

Derosia

Christopher Bollen, Interview Magazine, December 2, 2015

Interview



Whitney Clafin

By Christopher Bollen

Photography Christian MacDonald

AGE: 32.

ORIGINALLY FROM: Providence, RI.

CURRENTLY LIVE: Brooklyn.

GALLERY: Real Fine Arts, New York.

DESCRIPTION OF WORK: Painting, writing, performance. I make whatever I want whenever I want, but not everyone sees everything.

WHEN YOU FIRST CONSIDERED YOURSELF A FULL-TIME ARTIST: The idea of a “full-time artist,” as I have been hearing the term lately, is a totally false notion constructed by poseurs and capitalist

pigs. When you're making work, you're making work. You can't expect anyone to look at it or give a shit, ever. If you don't have the strength to work through this reality, or in spite of it, you're not making art, you're making objects or scenarios or moments that service capitalism.

THE MOST CHALLENGING OR SUCCESSFUL WORK YOU'VE MADE: There's a language-based piece that I recently re-performed that has been very difficult for me to reengage with. It's performative and requires participation, which is challenging to orchestrate in gallery settings. The piece works best when it's an intimate scenario, like an apartment, but then you're left with the problem of limited access, when the piece is meant to encourage cooperation, interaction, and lowering fences between people who otherwise might not be super-inclined to interact. The whole piece is actually much more accessible than my paintings are but is far more difficult to make visible.

THE MOST SURPRISING REACTION TO YOUR WORK YOU'VE RECEIVED: OMG, one time some lady told me that I should be worried that my makeup, jewelry, and clothing too closely resembled my art, and that because I'm a woman I should check that. I was like, "Bitch, please." I will literally take an earring out of my ear and sew it into a painting if I feel like that is what the work is asking for. I tend to shop for makeup for my art, and then I use it on my face if I feel like I'm cool with how it looks on me. My work has, like, two rooms—a room for just me and a room for me and everyone else that may see it.

THE BEST THING ABOUT BEING AN ARTIST IN NEW YORK: Participating in a collective fantasy.

THE WORST: Real estate.

DOES THE CURRENT ART WORLD FOSTER OR DEVOUR TALENT? There are many current art worlds; the one I'm choosing to interact with professionally right now as an artist and employee absolutely devours talent. It's savage, duh. So many people making gross things for worse reasons. It's exhausting and aggravates my depression. But there are other art worlds that exist in my mind, in a handful of my friendships, and, like, in moments between raindrops that are more loving and generative than anything else I've encountered so far in life.

