

BORTOLAMI

Motions (Entries) Anna Ostoya

7/7/20

I've been working on *Slap* standing up, so now my feet hurt. I sit down. I write. I'm trying to get *Slap* to look violent and fragile and to put all of the contrasting colors together to slap the eyes. The trouble is to create some magical depth without too much gradation of tones which would create a fake-ish depth. The color should be straightforward and simple, to pull one in and to push one out.

8/15/20

I haven't yet finished *Slap*. Instead I started a new canvas. It's more of a collage than a painting. It has images of protesters that I manipulated to make them less identifiable. It also has pieces of cloth that I previously used to clean paint off my brushes. And there are also gold stripes and fields of colorful paint. So far it all looks like puke after someone has had a huge dinner, colorfully stinky. But I'll get it right and it will become a French perfume with a revolting taste.

I'm spending less time on painting. I read reviews and comparison websites for diverse products like washing machines, beds, or napkins. I read the news. And then there's also my Sun, but I can't blame him for taking me away from painting. It's my own mismanagement of time, a somehow purposeful mismanagement. This time calls for mismanagement, for some sort of strike against efficiency. The suspension of the pandemic and the urgency of the issues it makes obvious, all that cosmic injustice ... that just fucks one's brain and one's heart. I mean it fucks me up — I'm on the frontlines of feeling it all and of doing little. And I make these paintings which somehow, maybe, could transcribe, translate, capture something or inspire someone to act. But of course the possibility for that is so minimal that too often I'm waking up with a feeling of being self-indulgent.

And so I consume more product reviews, and I pack all of my sublime energy into a couple of intense moments of actual work in my studio. And I feel old; I feel the world has become older with this pandemic. Everything seems like an ancient scripture that just repeats the unfulfilled desire for more justice and more happiness. And you're right, Young Reader, to scorn me for saying that. You go and fight.

8/20/20

I took out *Float* which I started on Rivington. Nice! Still in murky waters but a push will bring it to the surface and at the same time push it into the depths. I love the final stages. They can take a long time but they give so much pleasure. *Float* has the rags I used while painting other canvases to clean the brushes or the spatula, to smudge paint on canvas. I look at the rags, now integrated into this blue composition trying to remember which one was used for which work. Like an Alzheimer's patient, I can't quite remember although they all seem so familiar.

8/23/20

Trying to work but stressed by the noise from the apartment renovation. The floor is shaking, I'm shaking. *Float* is looking more complete or maybe I'm just imagining it. The light is bad in the room I work in. Medieval conditions. I hope the stretchers will come soon. I want to start new canvases. One in black and white, high contrast. And then another all in green, like Monet but better.

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8/30/20

A bad cold got hold of me. That weird feeling of fireworks in my eyes and a weakness in my torso. My body aches, even my breathing aches. The air that comes into my chest brings some sadness and pain and I'm upset because I can't paint. It's possible that the painting makes me feel this way. More precisely, it's possible that a few paintings I should finish put me in this terrible state. For the purpose of simplicity, I call it a cold. The final act keeps on slipping away and filling me with terror. Somehow I can't get hold of it. I feel so potent and so impotent at the same time.

09/10/20

Action is almost done. One field in the right corner jumps too much to the front. It breaks the space of the rest of the canvas. But maybe that's okay. An element out of place with its surroundings can bring a healthy feeling of unease. Maybe that's the case here.

09/14/20

Slap is developing slowly. The layering takes time and leads to muscle pain and migraines. The colors are so intense and I have to bend like an acrobat to paint. This puts me into a psychedelic state. Here comes my Sun and his face looks colorful and bright. I'd like to pick him up but my back and arms hurt too much. He is jumping around the puddles of color and I lean against the door, trying to calm my eyes by looking at a gray wall outside.

9/18/20

I'm finishing *Extasy*. It seemed like a neverending painting and I could have gone on forever helping it evolve - until I smudged it with Naples yellow. This froze the movement of the floating figures like the click of a camera shutter. Now there are only a few places here and there, which need a deeper blue or a brighter pink; an edge which needs to be sharper or smoother. But a year from its beginning, this painting is complete.

9/21/20

Now I'm on *Jump*, painting some parts more vividly. It was the first painting in the series that showed me the direction where it could go. The ones before it were failed experiments, which I had to redo later on. This one from the first brushstroke felt right. When I started it, my hand was quickly moving to cover the white canvas.

9/30/20

Working on *Leap*. Need to finish it in a week. Have been trying to work on it as if on a mural. Hope it will turn out well quickly. The show is in about a month. I want more canvases for it. I have plenty of ideas. Gosh.

10/1/20

I started *Step* over a year ago. Now the yellows and pinks pulsate with the right amount of intensity. I love the unpredictable metallic leaf; it looks dark or bright depending on how light hits the canvas. The yellow color makes the eyes go crazy pretty quickly. It's difficult to work without blinking after a short while. It's cold in my studio. I keep on blinking and I wish the yellow would make me feel warmer.

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10/08/20

I'm collaging some more stock exchange numbers on *Forward*, which I thought I had completed a few months ago. I love the touch and the smell of newsprint. *Forward* is so 19th c. with its obsolete materials, which makes me think of the masses moving towards grand utopias through grandiose dystopias. That old world I tasted and I remember. Now, since the ban, I can no longer get the shopping bags I had been using in the composition.

10/11/20

The show opens in one month. The paintings aren't finished and I'm not stressed. I'll get them done. For the first time, I'm relaxing before the grand finale rather than working myself to sickness. What's going on in the news, in the world, is scary, and at times profound. This time seems the most surreal I have lived through and I stay muffled in a dreamy detachment. Much of the burden of worrying about the outcome of the show is gone. The outcome is somewhat irrelevant since the criteria of judgment and points of reference seem absent. They had crumbled already before the pandemic, when the art world hastily tried to overcome its history of blindness. Now the end of the old art world is even more apparent as is the necessity to reimagine it. It will be done at some point. This upcoming show at a respected commercial gallery in a big metropolis feels like a museum show in a distant town. There's a different kind of pressure — a desire to connect with a few visitors, to connect with their particular sensitivity that is foreign to me. I don't need to prove much beyond that.

10/16/20

Two more weeks to go and the paintings will be picked up. I've spent enough time with them so I feel fine. It's actually refreshing to know they'll be out. So much art must have been made during the months of pandemic isolation and so little of it will be displayed. I feel so lucky to have my work being picked up and voila! hung on a wall at a gallery.

10/27/20

Finishing. Finishing. Finishing. And off they go to a bright room and then who knows where. *Leap* is not yet quite done. At times all these neckties in the collaged images suffocate me. What are ties all about, what do they stand for? Why is it considered elegant to wear a piece of fabric in a shape of a flattened penis under one's chin? Its mechanism is that of a hanging rope. What is that uniform about? Let's forget it and come up with new costumes. Let's introduce nudity as the new formal attire. Anything but no more of these tied-up ties. Leap forward.