

LET'S GET WASTED

Statement by Troy Henriksen

As a painter, I have always used photos within my work, using collage as a mean to construct and engage with my artistic practice. In 2006, I began studying photography and subsequently created my first series that earnestly combined digital photography and painting. In my series, Self-Portrait as Arthur Rimbaud, I used a photograph of myself as Rimbaud and painted on top of it to create a unique image and to explore the idea of reincarnation.

In my new series, "LET'S GET WASTED" I am using hundreds of photos I have taken over the years of people, places and things that I know well and that hold a special meaning within my life. One could say these images represent an autobiographical picture of my mind. What excites me about photography is the ability to capture the unseen symbolism that is at work right before our very eyes that we do not see. Just because we have our eyes open does not mean we are seeing what is right before our faces. Yet, a photograph can often reveal the serendipitous symbolism that exists all around us. Even if I had somehow captured serendipity of life, I longed for the physical demands, organic nature and textural elements of painting along with the engagement of my imagination. It was time for the photographs to serve the Art and for me to examine the symbolism.

When beginning to create this series I realized I desired my painting to express a certain trauma that couldn't be found in pure pigment; therefore by combining the photographs with painting I have discovered a formula that illuminates a clash of realities that shifts the human psyche out of the comfort zone and awakens the spirit. I needed to investigate this clash of realities that expresses my cognitive process in relation to the outer-world in order for me to continue my meta-physical journey or pataphysical journey as an artist. Pataphysics as described by Alfred Jarry, the science of imaginary solutions.

What I have discovered about these images is how the very usage of photograph and painting in conjunction with one another as a medium, in itself represents the societal cognitive dissonance that is mirrored in the two mediums together, the harsh reality of photography with the naive fantasy world of paint. What interests me most about this body of work is how fundamentally wrong the reality that is set up within the work appears to be. These pictures also show the literal mind's ability to hold one world with many intentions, while the visual mind distinguishes objects and forms without defining a narrative. It is in this synthesis of these two sides that reflects who, what or where we are, and allows us to organize our thoughts to create Gods, happy endings and kick the cosmos around a bit or enter the world of fiction where possibilities are endless.

I regard each work of art in this series as a universe unto itself, each trying to tell its own story or arrive at a poem or enter into a song as some of my paintings do. Sometimes they don't however, and operate on a very simplistic level of painting. It is within this gap that I attempt to engage with and further illustrate the stories these divergent images coalesce to create. The role of the Artist as receiver, transcender and entertainer is to aid the public to understand their own inner dialogue.

Troy Henriksen