

MY MIDWEST IS SHOWING

PEOPLE ESSAYS EVENTS ABOUT



SHANE WALSH, SHANE WALSH PAINTINGS

May 21, 2017 Sammy Walsh

To be honest, I was a little nervous to meet Shane Walsh. He's an artist and lecturer at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and I was expecting him to be serious and intimidating – I couldn't have been more wrong. From the second I arrived at Shane's loft and studio, he was warm, welcoming, and so nice. It was fun to check out the cool decor in his apartment (we bonded over our love for vintage dishes and glasses) and meet his dog, Miles. To see his workspace and art close up was amazing, and it was really interesting to learn about his process.

Don't miss your chance to see Shane's work for yourself – you won't regret it:

Friday, June 16th - Group show at The Alice Wilds

Friday, July 21st - Solo show "Xpressor" at The Alice Wilds

Thursday, September 14th - Solo show at the Thelma Sadoff Center for the Arts

In the meantime, check out my Q&A with Shane to learn more about him and his art:



My Midwest Is Showing: How would you describe your style?

Shane Walsh: Currently I make black and white abstract paintings. I'm interested in the history of abstract painting and how that intersects with culture and my own life experience. The black and white palette is a direct reference to the xerox photocopy which was a big part of growing up in the 90s subcultures like, punk, hip-hop, skating and graffiti. I'm combining this everyday visual language with an art historical one, trying to make an interesting hybrid basically.

MMWIS: How do you create your art? What medium/s do you use?

SW: All of my recent work is fairly large and is acrylic on canvas, although I do use some zany, less traditional things like liquid latex to get the paint to behave like ink in a photocopy. Each piece begins

by making small scale collages, which become the template for making the larger work. I also use a lot of indirect methods of painting which are probably closer to printmaking.

MMWIS: What's a normal day like for you?

SW: A normal day for me depends on if school is in session – I teach painting and drawing at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, so my schedule fluctuates according to the academic calendar. A normal studio day for me starts early – I'm absolutely a morning person. I really dig waking up early, drinking coffee, looking and thinking about what happened in the studio yesterday and what might happen today. I'm at my best from about 6-11 am so there's a burst of activity, then I go to the gym to get some oxygen to my brain, walk my dog for about an hour or so then head back to the studio for another few hours. If I'm working on a deadline or a big show I'll work round the clock but I prefer the daylight hours – I learned a long time ago to treat my art practice like a job so I pretty much put in normal 8 hour work days.



MMWIS: Where do you find inspiration?

SW: Too many things are inspiring – I mean, interesting possibilities are everywhere, everyday. I get inspiration from other art, philosophy, music, film, my life, swimming, etc. the list goes on and on. I think maybe the key is learning what you can use and what you can't, sort of filtering the massive amount of inspiring things we encounter everyday, and the internet only amplifies this.

MMWIS: Do you have a favorite piece you've ever created?

SW: I'm not sure I have a favorite piece, but the best paintings are the ones that stand the test of time. If I can look at a painting I made a year later and it still baffles me or impresses me then I know it's good. I think almost everyone that makes art is convinced that the thing they're currently working on is the best – time has a way of correcting this delusion.

MMWIS: When did you decide to pursue art as a career?

SW: I knew I was going to have some sort of life in the arts from a very young age. My father was an industrial designer so I was surrounded by cool things from the start.



MMWIS: What has been your biggest accomplishment so far?

SW: My biggest accomplishment has been just being able to continue to be a practicing artist. I feel grateful to be able to do what I want most of the time. I also really love teaching, being around talented and smart students keeps me on my toes – watching them develop into incredible painters also feels like an accomplishment.

MMWIS: What are you currently reading? Watching? Listening to?

SW: Now that I'm on summer break I have more time to read – during the school year most of my reading time is dedicated to preparing readings and discussions for classes so it's heavy in the art-theory category. I just finished listening to the "S-Town" podcast and I've got the Ultramagnetic MC's in heavy rotation in the studio.

MMWIS: If someone was visiting Wisconsin for the first time, what would you tell them to do first?

SW: If someone was visiting Wisconsin for the first time I'd tell them to go straight to the House on the Rock. This is one of the craziest places I've ever been and experiences like it are harder and harder to find these days. It's got all of these ingredients, it's overwhelming, it's scary, it's interesting, it's bizarre, it's sublime, I mean it really has a lot going for it – I highly recommend it. The other place is Cave Point in southern Door County, this state has a number of incredible natural places.

MMWIS: Favorite thing about the Midwest?

SW: My favorite thing about the Midwest is how affordable and accessible everything is. I can have a big studio and space without having to sacrifice all of my time.

MMWIS: How does your Midwest show through your personality and/or what you do?

SW: My Midwest is most apparent when I pronounce the words "mom" and "bag."