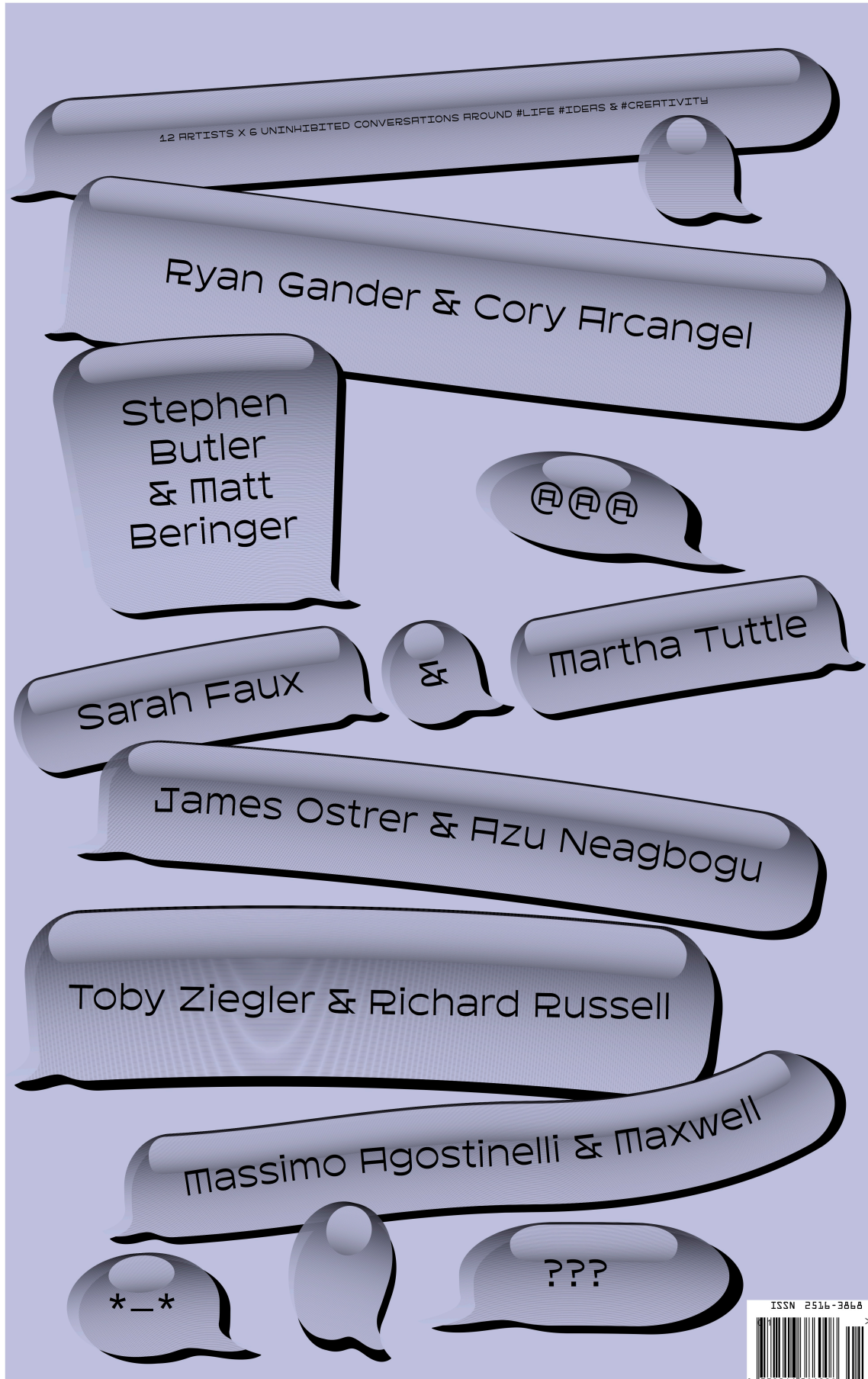


# ART OF CONVERSATION

Free news paper. 12 artists X 6 uninhibited conversations around #life #ideas & #creativity

Autumn 2018 £5.00



Human creativity creates the context we use to understand the world we're in. We've used it like this for millennia, but that first painted hand on the cave wall didn't just happen. There was an idea behind it.

The idea might have come from one, powerfully conceptual individual, or it might have come from a conversation. It changed the world. And then it happened again, and again and again.

And because we've all seen it happen again and again and again, we know at an instinctive level that a creative idea is incredibly powerful. We respond to that power even when we don't fully understand the processes that cause it.

Art of Conversation is a space to start understanding the origins of powerful creative ideas.

We've invited some of the world's most creative thinkers to document a conversation with someone they creatively connect with, and then we've left them to it. We haven't shaped the conversations and we haven't edited; we've just provided big, beautiful newspaper pages with enough space for big ideas to breathe.

You'll find us where conversations about creative ideas happen; where artists and those interested in art gather. The conversations documented here don't stop because we've printed them. Your involvement will make this more interesting. If you have thoughts on what you read here then come and say hi if we're in the same space, or email us at [ideas@RofC.co](mailto:ideas@RofC.co)

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Mark

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#### INNERSLEEVE ARTWORK

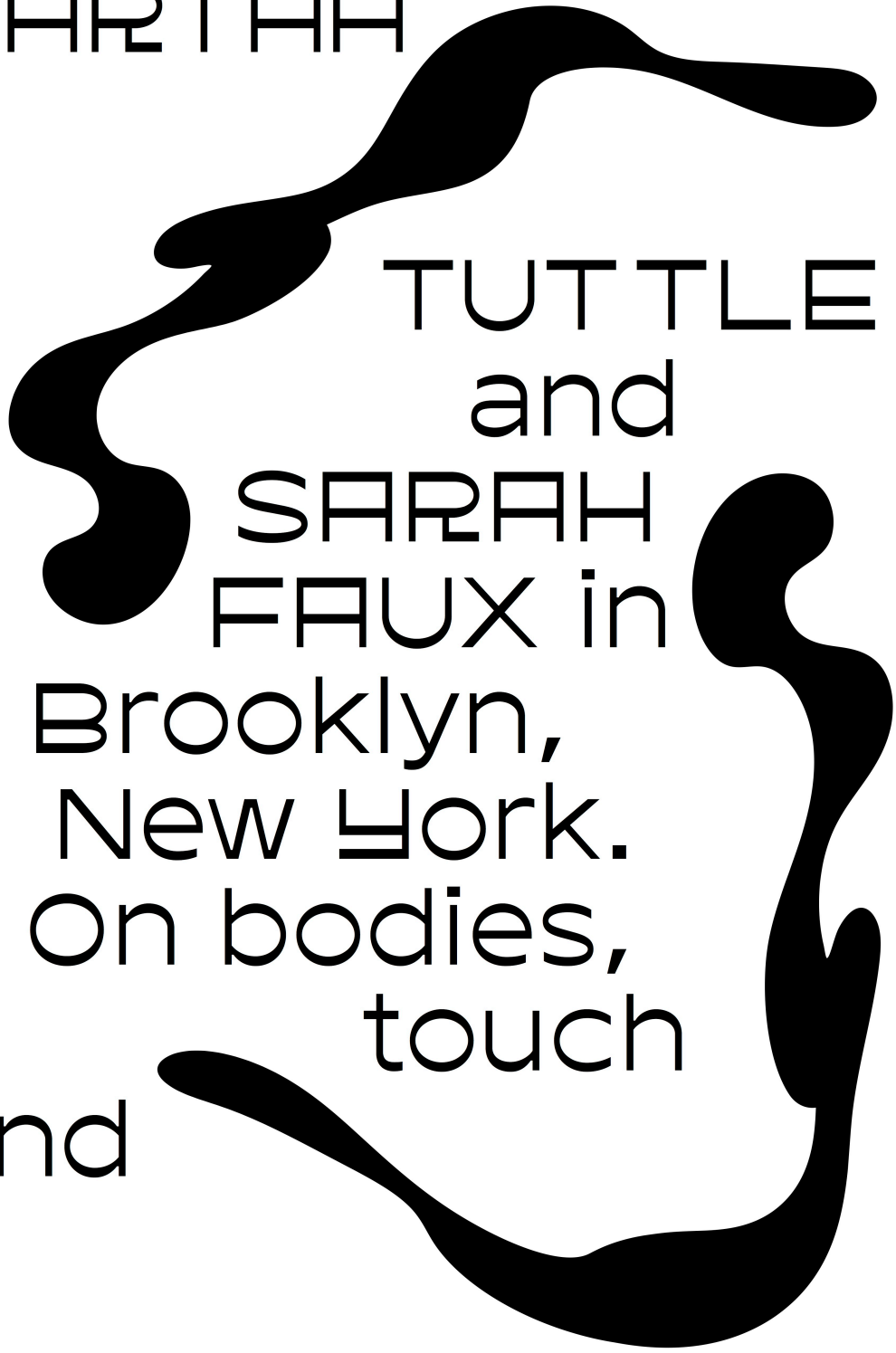
Stephen Butler, Parts of Speech 2017, Liquitex on canvas, 24x18in  
Stephen Butler has created a unique adaptation of a painting from his 'Parts of Speech'  
series for the inaugural edition of RofC. Printed on the inside cover sheet of this issue it is the first in a  
series of collectible pullovers. An edition of 50 signed and augmented Innersleeve artworks by Stephen  
Butler are available for purchase for more details visit:  
[www.RofC.co](http://www.RofC.co)

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MARTHA



TUTTLE

and

SARAH  
FAUX in

Brooklyn,  
New York.

On bodies,  
touch

and

meditation



SF: I was thinking about all the rocks and the addition of rocks into your paintings and how that's connected to Zen gardens and things. And I'm wondering what you're thinking about that. And I had more specific questions for you.

MT: I had questions for you too do you want to switch off or I don't know how to do this --

SF: -- or I can ask you about rock stuff and then you could see if there's anything that's interesting?

MT: Sure. So yeah, I mean first I feel like the act of walking and collecting anything is such a human impulse and it is a meditative one, like looking at the ground, understanding your surroundings on a very small scale, so that's how the rocks first started coming into my work, just through purely picking them up and having them in this studio. Then I was just thinking about the kinds of objects that you hold with you and thinking about worry stones and prayer beads and then having the fan-tasy that through such extreme emotion one could transform something through touch into another material. That the transformation would be the record of intense emotion or a thought --

SF: Within paintings or works?

MT: Specifically with the stones from stone to steel. With this last project that I've been doing for the gallery in Italy there's 250 cast stones and 400 real stones and in my studio I've been enjoying taking off my shoes and socks and making constellations with my toes and that feels good. Like Zen Gardening or dancing. And I think a lot of Joan Jonas performing and painting--

SF: Are you going to make people walk over the stones? Is this something you've been thinking about?

MT: Well yeah I've been thinking about it a lot because even in my space when I know they're there, I accidentally kick them places like often it takes a little bit of adjustment to realize that there are small things on the floor. So I imagine that people probably will kick them. I'm not worried about them being damaged because they're stone and steel, but I have been thinking about it. It might be stressful for somebody to feel like they kicked art --

SF: Or it could feel really gratifying that they're encouraged to step on things. Like when I was like 18 and realized that you are allowed to step on a Carl Andre. I would go to the museum to step on it and then tell the guard 'I'm allowed to step on it!'

MT: Does it make you feel anxious though? It makes me feel really anxious because I really want to do it and then I have to work up the courage and every time in every setting --

SF: -- it feels really, yeah. I think it makes me feel triumphant. Like, 'Ahaha you're not so precious after all!' I don't know. And I, I think I felt some kind of triumph that I knew I was allowed to, I felt like I had an insider knowledge that I'm allowed to do this, the artist intended this.

MT: That is a hidden part of it - in Marfa -- there the Andre's go over the stone path so they feel like rocks in the river. And you stand on them outside, and can look out into that west Texas

landscape. They're kind of unnatural works in general, but seeing them in that context. That humanized them a lot for me. I think after that I became more comfortable with stepping on them in an artificial space or a gallery space.

SF: That makes sense. Well I was thinking about with rocks I feel like your work is clearly connected to meditation and thinking about your paintings as facilitating meditation or -- have you been to Japan? You've probably been --

MT: I went to Japan a year and a half ago.

SF: Oh, you went on your own, right? Yeah, I remember.

MT: Yeah, I had a free ticket voucher.

SF: So did you go to Kyoto? Did you go to the rock garden? Ry an-ji. It's the most famous Zen rock garden.

MT: I did and I was prepared to -- I think the tricky thing with Zen, is that it's had such an impact in my life and then there's a big part of me that feels still inappropriate to love it --

SF: Because it's not the culture you're born into or?

MT: Yeah, I think because it's not the culture I was born into.

SF: But aren't you practicing Zen meditation?

SF: We have gone together before - I know your secret!

MT: When I was in Kanazawa, I went to see D.T Suzuki's museum. He was the guy who kind of brought Zen Buddhism to the US so to speak and he gave a bunch of lectures at Columbia -- I think in the fifties which Reinhardt, John Cage and Rgenes mar-tin

went to and were influenced by. It always fascinates me how like one lecture can really shape the course of things --

SF: That is crazy to think about, especially when the way that information spread was less rapid!

MT: Totally but maybe even more so because of that or, I don't know, like one summer of Black Mountain and being at Black Mountain and Cage and Cunningham being able to dance together there. I think it really did shape the course of 20th century art history, but it's just one little moment of probably drinking beers and hanging out. Anyway in the Suzuki Museum, there are these beautiful pools of water and it started raining and it dropped these ripples in the water and in my memory, those little ripples and the rock gardens are very conflated.

SF: I saw that garden when it was Fall, so the leaves were insane in the park around the Temple. So that's when I remember it, the colour was so, so intense. It was really overwhelming. It's the most intense natural colour I've ever experienced -- to be in Japan in the Fall, or Kyoto in the Fall.

MT: You lived in Japan for a year?

SF: Less than a year, but I was there for half a year --

MT: So still pretty intense. I mean you were in your early twenties, right? What made you want to go to Japan?

SF: I studied Japanese when I was in high school and college and was really interested in modernist Japanese literature and how they were in a repressed culture where things, especially sex and violence would be so intense in these novels. Like there's a lot of like BDSM stuff in Mishima or other modernist writers that I feel really appealed to my angst high school self that it was just, it felt just kind of explosive -- the way teenage energy is kind of explosive. So I was really into that.

MT: Can you -- is there an example that sticks with you? Like a book or a scene from a book?

SF: I mean there was a lot that I was into

at the time -- there's a book that Mishima wrote called 'Confessions of a Mask' -- Did you read that?

MT: Yeah

SF: It's repressed homosexuality and then mutilating his own body and all this intensity. I remember more of the feelings from it. You maybe remember more than I do --

MT: No, I read it a while ago. You're making me think also of Mishima's The Temple of the Golden Pavilion. That ability to show an internal complexity of a person is just mind blowing to me. And even in translation, I'm sure you were able to read it partially in Japanese.

SF: No - my Japanese was at a middle school level --- let's say 6th grade. But yeah, no, that one. And the guy has a club foot. I think there's something grotesque that comes through in that and in

Jap-

anese mod-

with him

his foot

and feel-

that

ermism,

dragging

around

ing

he's un-

desir-

able in

society

--

MT: and

post-war --

SF: yeah, but the

scene from that stuck

with me forever and that

makes me crazy is, at the

beginning his dad has been

telling him about this temple

and he goes to visit it for the

first time and it's disappointing. But

there's a model of the temple in the

lobby of the temple and he's way more

into the model than the temple itself. I

read that in college and I thought, oh

my god, this is about art. Like the symbolic

construction of something can be

better --

MT: Yeah of course! Well it's also and maybe that is in my limited experience, a hallmark of Japanese modernist literature is the ability to see something very simple, which is that an idea or a model of a thing can mean so much more than the actual experience. But then, in that simple thing, being able to show how much it can wrench your heart or call to action --

SF: Well there's something really poignant about identifying more with the model. It is almost like him not being able to be fully in the world or something there's some, there's some kind of weird distancing that happens if you are the type of person who would prefer the model. There's a loneliness to it -- that I can identify with.

MT: Have you read that book? I'm trying to think of the title. Um, it's by Kenzaburo Oe...?

SF: A Personal Matter?

MT: Yeah

SF: Yeah that one's crazy!

MT: Yeah and the idea of this deformed baby, but it actually was fine. And that the two things totally coexist, this feel-



Like Zen Gardening or dancing

ing of something being horribly and irreparably deformed and then actually salvageable. That's really interesting to me. But then that last part where that teacher told them to look up hope in the dictionary or something. And then in the end, like the last line of the book is like "and he opened the dictionary and he decided I'm not going to look up hope I'm going to instead look up the word for forbearance" I don't know -- that really gets me. So one of the questions I actually had for you is - how has your relationship to meditation shifted in the last year and also do you see it affecting your practice?

SF: That's a good question. When I started meditating it was with you and Marcela probably almost two years ago, which is cool. But, um --

MT: I guess then my question should be how has your relationship to meditation developed in the past two years?

ST: I feel like I always thought that I should be meditating and then I started doing it with you guys. It was like everything that I think about in painting made manifest in this real experience because it's so much about the connection between physicality and emotion and experiencing your own thoughts as sensation which I've always thought about in painting and it's like I have to make paintings that are experienced both primarily as sensory abstract experiences, but also they have to have more cerebral image constructions in them. Because that's how reality is to me, you know, so it has to be both things at once to feel like it's doing what I wanted to do. But I feel like meditation - it's kind of clarifying. It's like everything I learned in meditation will be like, Oh, right.

MT: Can you say again this distinction, the sensorial experience, the real or the referential? Is that the distinction you were making?

SF: Yeah, I feel like within painting or -- yeah, I want my paintings to be on the edge of being experienced as something that someone could process cerebrally, like this is an image of a woman and she has her legs open. Then at the same time not being sure if actually it should be processed as "the centre of this painting is just a throbbing red area" or some kind of pulsing warmth or something like that. And I think meditation just helps. It helps me connect my emotions to the physical sensation. I mean the most obvious thing that I think everybody knows if they have meditated is if you're getting stressed out to try and relax your stomach -- to know that somewhere in your front body, is holding the tension of your stress, and so to be aware that your physical tension actually controls partially how you're processing your emotion and vice versa.

MT: And that the boundaries are very porous between the two.

SF: Yeah, so I find that it helps me identify kind of a floating, ambiguous --- to tune into what is actually good --

MT: which feels very significant for the moments that you choose to paint or not. It's a moment of, well, of two things coming together or extremes -- I've been reading Ovid a lot, the Metamorphoses and I love, love, love that it's page after page of extreme emotion or sensation - shifting mat-

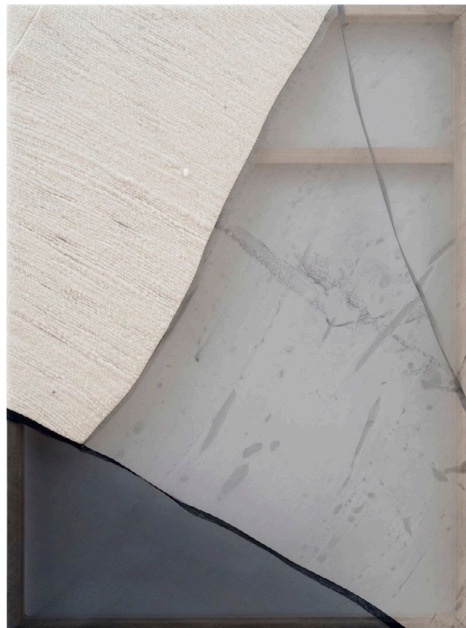
ter from one into other matter, through fear of running away from Apollo, turning into a tree or through the anger of competition, Athena turning Ariadne into a spider. That idea that one thing goes into something else by sensation, emotion, sensorial experience feels very related to your work. But also I love - if I'm understanding you correctly - that meditation or maybe finding this spaciousness can make you aware of your own experience of it while you're working.

SF: I love what you're saying about shifting matter because that seems a connector in both of our work, like thinking about what you're doing with materials like wool and silk. How I would think about it all through oil paint but it would be a similar kind of impulse of this painting needing to have an area that's really loose and washy and kind of slipping away and something that's really concrete and hard and it's a flat surface. There's some kind of meeting there -- because our work looks so different from each other. But I do feel like we think about similar things sometimes.

MT: Yeah, I guess I'm always really interested in what is that instance when they touch. Because anything can get used to anything else, but but to think about the charge of the first touch between two different matters and the emerging space between them after that moment -- that feels very erotic, not just in a sexual way, but I feel like maybe both of our works deal with this.

SF: Do you think of your work as erotic?

MT: Yeah, I think about the erotic a lot, I think. Well I'd be curious about what your definition of erotic is because mine is always shifting --



SF: I'm not sure because I feel like it's such a wide category. The erotic can become like the erotics of blah blah blah. Like the erotics of material. The erotics of anything really. But I mean, my work like has sex in it so - images of sex - so I feel like it has to inevitably come up --

MT: But I feel like the erotic in your work is, yes images of sex but it's also in the materiality of it and the exploration of touch and one quality next to another.

SF: Well, all of the paintings that I'm making right now for the Shanghai show are all one figure on each canvas. So I mean they're abstract paintings, but each one is based on one body. So what you're saying is maybe even truer right now where it's like within one body, what if part of you feels hard or part of you feels soft and part of you

feels like it doesn't want to be seen and part does want to be seen. So thinking about how people present themselves and when they're constructing themselves, how -- like I guess I think about veils and transparency and what do you show and what do you hide, what do you want, where do you feel concrete? So each painting has kind of a different take on that for me.

MT: I guess that relationship between distance and absorption gets to where I define erotic. I think desire, desire is a lot of it, but desire is to me both, the existence of distance somehow also closing it. How desire or longing can bring a person closer to something that if they already possessed it, and took it for a given.

SF: It's actually really related to something I was thinking about. I think -- but I couldn't articulate it, but I'm thinking about distance. It's similar to the thing that we were talking about before, about the temple that there's some way in which you standing in it is less powerful than it being apart from you.

MT: Exactly. Exactly. And I think that there can be this experience of being apart that actually makes you feel more with. For example, maybe it's the moment between a hard material on a soft material where they just comes together before the distance is completely melted. Touching with the tips of your fingertips rather than fully grasping and suddenly the space becomes charged. Does that make sense?

SF: It make sense to me. Yeah. I've been thinking a lot about hiding and concealing cause I want the ambiguity in my paintings to be really in your face, but then there's this weird thing of this dual impulse of -- being ambiguous is not being in your face. Being ambiguous is being a bit cagey and kind of evading being categorized. It's sort of a sneaky way to work around a quick read of your paintings

MT: Do you know what the etymology of ambiguous is? I mean, ambi is both.

SF: Shall we look it up?

MT: Yeah. Do you feel like it's dishonest to be ambiguous?

SF: No. I feel like it's more honest to feel -- it is a driving force because it feels more true to my own experience in thinking about sexuality. I think a lot about being both objectified and then objectifying yourself and then being lost in sensations or really detached. There's so many different roles that people play in relationship to other people.

MT: Most practically for me, the way that I see my work as erotic -- is because the way I've learned how to touch material is through touching other people and vice versa. At the same time, however I find a huge sense of empathy when I read someone like Teresa of Avila, Hildegard von Bingen, who talk about an intense desire for a union with God, especially after experiencing small moments of God's presence through prayer or other ecstatic experiences. How that kind of experience of closeness can evoke an overwhelming desire to be closer to things -- but way more intimate than the boundaries of skin or the boundaries of material allow. Erotic closeness becomes defined for me as a kind of intimacy of spirit. That's what gets really interesting. To me this is an interesting ambiguity. Both closeness and distance at once.

SF: To drive in both ways. Ambi means both ways and here in Latin means to drive, to waver or go around - and then ambiguous: it meant doubtful and now it means obscure.

MT: Interesting.

SF: But I like to drive both ways. I mean when I think about being in between figuration and abstraction, which I guess are the terms I end up having to use, but um, my drive is in both directions and sometimes those impulses are more in harmony and sometimes they're totally clash-

It's sort of a sneaky way to work around a quick read of your paintings

ing. Sometimes the abstraction, the paint itself and the narrative image in it are connected with each other, which is a way that I experience reality sometimes. But I was thinking about when you were talking about touching material and thread -- about how you were like an ER person or like an EMT. And just kind of how maybe that healing touch can be connected to developing the work that you're now mak-

ing. Do you see that as connected or?  
 MT: That's such an interesting thing to say -  
 yeah, yeah, I totally see it as connected.  
 Because as an EMT it's coming into  
 a person in an extreme situation  
 and not knowing anything about  
 them other than what their body  
 needs at that one moment and  
 in that split moment think-  
 ing about how you can  
 help them alleviate  
 stress or pain.  
 I'm interested  
 in medicine  
 in general,  
 I think  
 way that  
 ness is  
 inter-  
 to me,  
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Erotic closeness becomes defined for me as a kind of intimacy of spirit. That's what gets really interesting.

experiential. It's such a primal experience.  
 I think often I go out  
 through the day and  
 don't remember  
 that I'm a  
 physical be-  
 ing  
 and  
 when you  
 feel pain, that's the only thing  
 you're aware of. But I think  
 what's still unclear to me is the re-  
 lationship between extreme physical  
 pain and extreme emotional pain. And as  
 you say, there's the sensorial experience  
 and the mind experience are they are not  
 actually different ones. Can I ask you how  
 you would answer the same question?

SF: The question was about pain? Yeah, I  
 mean, I guess in my own work, there's  
 always a fractured sense of reality and  
 the reality of being in a body. Not every-  
 body feels fractured in their day to day. I  
 think some people feel really whole all the  
 time. But I don't, and I don't mind feel-  
 ing fractured - I like the way that I ex-  
 perience the world. It's interesting to me.

it released this torrent of  
 emotion that was so  
 intense. I was  
 super dis-  
 oriented.  
 I was  
 in Bos-  
 ton and  
 went to  
 my mom's  
 acupunc-  
 turists in the  
 suburbs and then driving  
 back to her house I got lost  
 and was crying and just couldn't  
 handle my shit at all and it was  
 because of the acupuncture

SF: But in talking about distance and  
 things that aren't touchable, do you think  
 there's something weird about the fact  
 that we can't touch our organs. Know what  
 I mean?

MT: Yeah, well, you're touching them all the  
 time, but what is actually --- that was  
 the question I have for you, well, what is  
 touch? Do you think about training your  
 touch and if so, how do you do?

SF: So within paintings?

MT: I guess however you want to answer that  
 question.

SF: Yeah, I mean I think I've  
 been really into this absorbent ground  
 that Dani helped me develop, every-  
 thing gets absorbed really quickly and  
 I feel like the surface that I'm work-  
 ing on is more responsive than other  
 surfaces - because a regular gesso  
 you could wipe it off and it'd be like  
 you'd never touched it at all. But this  
 surface -- you can't get rid of your  
 touch, you touch it and then it's there.

MT: Well I guess just in talking  
 about how we don't think that we  
 touch our organs, it's hard to feel in-  
 timate with the insides of your body.  
 Touch and sight are so connected for  
 us that it's hard for us to feel like we're  
 touching things that we don't see.  
 That feels very related to both of our  
 work and why it needs to be a visual  
 experience.

SF: Is there something like really  
 specific that you're thinking about?  
 MT: um, I think I experience  
 touch in my work as a physical sen-  
 sation more than I would in a daily  
 sense. And that's kind of why I would  
 look at a painting - to have something  
 more than I could experience on a  
 day to day sensorial level.

SF: Yeah, I mean I guess there's  
 the idea of mirror touch and that when  
 you're painting or when you're look-  
 ing at a painting, your eye follows the  
 way that the mark was made. So even  
 if you don't quite understand how the  
 mark was made, you're still, kind of  
 following the trajectory of moving up  
 and down or things dripping. There's  
 a feeling of gravity and movement and  
 weight and that you are simultaneou-  
 sly experiencing that sensation. Sort of  
 like if you had a dream and like you can't  
 fly, but you sort of know what it feels like.  
 I feel like that about painting sometimes.  
 If I'm looking at a painting and the vis-  
 ceral way that it's been touched, there's a  
 sort of simultaneous re-experiencing.

MT: Does the state of mind that you're in affect  
 the work you're making? If you're thinking  
 about something or distracting, can you  
 tell it when you look at the painting -- an  
 actual moment?

SF: Oh, I have to be in a certain state of mind  
 that's much more - like I'll be listening  
 to NPR all day and then when I actually  
 have to paint I'll put on some kind of mu-  
 sic that's really familiar to me. That's really  
 comfortable. That evokes a weird nostalgia  
 or an extreme joy. Do you feel like you have  
 to be in a certain state of mind?

MT: Yeah, well at the very least I feel like it  
 shows like if I'm distracted it just feels  
 tighter or looser. It's so affected by my  
 body movements that if my muscles are  
 tight because I'm stressing about some-  
 thing, it shows up in the work - but I'm  
 also so easily emotionally influenced that  
 it's actually kind of easy to trick myself into  
 being in the right mood with a particular  
 song reading a passage --

SF: what are you listening to now? Like what  
 music were you put on or is it mostly se-  
 cret?

MT: I've been really obsessed with Alice Col-  
 trane. What about you?

SF: I think I like tend to want to be in a hy-  
 per emotional state, so whatever it is, to  
 be feeling it a bit too much, sometimes I'll



SF: Pain is so ambiguous. I'm doing  
 physical therapy right now  
 because I injured my back and  
 the doctor asked what lev-  
 el is your pain, and I'm like, I  
 don't know, like a 7? I don't  
 know, what level is other peo-  
 ple's pain? And then you don't  
 remember exactly how pain felt  
 afterwards.

MT: What we learned in our EMT  
 training is that that pain scale is  
 only relevant in thinking about  
 the individual. If we have these  
 20 minutes together, I can  
 say Sarah what's your pain?  
 And you say seven, and then  
 I asked you in 20 minutes and  
 you say nine, then I understand

that you're getting worse. But yeah, as you  
 say one person's seven is another person's  
 three. It's totally a vast scale but I think  
 that's also really beautiful in a way it's this  
 universal measuring device that actually  
 is only relevant when it's related to a one  
 person.

SF: Yeah. That was the thing I was going to  
 ask you about. I was thinking about the  
 work that you made a few years ago at the  
 end of school and the way that you were  
 connecting things to each other with a  
 tube, like the material choice was litera-  
 lly connected to medicine and the body in  
 that work, and I was just wondering if you  
 think about physical pain within the work  
 you're making now.

MT: That's a big question. It's a very import-  
 ant question. Just quickly, I went to the  
 Bronx Botanical Garden yesterday with  
 Brook, and I saw the orchids and there  
 were these really elaborate tubing systems  
 to get them water. They were spread out.  
 That was so beautiful to me and I guess  
 a tube obviously is something that moves  
 liquid from one place to another and that  
 is a medical device, but it's also ---

SF: I mean maybe I'm projecting something  
 into it --

MT: No no, I mean, one of the most import-  
 ant books for me is the *The Body in Pain*  
 by Elaine Scarry, um, which we've talked  
 about. I mean, I guess the most direct  
 question that I'm interested in answering  
 is what happens when you're in extreme  
 pain? and I think it's related to medita-  
 tion in that you can -- you switch into this  
 singular focus. That's really interesting to  
 me, also that pain transcends. It's purely

I think it comes from when I was a kid  
 having health issues and then I had sur-  
 gery when I was young so -- like my body  
 was a porous thing that somebody cut and  
 sewed again when I was really little and  
 very impressionable. And there's some-  
 thing in that that then has shaped the  
 way that I experience body awareness  
 -- maybe having some kind of awareness  
 from an early age that you have organs -

MT: And then when you think about your kid-  
 ney, you imagine a kidney in a textbook  
 rather than this thing you're extremely inti-  
 mate with.

SF: Yeah, but I never make paintings that are  
 about physical pain.

MT: But it's interesting when the body is the  
 subject matter in an artwork or -- I don't  
 mean to speak for you but just that what  
 happens to my body becomes like 'inter-  
 esting' instead of this other thing, when I  
 feel pain. It's like, oh that's so interesting.

SF: Yeah when I'm going to physical therapy  
 I think: "this is very interesting" and also  
 it's mildly erotic. Feeling my body move in  
 a new way.

MT: Yeah, I have been getting acupuncture  
 and it really affects me. I know for some  
 people it doesn't affect them at all. And  
 whether it was psychosomatic from me or  
 not - but this idea of like energy points  
 -- I got treated for cold and right after I  
 shot up with fever and was sick and then it  
 went away.

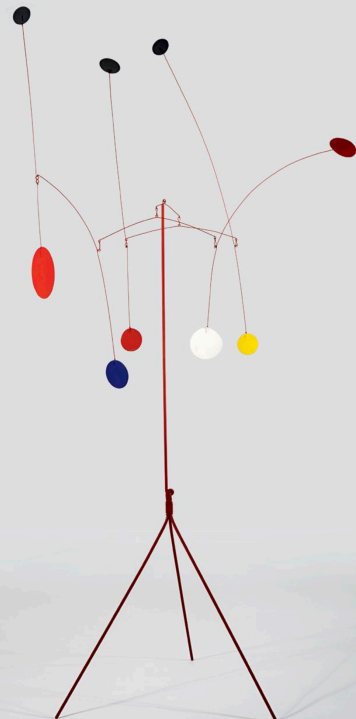
SF: The one time I got acupuncture for back  
 pain and it didn't cure my back pain, but

- put the same song on repeat or two songs that are book ends of each other and put that in a loop. One is the happy part and one is the sad part. I feel like that works pretty well, but a lot of times I'm putting on something really upbeat and pop-y that gets me the energy that I need, and it's a little hyperactive. But yeah, I don't know. Wouldn't it be different though if you're sewing?
- MT: Well with spinning or weaving I don't listen to anything - but when I'm actually making the pieces and I am more careful about what I have on.
- SF: Like if you're arranging?
- MT: Yeah because then the energy that your body is feeling by hearing music affects the choices and the compositions that come out of it. And I used to feel kind of like, oh that's not as serious. But recently I have been feeling differently. Even whatever the most popular songs are, they are popular for a reason. Like the definition of popular is that they affect many people. And so to be one of many feels actually really important when making work.
- SF: I thought it was so cool that your image was used for that Claudia Rankine play because that felt like your work was accessible to -- if we're thinking about pop, -- it made me really happy to see that somebody outside of the art world could feel super connected to your work in this literary way -
- MT: Thank you. Well really any time where I feel like my work can go out and be felt or understood in a way that can speak to our current culture. I don't think that at every moment in history art and community have always needed each other, but my person-
- al feeling is that at this moment right now art and people are so inextricably linked and it's important to me in my practice that it can reach out and touch other people or link to this world. Do you think about that?
- SF: Yeah, I mean I feel like I want to make things that suck people in and then they're in it and they have to battle it out, that's important to me.
- MT: Who do you feel in dialogue with contemporary artists or musicians or even an idea or a song, or a book?
- SF: I mean Maggie Nelson. To make something that's inspiring on so many different registers. There's theory, there's personal narrative, there's reverberations of that into literature, art history. I like to think that the paintings that I'm making, they're very collage based in their origins. And painting is just like that - really rhizomatic you know, where it's connected to a million things at once.
- MT: but I think that's actually really interesting to me because so much of the way Maggie Nelson is about questioning appropriation. The texts that she takes from incorporated into her own and that your paintings in some ways -- could be appropriating from your collage and I think that's how I imagine her practice would be: reading and collecting moments and how they all come together.
- SF: -- and it's, I mean, I guess allowing things to be inconclusive, just kind of an unspoken, an amalgamation of things. Do you have people that you're want to be connected to?
- MT: Yeah, I made a list of artists whom I was most influenced by recently - contempo-
- rary from our generation. And for the most part they were young women, uh, working with material based sculptural practices. Um, but ones that showed perhaps the porousness of things, so someone like Anicka Li. I love her. Anything that evokes malleability of matter or boundaries not being set really gets my heart fluttering. So you, where do you think you're going - with your own work or in life? Just in general. However you feel like answering.
- SF: I feel like I've felt this drive that I had to say everything all at once, immediately, especially leaving school and then putting work out in the world. Now I feel a lot more slow. That could be an effect of meditation also, but I feel like this group all deals with one type of absorbcency and the next group might have a really different surface. Like maybe before I'd make 20 paintings that were all different from each other and now I can make 20 bodies of work out of each one.
- MT: My first thought is that is a beautiful meditation -- one thing at a time and I imagine that the more you do it, the more it would be broken down more and more and more, but in another way it feels like that not needing to be everything, just needing to be one thing and one thing being able to carry a whole body of work or a whole show.
- SF: Yeah and I spent years wondering when I would develop a body of work, but what is a body of work? It's also interesting that it's called body -- See I find that fundamentally weird. If there's this assumption of body and wholeness, I don't know if I can get with that --

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