looking, even at a flattened world, is joyous. Painting as a kind of plastic Pinterest still satisfies, and Wood's relentless processing does plenty to please. ◆■

Ian Chang is a writer based in Los Angeles, USA.

Jonas Wood is an artist who lives and works in Los Angeles, USA. He has had solo shows at David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles, Anton Kern Gallery, New York, USA, and Shane Campbell Gallery, Chicago, USA, and a collaborative exhibition with Shio Kusaka at Gagosian Gallery, Hong Kong. His solo exhibition at Gagosian Gallery, London, UK, will run from 12 October to 19 December.

1
Red Studio Pot,
2014, oil and acrylic on canvas,
1.8 × 1.8 m

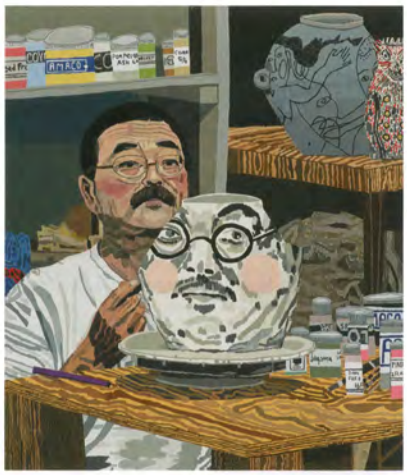
2
Akio Takamori,
2014, oil and acrylic on linen,
107 × 91 cm

3
Maritime Sunset Landscape Pot,
2014, ink, gouache and
colored pencil on paper, 71 × 56 cm

4
Children's Garden,
2015, oil and acrylic on canvas,
2.3 × 2.3 m

All images courtesy
the artist, David Kordansky
Gallery, Los Angeles,
Anton Kern Gallery, New York,
Shane Campbell
Gallery, Chicago, and
Gagosian Gallery

Chang, Ian, “Art history meets domestic life in the paintings of Jonas Wood,” *Frieze*, Issue 174, September 2015, p. 232-237



2

Wood's modernism is a modernism of the screenshot, though it requires neither computer nor camera.

3

4

Sanchez-Kozyreva, Cristina, “Shio Kusaka and Jonas Wood,” *Artforum.com*, Critic’s Picks, February 2, 2015

ARTFORUM

Hong Kong

Shio Kusaka and Jonas Wood

Jonas Wood, *Red Studio Pot*, 2014, oil and acrylic on canvas, 72 x 72”

GAGOSIAN GALLERY | HONG KONG
7/F Pedder Building, 12 Pedder Street
January 16–February 28

Potter Shio Kusaka and painter Jonas Wood share an obsession with vessels as pictorial tropes. Along with other artistic couples maintaining independent practices—such as painter Madelon Vriesendorp and architect Rem Koolhaas, whose dual visual pursuit of surrealist architectonics is strengthened by both their lines of work—Wood and Kusaka converse with the same muses without the stamp of collaboration. Fresh and hospitable, this exhibition of their work conjures an impression of prolific artistic endeavors in a continuous evolution, all born from their Los Angeles studio.

Sanchez-Kozyreva, Cristina, “Shio Kusaka and Jonas Wood,” *Artforum.com*, Critic’s Picks, February 2, 2015

Here, the glazes on Kusaka’s porcelain and stoneware, inspired by her children’s toys and games and her husband’s use of color, evolve from geometric to figurative. Accordingly, her numbered “(Dinosaur)” series from 2014 is composed of black and red amphoras which depict landscapes with dinosaurs. There’s also the more abstract installation (*Fruits 10*), 2014, which tightly gathers different colored jars together including a few red-pink pitchers with dots like strawberries seeds.

More than the sum of their parts, Wood’s paintings of sunny interiors with plants in turn echo his wife’s ceramics while serving as an homage to Matisse’s moorish interiors or David Hockney’s leafy palettes. One such work, *Red Studio Pot*, 2014, is an oil and acrylic painting of a red pot decorated with a Mediterranean studio or living room, while *Black Still Life Collage*, 2012, is a collaged study on paper showing shelves bearing multipatterned vases of flowers and plants, further hinting at the environment the artists share.

— Cristina Sanchez-Kozyreva

Schad, Ed, "Jonas Wood, David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles, 8 November - 10 January," *ArtReview*, January &February 2015, p. 137

Jonas Wood

David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles 8 November – 10 January

The world of Jonas Wood often has a shaky but lovingly attentive feel. His paintings and drawings are calm and reflective, many showing the interiors of what look like happy lives. Wood seems genuinely to like his subject matter, to dwell nostalgically on the good memories and good people in his life.

Wood's exhibition at David Kordansky's new space is somewhat of a survey of his collected themes. The first of three galleries contains his plant paintings, usually featuring the ceramics of his wife, Shio Kusaka, while a second gallery features Wood's paintings of collectable sports cards (usually baseball or basketball). The last gallery brings in the rest of Wood's genres – landscapes, portraits, sporting events and interiors – in a salon-style hang of drawings and several large paintings.

Wood's paintings and drawings start as photo-collages assembled from many views of the same subject. He also starts new productions from previous ones, reworking the same content into a meditation on how his life has changed or how his attitudes towards his subjects change.

For instance, *Rosy in My Room* (2014) pictures Wood's father in the artist's childhood room holding a cat (presumably a surrogate for the son who has left the nest), while *Self Portrait with Momo* (2014) shows Wood in the same room, holding his daughter. The simple gesture is about the passage of time, about growing up and about fatherhood, all contained in the subtle flicker between two similar but slightly different images.

In *Manny Sanguillen* (2009), a small gouache and coloured pencil on paper, one can see the efforts of a young boy with an urge to draw the bigger-than-life baseball players he sees on television. The boy focuses intently on the contours of the uniforms. He uses lines rather than shading to define the forms. The boy's line is unpractised and shaky but earnest. He grinds the nubs of coloured pencils to fill shapes. He has no need to study or get precious about volumes. All told, the boy is not interested in skilfully recreating the player; instead he mimics the attention and love that he shows the baseball cards that he hoards in his room. He has looked at them so much that looking is no longer enough.

This innocent exuberance, which comes from Wood's ability to inhabit and mimic childhood as much as reflect on it, is remarkable. It is fitting that the touchstones one most often finds associated with Wood are David Hockney and Vincent van Gogh. Wood's spaces are built through technique and practice, the labour of a man in a world of exponentially multiplying images. But ultimately these works owe allegiance to emotion and memory. What we see is a product of how Wood feels, and his feelings are coherent and heartening, thankfully free of the temptation to manufacture drama or to exaggerate. *Ed Schad*

Manute, 2014, oil and acrylic on canvas, 305 × 122 cm.
Photo: Brian Forrest. Courtesy David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles

Moret, A., “Los Angeles, Jonas Wood at David Kordansky Gallery,” *art ltd.*, Jan/Feb 2015, p.17

"Maritime Hotel Pot with Aloe," 2014
Jonas Wood
Oil and acrylic on canvas, 120" x 76"
Photo: courtesy David Kordansky Gallery

LOS ANGELES

Jonas Wood
at David Kordansky Gallery

The bowstring stress and ample ambient light of David Kordansky's new gallery space serves as an optimal stage to view an extensive and ambitious solo exhibition from Jonas Wood. With work spanning three large rooms, Wood explores three facets of his painterly practice: plants, sports cards and portraits. Creating painting from case studies of drawing and collage, Wood draws inspiration from a pop culture Rolodex, culling images from the web, while also saving baseball and basketball trading cards, and gathering photographs taken of his friends and family in domestic spaces. In his painting, Wood captures the texture found in Braque's synthetic Cubism, relays an intimacy of private spaces likened to van Gogh's *Bedroom in Arles,* and finds inspiration in the Southern Californian landscape and the severe geometric architecture seen in David Hockney.

In the North Gallery, seven large-scale works of oil and acrylic on canvas depict plants, or what Wood refers to as "landscape pots." Beyond containing soil for the flora to thrive, each planter becomes a window that explores another scene. In *Maritime Hotel Pot with Aloe* (2014), we enter an urban vista where an angular, darkened building juts out of the canvas amidst a grid of buildings haphazardly placed like Lego blocks. As the eye travels into the background, the claustrophobic skyline recedes and is obscured by an electrical sunset. Radiant yellows, burnt oranges and hot pinks illuminate the horizon and overshadow the grey smoke escaping from the chimney tops. Wood approaches his work in a cinematic manner and the effect is similar to a rack focus in which the eye oscillates between foreground and background to form a single, unified image.

The South Gallery presents a salon-style installation of various-sized works of paper. Appearing like a montage are images of NBA super stars in the style of collectible trading cards, rendered in gouache, colored pencil and ink on paper, along with sketches for the "landscape pots" and images inspired by personal photographs. In the work called *Face Painting* (2014), Wood presents a candid moment of his young daughter seated behind a mirror holding a paint brush with a palette of crimson, cobalt blue, grey and pink. Although her entire face is nearly covered in paint, she maintains a keen curiosity amid the paintings stacked along the wall. Wood's works are essentially narrative paintings which convey the textures and surfaces of the quotidian. Like a palimpsest, layers reveals themselves slowly and manifest into a labyrinth of symbols not immediately seen or felt at first glance.

—A. MORET

Crow, Kelly, "A Couple Entwined In Art," *The Wall Street Journal*, Saturday/Sunday, January 24-25, 2015, p. C14

ICONS

A Couple Entwined In Art

BY KELLY CROW

JONAS WOOD'S 'Red Studio Pot,' above, pays homage to Henri Matisse; left, Shio Kusaka's stoneware '(flower 1).'

HISTORY BRIMS with artist couples: Surrealists Max Ernst and Dorothea Tanning, modern masters Alfred Stieglitz and Georgia O'Keeffe and abstract expressionists Jackson Pollock and Lee Krasner. The latest twosome to join the international art circuit is Los Angeles painter Jonas Wood and his potter wife, Shio Kusaka. Together, they are helping to redefine creative collaboration.

Mr. Wood, 37, and Ms. Kusaka, 42, don't merely work alongside each other in a shared studio. They continually refer to each other's works in their own: Mr. Wood's still-life interiors often include rows of striped and speckled pots and planters that echo Ms. Kusaka's ceramics. Ms. Kusaka, in turn, often mimics images from his canvases—from his signature plants to basketballs—on her pots.

Now the couple's overlapping oeuvres are getting an in-depth look for the first time in a Gagosian Gallery show in Hong Kong, "Jonas Wood and Shio Kusaka: Blackwelder," up through Feb. 28. The show includes 10 paintings and 25 drawings by Mr. Wood and 53 pots by Ms. Kusaka, many of which haven't been seen before.

"They each have their own stories to tell, but we want to show how they cross-pollinate," said Nick Simunovic, a Gagosian dealer. "Where one meets Jonas, one meets Shio."

Of the two, Mr. Wood is better known, a Boston-born transplant to Los Angeles. He caused a stir in 2006 when he showed a series of David Hockney-like portraits of his grandfather—as well as of former Boston Celtic Robert Parish—in a former Kung-Fu studio in the city's Chinatown neighborhood. The earnestness of his sports-star portraits, some of which looked like oversize sports trading cards, endeared him to collectors like New York real-estate developer Aby Rosen and New York printers Michael and Susan Hort.

In 2012, Mr. Wood designed wallpaper featuring repeated painted images of basketballs. From a distance, the wallpaper looks abstract—like rows of orange polka-dots—but up close, the basketballs' differing details stand out. He has also scoured gardening books for images of plants, which he painted large on otherwise white canvases in a series called "Clippings" that showed at Mr. Rosen's Lever House in 2013.

Mr. Wood's pieces now belong to at least a half dozen museums, including the Hammer Museum, and have traded at auction for as much as $56,250 apiece. At galleries they have sold for as much as $140,000.

Los Angeles dealer David Kordansky, who also represents the artist, said that Mr. Wood gives his works a conceptual edge by using the Internet, books and pop culture to appropriate source images for his paintings before blending these images with family photos or objects in his studio—a combination that makes the final product appear realistic but slightly off. "It's a deception that still feels heartfelt," Mr. Kordansky said.

What matters, said the artist, is that the imagery in his paintings "feels meaningful to me—they need to come from an important place," he said. He played basketball and tennis in high school and listens to ESPN while he paints, which explains the portraits of sports stars. That's also why his wife's pottery pops up so often in his canvases. "I love her work, and I love her."

Mr. Wood met Ms. Kusaka in the art library of Seattle's University of Washington in 2000, where they were both students. Ms. Kusaka, who had moved to the U.S. from Japan in 1992, said that they clicked immediately: "We both loved being in the studio, and it's comforting to be with someone who gets my need to be there."

Ms. Kusaka said that she studied ceramics in part because she had always loved watching her grandmother conduct tea ceremonies. These domestic rituals allowed for slight imperfections—in the bowls as well as the conversations—and Ms. Kusaka found that she, too, was drawn to her pots whenever they turned out slightly misshapen. "I like the tension that comes with failing," she said. She also admired the minimalist lines of painter Agnes Martin, and today she's best known for painting wobbly grids on her pots—as well as pots whose bellies or handles feature dinosaurs. ("Our daughter used to be obsessed with them," she added.)

Some of these so-called dinosaur pots were included in last year's Whitney Biennial, and her pots can sell for up to $10,000 apiece.

The couple's artistic collaboration started slowly. It was only after they married in 2002 and moved to Los Angeles that Ms. Kusaka noticed that images of her ceramics began appearing in her husband's paintings. She was more flattered than miffed. After a while, she started borrowing the striped lines and patterns that she saw in his paintings. Eventually, it became clear that they had become, in a way, each other's muse.

"It's fun to see what he does with my pots," she said. "Sometimes he takes a small one and paints it giant, and suddenly I want to make a giant version as well."

That was the idea behind the Hong Kong show—to explore how their own practices intertwine. Highlights include Mr. Wood's "Still Life With Two Owls," which shows a case of potted plants, some of which contain black-and-white grid designs like Ms. Kusaka's "(grid 36)." Mr. Wood also nods to Henri Matisse's studio by painting its contents, in "Red Studio," within the ginger-jar shape of a red pot.

Ms. Kusaka said that the only time she got flustered in the run-up to the show was when she set about to paint some orchids on a pot that she admired in Mr. Wood's painting "2 Tigers." Then she realized she was trying too hard to copy them exactly—a no-no, since she had hinged her own artistic code on finding beauty in flaws. In the end, she painted her own version of his orchids. She said, "He's comfortable with my imperfections."

Gagosian Gallery(2)

Powers, Bill, "'I'm Less of a De Kooning and More Like Lichtenstein': A Talk with Jonas Wood," *ArtNews*, January 2015, pp. 26-27

"I'M LESS OF A DE KOONING AND MORE LIKE LICHTENSTEIN": A TALK WITH JONAS WOOD

BY BILL POWERS

Powers, Bill, "'I'm Less of a De Kooning and More Like Lichtenstein': A Talk with Jonas Wood," *ArtNews*, January 2015, pp. 26-27

BILL POWERS: HOW DID YOU GET YOUR START IN LOS ANGELES?

Jonas Wood: My wife [Shio Kusaka] and I decided to move to L.A. in 2003. I had gone to high school with Matt Johnson who offered me a job working for him. While we were driving out, he set up a gig for Shio assisting Charles Ray. A couple of months later, Laura Owens called Matt looking for a studio assistant, so I went to help her for two years until she had a kid, and then I actually worked for Matt again another year and a half before my first solo show in 2006.

BP: YOUR RECENT EXHIBITION AT DAVID KORDANSKY IN L.A. FEATURED WHAT YOU CALL LANDSCAPE POTS?

JW: Yes, paintings of clipped plants in pots with pictures of shaped landscapes on them. I also had two still-life paintings in that show, plus another room of portraits and a big wall of drawings from 2007 until now.

BP: THERE'S ONE STILL-LIFE PAINTING THAT REMINDED ME OF THE SHELVES YOU HAVE OUTSIDE YOUR STUDIO IN L.A. I HEARD A RUMOR THAT ED RUSCHA IS YOUR LANDLORD?

JW: It's true. He owns the building where I've had my studio for the last seven years. Ruscha never used it as his studio though—storage mostly. And I think it was a back-up plan if he ever got evicted from his old spot in Venice Beach, which ended up happening anyway. We're friendly, but I try not to super-fan-out on him. Plus he gave me a great deal on the building.

BP: IS IT HARD TO SHARE A STUDIO WITH YOUR WIFE?

JW: When we first moved to California, we lived on the second floor of a pretty big house in Echo Park. It was a disaster. In retrospect, I think we both needed to figure out who we were as artists on our own before we could handle it.

BP: WERE YOU JEALOUS AT ALL WHEN SHE WAS INCLUDED IN THE LAST WHITNEY BIENNIAL?

JW: The funny thing is that they came to visit both of us. I never thought they were really interested in me. And part of me felt that if we were both in the biennial, it could take away from each other. I love promoting my wife's work. I'm very into her doing well. In fact, sometimes she has to tell me to chill out. Shio is much more reserved.

BP: ARE LUCIEN FREUD'S PLANT PAINTINGS AN INFLUENCE? OR DAVID HOCKNEY'S POOL PAINTINGS? OR ALEX KATZ'S PORTRAITS?

JW: All three of them are superheroes. If I had to make a power ranking I'd list: Hockney, Katz, Freud.

BP: MARK GROTJAHN SAID THAT SOMETIMES WHEN HE'S STRUGGLING WITH A PAINTING HE'LL ADD A LITTLE WHITE TO IT, AND THAT CLEANS EVERYTHING UP. WHAT'S YOUR RESCUE PLAN?

JW: I look to drawing first. I'll take a picture of the painting and print it out on drawing paper, get the colored pencils and try to figure some shit out. I'm less of a de Kooning and more like Lichtenstein so it's a compositional decision, I guess.

BP: HAVING INCORPORATED OLDER ARTISTS' WORK INTO YOUR OWN—I'M THINKING HERE OF, SAY, THE POT PAINTING YOU MADE WITH THE MATISSE INTERIOR—DID IT MAKE YOU THINK ABOUT THOSE PAINTERS IN A DIFFERENT LIGHT?

JW: It's more a reflection of having grown up with some of their work. My parents had a couple of Matisse prints from the cutout series, one with lots of hearts on it. I grew up with the green-and-pink Warhol cow wallpaper in our hallway. And my grandfather had a serious art collection: a big Bacon painting, a Lichtenstein, Calder, Rauschenberg.

BP: AND DOES THE IMPACT OF THAT EXPOSURE AT AN EARLY AGE INFORM YOUR PAINTINGS IN OTHER WAYS?

JW: There's a painting of my dad in the Kordansky show and he's sitting in my grandfather's Modernist house after my grandfather passed away. My grandfather built this crazy house in 1955 in upstate New York and filled it with his art collection. He was an interesting guy: a self-made man, a doctor. He taught himself how to paint at age 60. When I was younger, I thought maybe I'd follow in his footsteps.

BP: IN A RECENT INTERVIEW, CADY NOLAND WAS QUOTED SAYING THAT "GAGOSIAN IS WHERE ARTISTS GO TO DIE." AS SOMEONE WITH TWO GAGOSIAN SHOWS LINED UP FOR 2015, HOW DOES THAT RESONATE WITH YOU?

JW: That's her opinion. I'm going to Gagosian to live. I have friends who show there. It all came about very organically.

Jonas Wood's show at David Kordansky closes January 10. Later this month he will show with Shio Kusaka at Gagosian Hong Kong. He has a solo exhibition at Gagosian London next fall.