

SHANNON FINLEY: 19 Questions for Painter and Plant Collector Shannon Finley

Written by Ashton Cooper
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Name: Shannon Finley

Age: 39

Occupation: Artist

City/Neighborhood: Berlin



(L-R): Shannon Finley's "Orb (Equilibrium)" and "Rhombus (Impression Formation)" at Vladimir Restoin Roitfeld.

Your first New York exhibition just opened at Vladimir Restoin Roitfeld's space. Did you find that the reception of your work was different in New York compared to San Francisco or Berlin?

Every city has a different climate, with varied histories and sensibilities. I've absorbed the computer into the composition of my works in a way that feels so natural that I hardly think of it. New York seems more acutely tuned in to technology and the way it rejuvenates archaic mediums like painting.

In San Francisco, they seem to look at my paintings from the perspective of 1960s counter culture and psychedelia. In Germany, maybe they think I'm the son of Gerhard Richter.

How did your relationship with Roitfeld come about?

I believe Vladimir found my work on Jessica Silverman's website last fall and flew to Chicago to see her solo presentation of my work at Expo Chicago. Soon after, he visited me in Berlin and we planned the New York show. His unique Upper East Side space highlights the timeless aspects of the work.

In the new paintings, you use digital imaging software before you apply paint to the canvas. Does it create a template that you paint over?

The software doesn't create the template; I do! The paintings develop out of both digital drawings and hands-on improvising. When planning a show, I often begin by working out the scale of the works with digital mock-ups, overlaying previous paintings onto installation shots of the gallery space.

What project are you working on now?

I'm sending some works to Jessica Silverman for the Dallas Art Fair and am starting to work on a solo show with Susanne Vielmetter, which takes place in L.A. this summer.

What's the last show that you saw?

David Altmejd at Andrea Rosen. Loved it!

What's the last show that surprised you? Why?

Rudolf Stingel at Gagosian. It's a hypnotic reflection via an epic landscape.

Do you make a living off your art?

Yes.

What's the most indispensable item in your studio?

The stereo system.

Where are you finding ideas for your work these days?

Everywhere, real science, and science fiction. Many artists inspire me too.

Do you collect anything?

Music, Japanese video games, books, plants.

What is your karaoke song?

I don't have one.

What's the last artwork you purchased?

A Jonathan Lasker drawing.

What's the first artwork you ever sold?

A painting of a lens flare on a monochrome field.

What's your favorite post-gallery watering hole or restaurant?

Wherever my friends are, in X-berg or Neuköln.

What's the last great book you read?

The collected short stories of Jorge Luis Borges.

What work of art do you wish you owned?

One of the 10 x 10 foot square paintings from Peter Schuyff's 1987 show at Leo Castelli or a Tauba Auerbach fold piece.

What international art destination do you most want to visit?

The Caves of El Castillo in Spain or Lascaux in France.

What are your hobbies?

Snowboarding, making music, cooking.

What under-appreciated artist, gallery, or work do you think people should know about?

Female artists.