

LOOKIE-LOOKIE

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Posted by Lookie-Lookie

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TEN PAINTERS ON DOUBT

Beverly Acha

"Conception" cannot precede "execution." Before expression, there is nothing but a vague fever, and only the work itself, completed and understood, will prove that there was something rather than nothing to be found there."

- Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Cezanne's Doubt"

Beverly Acha shares writing by ten painters from her forthcoming book, to be published in 2019, "Artists in the Studio: On Doubt." The project brings together a diverse group of contemporary artist's musings on the role of doubt in their artistic practices. With little published writing on doubt in art and Maurice Merleau-Ponty's seminal essay "Cezanne's Doubt" having been written over half a century ago, Acha approached contemporary artists to gather their experiences of doubt in their studios. It feels apt that in this moment we are facing, among many other cultural, social and political challenges, the effects of valuing confidence, certainty, and productivity over doubt, questioning, and exploration. Here, ten painters offer their thoughts on, experiences with, and ways of approaching doubt.

Kristy Luck



"Land Bouquet," 2018, Oil and wax on canvas, 20 x 16 inches. <http://www.kristyluck.com>

I tend to experience doubt many times throughout the making process. Primarily when I've been working on one piece to the extent that I no longer seem to know what is or isn't important anymore. But it is also there in moments when everything seems disposable or when I take a break and return to my studio and find I am unable to gain momentum.

My experience of doubt comes in the form of feeling out of balance. As if looking, thinking, and creating simultaneously operate in this perfect rhythm, like a fine-tuned instrument. And then suddenly I'm thinking too much or painting in a way that is out of sync with what it should be, and I am no longer able to decipher or see any of my choices clearly for what they are, every move feeling unintentionally self-conscious.

Doubt can slow me down occasionally, but only if I let it. Sometimes taking a short break and gathering my thoughts can be a good thing.

If I experience doubt, I typically do one of three things:

1. I keep working. I don't leave the studio until I arrive, in some way, at a place I believe possesses potential.
2. I leave my studio. Eat a meal, ride my bike, go for a walk, see a movie. Do some such activity that makes me feel good and occupied and come back to it with fresh eyes.
3. Go to a museum.