

SUSAN INGLETT

SHAUN O'DELL: *By Cloud*

11 December 2014 – 31 January 2015

Susan Inglett Gallery, NYC



floatABOVEhorizontals, 2013
Gouache on paper mounted
on canvas mounted on panel
38 3/4 x 22 in.



GOLD REVERSE, 2013

Gouache and archival glue on paper
mounted on canvas mounted on panel
24 x 20 in.



SILVER WHITE REVERSE, 2013

Gouache and archival glue on paper
mounted on canvas mounted on panel
24 x 20 in.



WAS.GOLD, 2013

Gouache on paper mounted
on canvas mounted on panel
28 1/4 x 22 in.



mudVISION, 2013
Gouache on paper mounted
on canvas mounted on panel
30 1/4 x 22 1/4 in.



notTHE.star, 2014

Gouache and archival glue on paper
mounted on canvas mounted on panel
43 x 30 in.



brkn.grfik, 2014

Gouache and acrylic ink on paper mounted
on canvas mounted on panel

24 x 20 in.



old.collection, 2014

Gouache on paper mounted
on canvas mounted on panel
40 x 29 3/4 in.

Sad On It: Post-Season with Shaun O'Dell

by Jordan Stein

"I made this one when I thought it might never rain again in California."

We're in Shaun's too-small basement studio in San Francisco. The painting he's describing depicts a collection of particles, maybe dust, blowing in a scramble of overlapping fore and backgrounds. Or we're looking *underground* and not much is reaching the horizon.

It's post-season.

Shaun's team, the San Francisco Giants, have reached the World Series for the third time in five years. Baseball is good for endless possibilities and wild statistics, the quickness and slowness, the optimism and resolution, he explains. How can the same number of players and distance from home to first base yield such different results each and every time?

I discovered Shaun's work—and what, at the time, was its signature symbolist style—soon after moving to California 10 years ago. Large-scale gouache on paper dreamscapes twisted intriguingly paranoid theories of interconnection into precisely rendered compositions. They weren't quite conspiracy theories, but private ones, and their excited mythologies lent an outsider-ish air.

Shaun's new work is free of symbols, a major departure, and the studio walls are lined with abstract cut-ups, fades, fractures, and glue-togethers. Many are woven-looking, like out-of-joint slices of a time-lapse photograph.

I make a request and he narrates a few pieces out loud. Fears over the drought give way to a host of broader concerns and apprehensions. For the next hour his tone toggles between the epic and the workaday. "Three wars, global warming, the abstraction of The Cloud, the abstraction of money and the way it moves, the abstraction of ourselves, the techno-libertarian take over of not just San Francisco, but the intellectual, ethical, and cultural landscape of the contemporary info-sphere." And also: "I come down here and make choices. If it's not right I do something else." More than once he describes the work as a collection of ruins.

Meanwhile, local leases are exploding. Under the mania of the new Creative Class' rooftop butterfly habitat, Shaun and so many others are no longer considered innovators, but the outsider artists they once flirted at becoming. An increasingly common approach among Bay Area artists at the moment is that the ideas should come from their work rather than the other way around. They must suspect that concepts won't save them from the very real mess we're in—if they haven't already moved to Los Angeles.

He points to another work. "This one has a sound to me."

Back upstairs we tune in to the first game of the Series. There's an AM radio roaring in the kitchen and a pirated video stream on the computer in the next room. The stream, however, suffers a 30-second delay and as we eat, talk, and listen, when something noteworthy happens we jump into the other room to catch the "live" replay. It's weird, because all those people on the ballpark computer screen don't know what we know; they don't know what's about to happen. Somehow, impossibly, we identify with them.

INTERVIEW

I stopped by several days later with the impossible plan of tackling the small and large of Shaun's work in one short interview with one short question, something colloquial and democratic—something like, "What about that?" or, "How?" or even, "Tell me."

We chose one painting – "WAS.GOLD" - and got started. The "small" section is first, made from incremental decisions and glue. I transcribed it faithfully.

The next section is "big," like a horizon or a well. We agreed that Shaun would transcribe this part, which he did. But he subsequently changed it, rounding the corners into something more written over the course of several drafts. Finally, at my suggestion, he worked it back into something more spoken.

The logic thread is abstract and crypto-paranoid, a bit "Uncle Crackpot." I'm not certain I follow each and every turn. Regardless, he's feeling it and that emotion carries through to the work, exuding a spectral hysteria uniquely his own.

A hyperactive blender was going in the other room for much of the interview. It occurs to me now that the blender sits between the big and the small.

JS: "What about that?" or, "How?" or even, "Tell me."

SO: *Well, formally, I made a pattern and then I turned it a little bit and then I turned it again. There were three different colors, but that didn't really work so I covered one part in black, then I covered the whole pattern in black, and then I covered the whole thing in white. And then I covered that in a layer of glue, all three patterns.*

I put a piece of glassine down on it and pulled that off. It seemed like maybe now there was something to work from. But I didn't like it. I was sad on it for a while. Then I covered it in gold, but then it got all sloppy and weird and I wasn't sure what I was doing. So I pulled off most of the gold. And I just missed gluing this area at the bottom. I stopped, or I can't remember what happened.

I'm trying to uncover something and at the same time I'm covering it up; I'm just trying to change it. Some of them want to be changed in certain ways and some of them want to be changed in other ways. This one didn't want to be cut but it wanted to be changed. I was interested in whether or not the original pattern would still be visible in an obscured way. And then it seemed to me that the whole thing had been one golden field that was eroded somehow. Then it started to have depth and flatness in certain places. Formal decisions.

JS: "What about that?" or, "How?" or even, "Tell me."

SO: *Beyond that are metaphorical interests related to collapse and the notion of golden ages. This "golden age" thing happens throughout history over and over again in different cultures at various times. The Persian Empire, Fourth Dynasty Egypt, Periclean Athens, the Enlightenment, it happened locally in California, here in San Francisco. There are creative peaks in culture, in music and art; these are powerful moments in time. And then it collapses but returns again at other times and in other places. We name these periods retroactively by comparing them to our - less golden - present moment. So now, the possibility of any kind of golden age anywhere in the future seems unlikely. The utopian promises of modernity were supposed to produce one long lasting, global, golden age of the future – that's the pitch anyway. That doesn't seem to be panning out. The painting is an exploration that confronts that failure - the failure of some future utopian golden age, the failure of the future as a possibility.*

JS: "What about that?" or, "How?" or even, "Tell me."

SO: *It seems like there's been a fundamental change in the way we think. Or maybe it's more like we're thinking less like we've thought in the past. There's less humanities thinking and more science, technology, engineering, math and business thinking. I've been reading Poetry and Finance by Franco Berardi. He's talking about the difference between what he calls the conjunctive and the connective. Conjunctive he says is a modality of becoming-other. Singularities change when they conjoin, they become something other than they were before their conjunction. Conjunction wants to fuse round and irregular shapes that are moving around crazily without precision, repetition or perfection. Connection by contrast is the punctual and repeatable interaction of algorithmic functions required by the digitalization of everything.*

I'm concerned because conjunctive thinking, the kind of thinking the humanities engages – an associative kind of thinking - is being edged out by the connective thinking required by digital capitalism – a dissociative kind of thinking that Berardi describes as reducing everything to straight lines and points that overlap perfectly and demand standardization. The shift to the connective as the main cognitive mode in which we interact is distressing because it signals an anthropological transformation that demands all our creative energy be exclusively channeled into the financialization of consciousness. The whole scenario is a doubling down on the abstraction of our bodies and minds from our selves, each other, and physical reality.

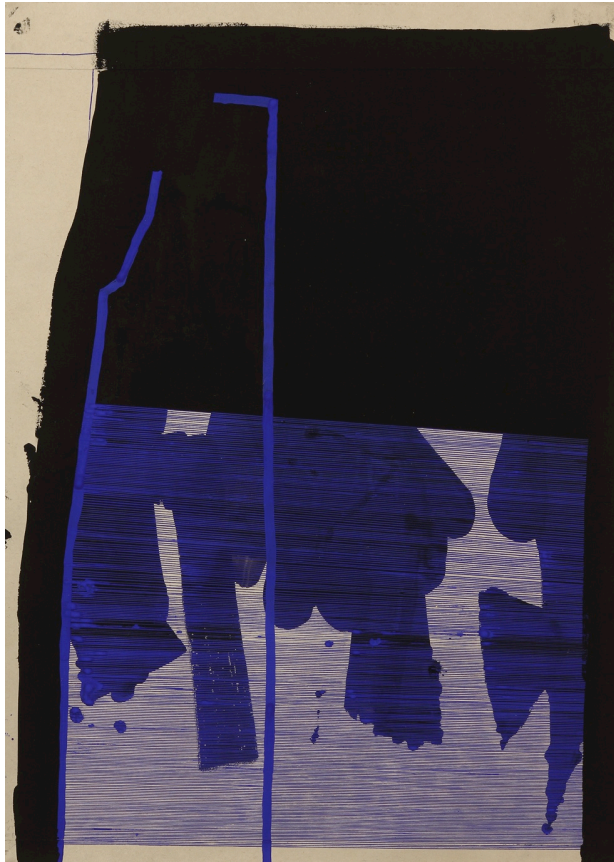
The situation makes me feel like time has stopped and shattered the future into impossible fragments. It's like realizing you have just escaped being sucked over the falls while simultaneously realizing you have already been smashed on the rocks. It's an indication that modernity's utopian promises are not in the process of ruination or collapse but have already been completely obliterated. The present is gone. There is nothing to salvage nothing to reclaim. A biological mutation has been set in motion that is radically altering our ethical consciousness. I'm feeling this shit and trying to cope and navigate all of it without having a meltdown panic attack everyday. Making the paintings is a physical way for me to think through the collapse and process its effect on my life. The paintings are a pure emotional response to this catastrophe. It may not sound like it but, I'm still optimistic – and I think that is reflected in the paintings - because as I've said to you a number of times recently quoting Giorgio Agamben, "Thought for me, is just that: the courage of hopelessness. And is that not the height of optimism."



MurderedBYnewsUNS, 2013
Gouache on paper mounted on canvas
mounted on panel
26 1/4 x 20 in.



y.cloud, 2014
Gouache on paper mounted on canvas
mounted on panel
28 1/2 x 22 in.



fishMUSEUM, 2014
Gouache and acrylic ink on paper mounted
on canvas mounted on panel
24 x 17 1/2 in.



all that.way, 2014

Gouache and acrylic ink on paper mounted
on canvas mounted on panel

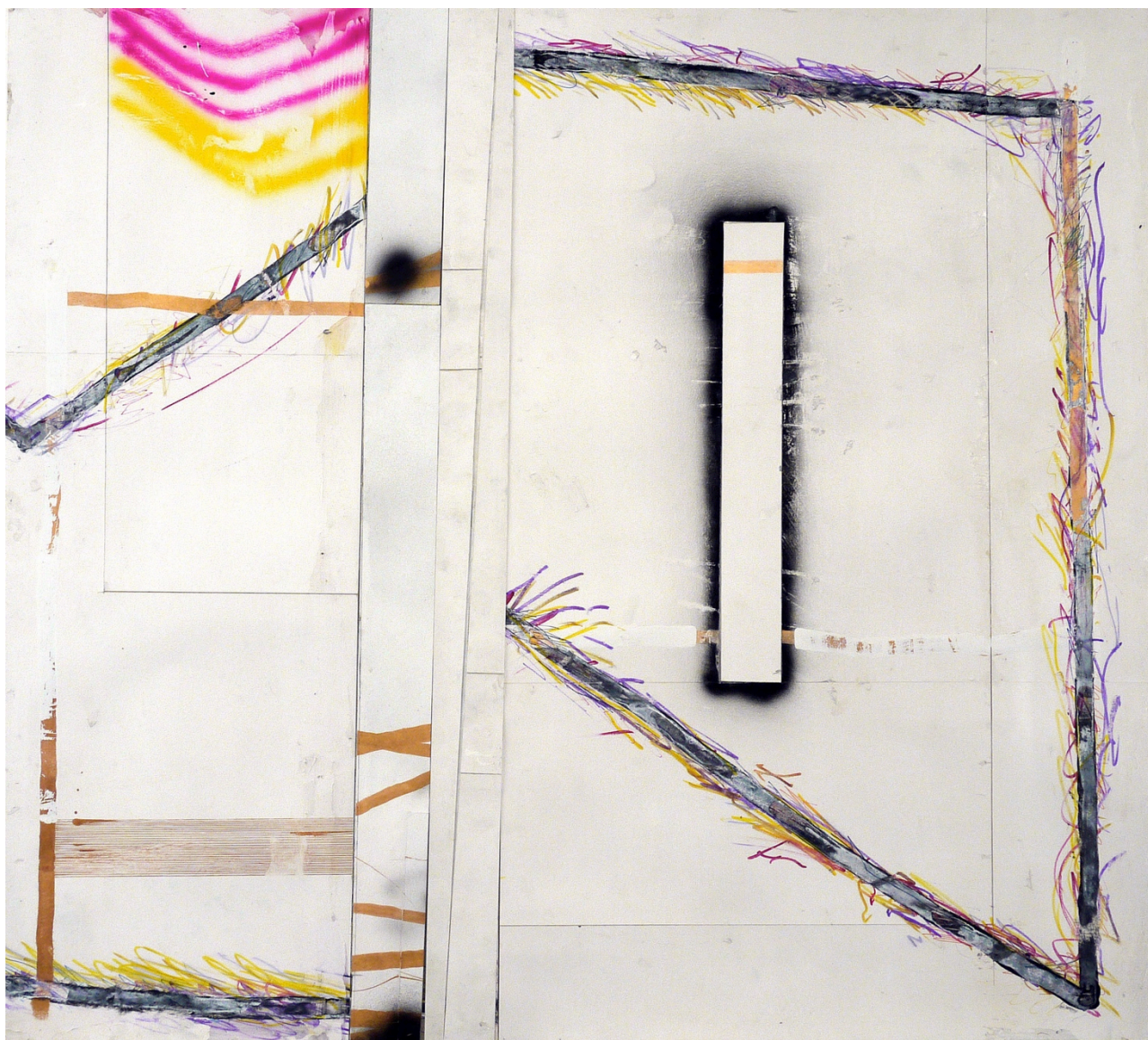
28 x 22 in.



from THEdesert.problems, 2014

Gouache and acrylic ink on paper mounted
on canvas mounted on panel

40 x 30 in.



otherside!S.fuckedToo, 2014

Gouache, acrylic ink and archival glue on paper
mounted on canvas mounted on panel
30 1/4 x 34 in.



ultra.2, 2014
Gouache on paper mounted on canvas
mounted on panel
30 x 22 in.

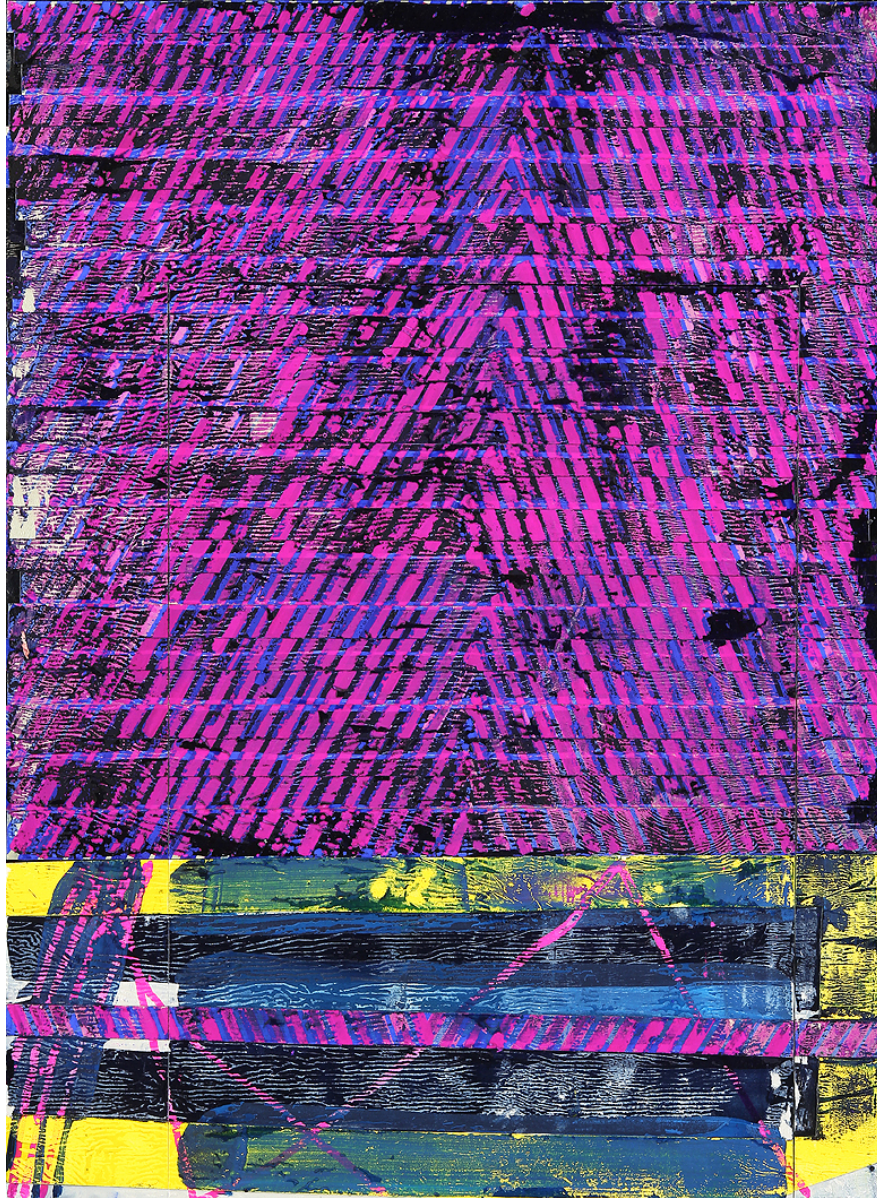


silver.BLK.ultra2, 2013
Gouache and archival glue on paper
mounted on canvas mounted on panel
19 x 13 1/2 in. each



silverSTRAWBERRYgrid, 2013

Gouache on paper mounted on canvas
mounted on panel
25 x 20 in.

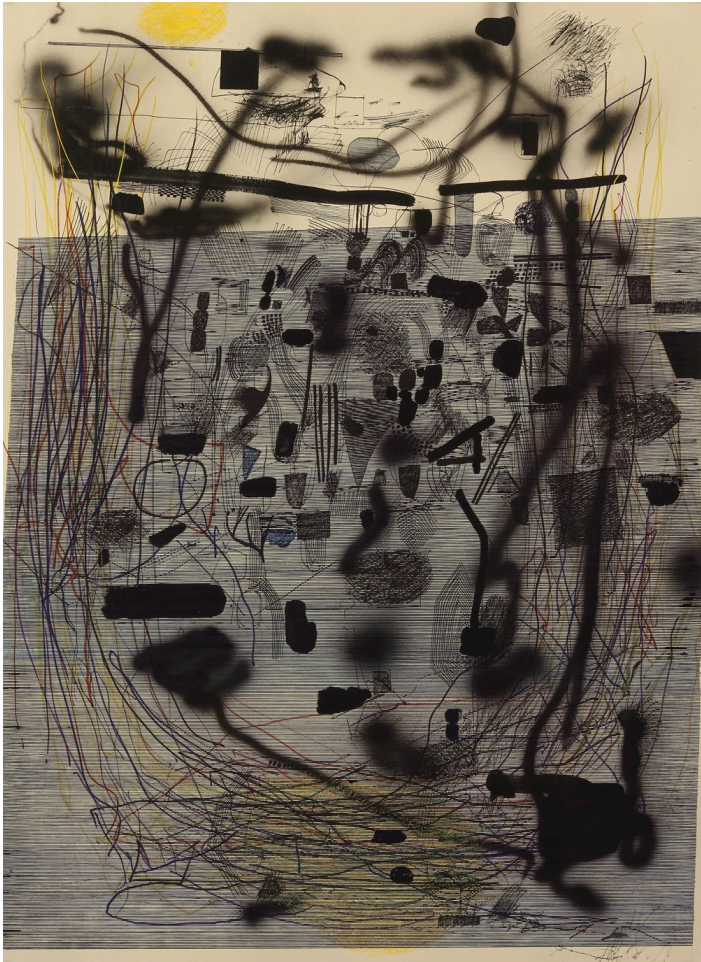


videomix.sm, 2013

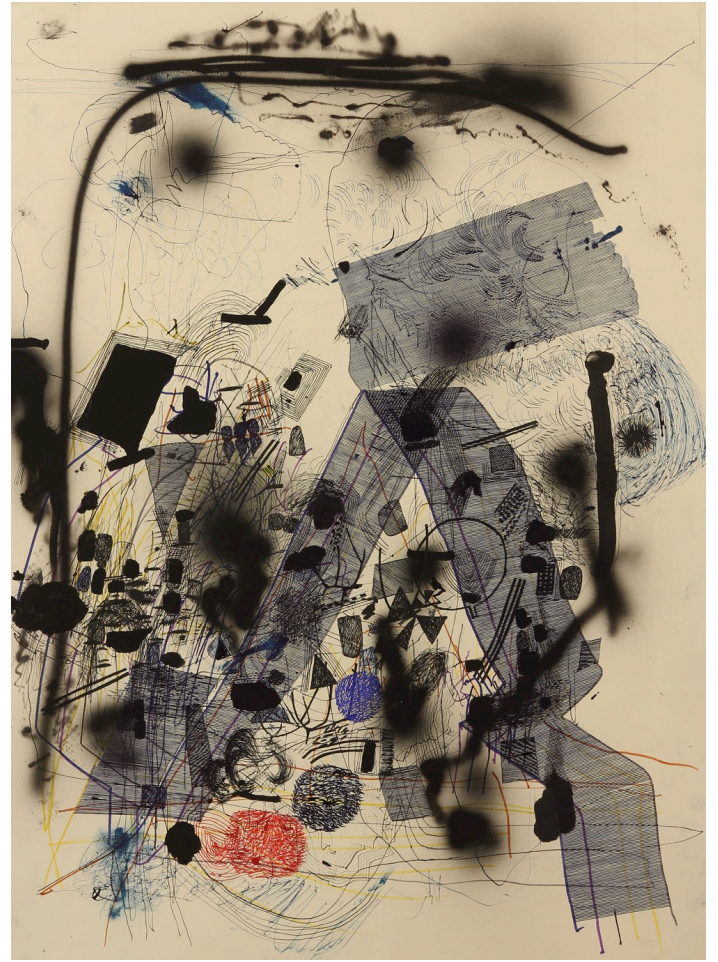
Gouache on paper mounted on canvas
mounted on panel
29 3/4 x 22 in.



pyrocumulus.Spring, 2014
Gouache, acrylic ink and archival
glue on paper mounted on
canvas mounted on panel
44 x 30 1/4 in.



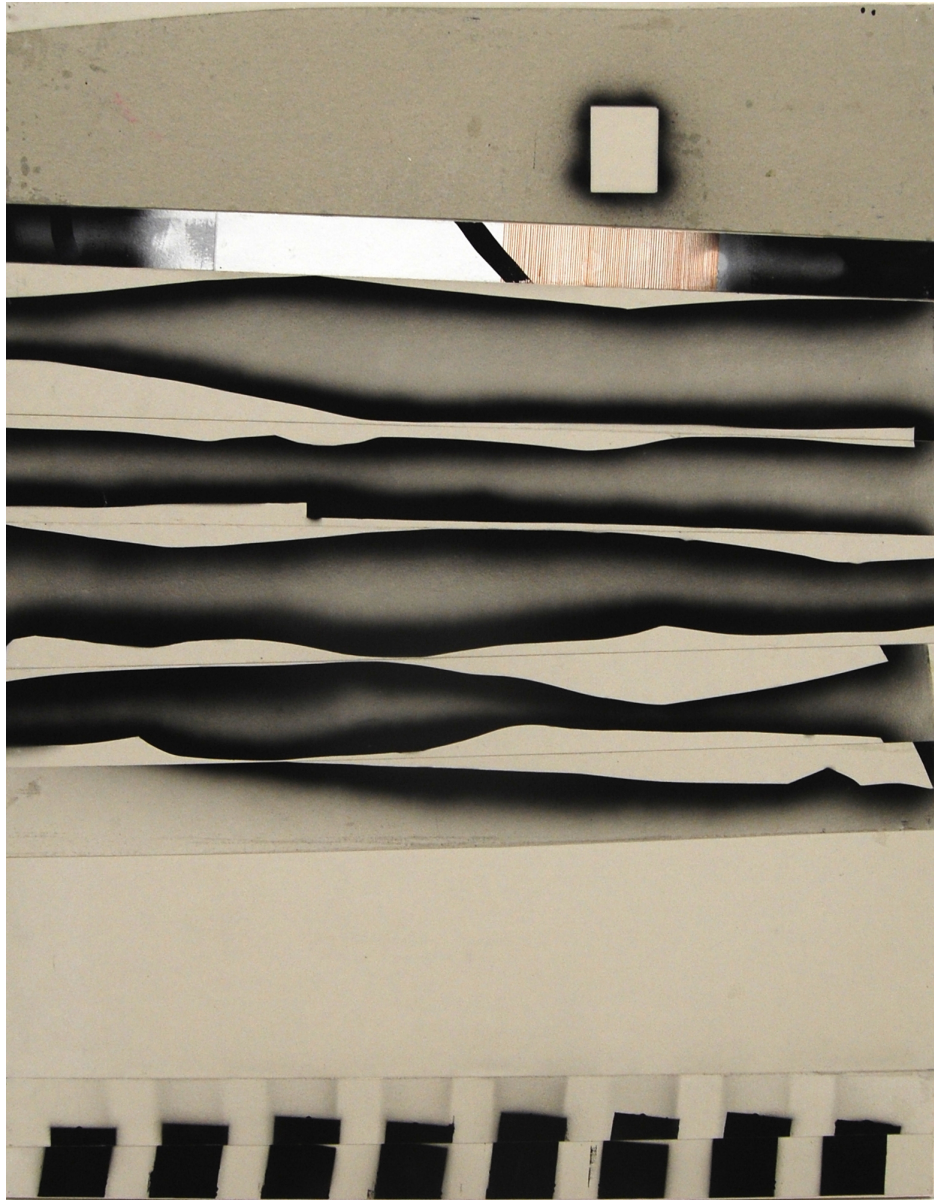
rain.FIGURES.2, 2014
Gouache on paper mounted on canvas
mounted on panel
30 x 22 in.



rain.fragments, 2014
Gouache on paper mounted on canvas
mounted on panel
30 1/4 x 22 in.



z.analytics, 2014
Gouache on paper mounted on canvas
mounted on panel
30 1/2 x 22 3/4 in.



a.series.ofdesert.problems, 2013
Gouache and archival glue on paper
mounted on canvas mounted on panel
28 1/2 x 22 in.

SHAUN O'DELL

Born in Beeville, TX 1968
New College of California, BA in Humanities 2000
Stanford University, MFA 2004
Lives and Works in San Francisco, CA

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2014 "By Cloud", Susan Inglett Gallery, NYC
"Mourning Air", Inman Gallery, Houston, TX
- 2012 Susan Inglett Gallery, NYC
"Ruined", Jack Hanley Gallery, NYC
- 2011 "Shaun O'Dell: Feeling Easy Feelings", Inman Gallery, Houston, TX
"Shaun O'Dell: New Prints and Works on Paper", Paulson Bott Press, Berkeley, CA
- 2010 "Loomings", Susan Inglett Gallery, NYC
"3 + 3", Haines Gallery, San Francisco, CA
- 2009 "Sound From a Rock", Jack Hanley Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
- 2008 "We Remember The Sun", Susan Inglett Gallery, NYC
"Sound From A Rock", Jack Hanley Gallery, San Francisco, CA
- 2007 "Road Ghosts Coming; Landscapes of Blood: From SKULL PILE TO THE SUN", Inman Gallery, Houston, TX
"PORTAL OH! PORTAL", James Harris Gallery, Seattle, WA
- 2006 "Skull Pile To The Sun", Jack Hanley Gallery, San Francisco, CA
- 2005 SECA Award Show, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, CA
- 2004 "Last Stand of the Invisible Hand", James Harris Gallery, Seattle, WA
"Mythoprismatic Extraction Stratigraphy from the Confluence at Titusville Deluge", Jack Hanley Gallery, San Francisco, CA
- 2002 "Errand Projections from Pilgrim Glacier", Southern Exposure Gallery, San Francisco, CA
- 2001 509 Cultural Center, San Francisco, CA
"The Psychic Cinema Archives", Gallery 16, San Francisco, CA
New Image Arts, Los Angeles, CA
Southern Exposure, San Francisco, CA
- 2000 Luggage Store Gallery, San Francisco, CA
"The Horizontal Ascension of an Ouranian Trajectionist", Bing, Oakland, CA
- 1999 ESP, San Francisco, CA

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2013 "INTRODUCTIONS", Philip Slein Gallery, St. Louis, MO
- 2012 dOCUMENTA(13), Kassel, Germany
"In Protest", Berkley Art Museum, CA
"50 Years of Bay Area Art", San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, CA
- 2010 "Go West", organized by UMFA curator Jill Dawsey, Salt Lake Art Center, UT
"3 + 3: Kota Ezawa, Darren Waterston, Shaun O'Dell, Taha Belal, Leslie Shows, Emily Prince", Haines Gallery, San Francisco, CA
- 2009 "The Economy Of The Gift", A Foundation, Liverpool, England
"Moby Dick", (performance) CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Art, San Francisco, CA
"Salt Peanuts", Inman Gallery, Houston, TX
- 2008 "We Remember the Sun", San Francisco Art Institute, San Francisco, CA
"Making History", curated by Yaelle Amir, Jeff Bailey Gallery, NYC
- 2007 "Euphorion", Pierogi, Leipzig, Germany
- 2006 "How to Build a Universe That Doesn't Fall Apart Two Days Later", CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, San Francisco, CA
Some Translations by Harrell Fletcher (Participation in Harrell Fletcher project) In Situ, Paris, France
"The Searchers", White Box, NYC
Artadia Award Show, CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, San Francisco, CA
- 2005 "Consume(d): Acts of Creative and Critical Resistance", Georgian Trade Center, Tbilisi, Russia
"Mental Maps", Dorsky Curatorial Program, Queens, NYC
"Little Odysseys", Marianne Boesky Gallery, NYC
"Eureka: The Eureka Fellowship Awards 2002-2004", Berkeley Art Museum, CA

2004 "First Happiness", University of New York, Albany, NY
"Majority Whip", White Box, NYC
"Storyline", New Langton Arts, San Francisco, CA
Galerie Anne De Villepoix, Paris, France

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Staff, "Shaun O'Dell", THE NEW YORKER, January 2013.
Laluyan, Oscar A., "Shaun O'Dell: Random Acts of Unique Rythms", ARTEFUSE, 26 December 2012.
Haru, Hou, "Paradigm Shifts: Walter and McBean Galleries Exhibitions and Public Programs, San Francisco Art Institute (2006-2011)", San Francisco Art Institute, 2011.
"Fifty Years of Bay Area Art: The SECA Awards", San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2011.
Staff, ARTnews, December 2011.
Britt, Douglas, "Gallery Offerings for Discriminating Tastes", HOUSTON CHRONICLE, 23 May 2011.
Gessen, Keith; La Farge, Paul, "Special Section: Utopia Dystopia", BOOKFORUM, Summer 2010.
Helfland, Glen, "Group Show", ARTFORUM, 14 April 2010.
Harzinski, Kris, "From Here To There: A Curious Collection from the Hand Drawn Map Association", Princeton Architectural Press 2010.
Staff, "'Salt Peanuts' strikes idiosyncratic chord", HOUSTON CHRONICLE, 8 April 2009.
Caroll, Sean, "Critics Picks: 'Salt Peanuts'", ARTFORUM, March 2009.
Harmanci, Reyhan, "'We Remember the Sun': Recalling Revolution", SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE, 19 June 2009.
Maureen, Farrell, "Democratizing the Art World", FORBES, 9 May 2008.
Staff, TIME OUT NEW YORK, 12-19 March 2008.
Weinstein, David, "Art Talk," WPS1.ORG, 25 February 2008.
Staff, ART ON PAPER, July/August 2007.
Kurtz, Katie, "Get Right With the Sun", WORLD CHANGING PRESS, April 2007.
Ryan, Jeffrey, "How To Build A Universe That Doesn't Fall Apart Two Days Later", FRIEZE, March 2007.
McDowell, Tara, "How To Build A Universe That Doesn't Fall Apart Two Days Later", ARTWEEK, January/February 2007.
Gray, Emma, "L.A. Confidential", ARTNET, August 2006.
Feinstein, Lea, "How to Build a Universe That Doesn't Fall Apart Two Days Later", SF WEEKLY, 27 December 2005.
Staff, "The Year in Prints", ART ON PAPER, November/December 2005.
Orden, Abraham, ART PAPERS, October/November 2005.
Smith, Roberta, "Little Odysseys", THE NEW YORK TIMES, 19 August 2005.
Helfand, Glen, "New Drawings in San Francisco", ART ON PAPER, May/June 2005.
Orden, Abraham, ART PAPERS, July/August 2005.
Bing, Alison, "2004 SECA Award", SF GATE, 10 May 2005.
Gagnon, Adrienne, "Draw You In: Four Bay Area Artists Seek Connection", SF WEEKLY, 23 February 2005.
Orden, Abraham, "San Francisco Days", ARTNET, 7 February 2005.
Wagonfeld, Judy, "Shaun O'Dell's 'Last Stand' Drawings Sound a Wake-Up Call", SEATTLE POST INTELLIGENCER, 24 Sept. 2004.
Bing, Alison, "Shaun O'Dell", SF GATE, 16 January 2004.

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

DESTE Foundation, Athens, Greece
FOR-SITE Foundation, Nevada City, NV
Hallmark Art Collection, Kansas City, MO
JP Morgan Chase Collection, NYC
Kadist Foundation, San Francisco, CA
M.H. de Young Memorial Museum, San Francisco, CA
Microsoft, Seattle, WA
Museum of Modern Art, NYC
Progressive Insurance Collection, Chicago, IL
Rene di Rosa Art and Nature Preserve, Napa, CA
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, CA
UC Berkeley Museum, CA
UCSF, San Francisco, CA
Whitney Museum of American Art, NYC

SHAUN O'DELL

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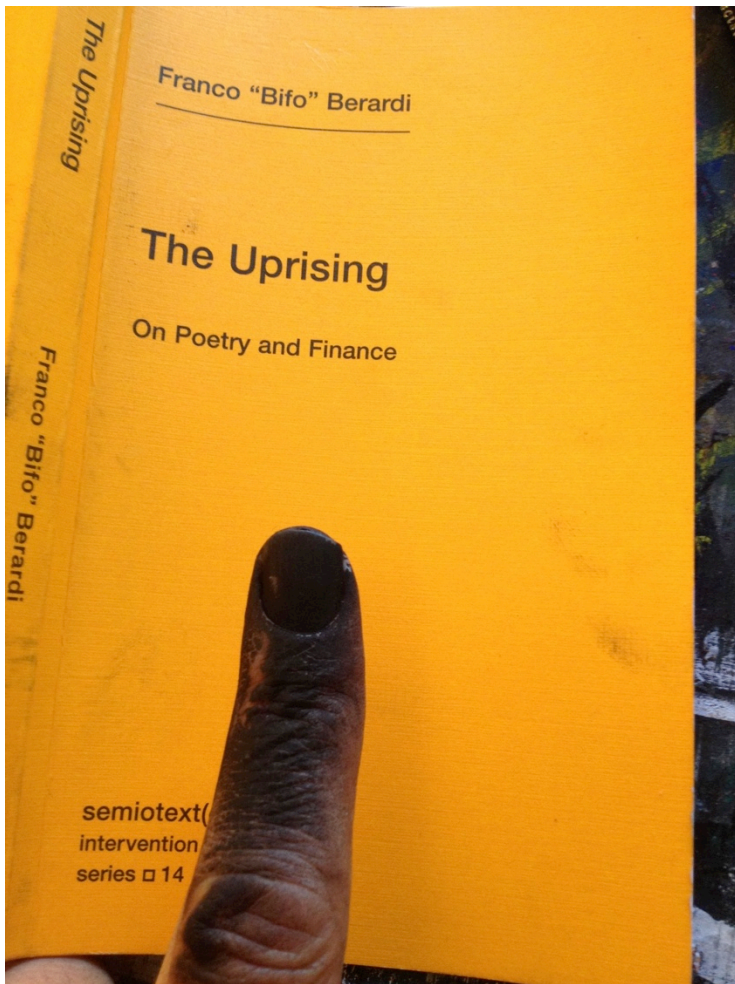
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ENDNOTES: Monday, Nov 3, 5:17pm



... and the market for self-preservation are speaking the same language; and they are telling them that it has to be so. (Sloterdijk 1988, 5)

Contemporary mass cynicism can be linked to two different sources: the failure of twentieth-century utopian ideologies, and the perception that the exploitation of labor, competition, and war are inevitable and irreversible. Mass cynicism results from the dissolution of social solidarity. Globalization and the systemic precariousness of the labor market resulting from neoliberal deregulation have

imposed competition as the inescapable, generalized mode of relation among social actors. Workers, once linked by a sense of social solidarity and common political hope, are now forced to think in cynical terms: survival of the fittest.

Within the '68 movement, different cultures and political tendencies coexisted. Some dreamed

