



people+ / artist / Interview with Julie Weitz on 09.18.2008

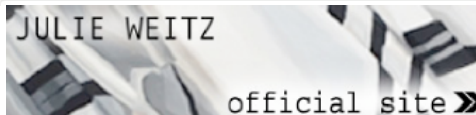


Bird 3
Gouache on paper
10"x10" 2008

JULIE WEITZ

stop slideshow

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artist information+

Julie Weitz was born and raised in Chicago, IL and currently lives and works in Tampa, FL. She has widely exhibited in New York, Chicago, Miami, Tampa, New Orleans and Austin. Her work was recently on view in group exhibitions at Dam Stuhltrager Gallery in Brooklyn, NY, the Contemporary Art Museum in Tampa, FL and BECA Gallery in New Orleans, LA. Weitz is featured in the current issue of New American Paintings juried by Miami Art Museum Curator Peter Boswell and published by Open Studio Press. Her work will travel in the 1st International Roaming Biennial of Tehran through 2010, which opened in Istanbul this summer. In 2007, Weitz was awarded an artist-in-residence at Makor Gallery in New York City and Oxbow in Saugatuck, MI. She received her MFA at the University of Wisconsin, Madison and BFA at the University of Texas, Austin. Weitz currently teaches painting and drawing as Assistant Professor of Art at the University of South Florida.

Q1 What was it like for you when you were growing up? Did your parents encourage you to become an artist?

As a child, I always drew and wanted to be a cartoonist. I made my own comics and picture books. In 5th grade I won "Best in Show" for my portrait of The Simpsons.

Q2 Do you think that your choice to be an artist was a difficult choice or did it feel very easy and natural?

The choice to make art was always easy; the choice to become an artist was more difficult. While I love being in the studio working, I've always felt an urgency to be part of a larger conversation and it took me awhile to understand how to put that desire to work in the studio.



Member 1

Q5 It seems that both series (the hoods and bearded men) feature the disappearance of personal expression. Can you talk about the theme of hiding in your work?

The covering of the hood, in its complete blanketing of identity behind a theatrical and ideological mask, suggests a distancing from moral deliberation and consequence - allowing for the potential of the wearer to commit immoral acts or, to be the victim of such atrocities. Likewise, iconic portraits of leaders are revered as testaments to one's history or ideological viewpoint and appear to absolve leaders of their human imperfections. I like to think of my work as a reminder that something is always missing from the picture; whether or not we like to admit it. After all, is it possible to see conflict from an unbiased perspective?

Q6 Is there sadness in the work?

Yes, although I believe there is also hope.



Detail, Gathering

Q3 How did you decide working on the covering of the hood? Does it represent America's involvement in Mideast unrest?

I've always worked from photographic sources and after September 11th I became addicted to the

JULIE WEITZ

[5 Admirable Artists]

01

Kara Walker

For her defiant and inventive approach to picturing ugly histories.

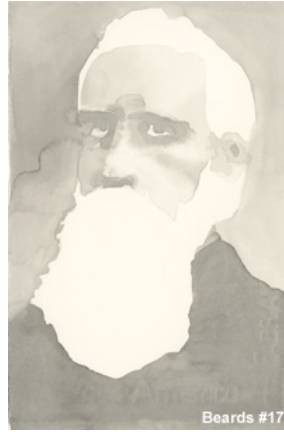


Philip Guston 02

For the intention and self-conscious humor of his mark.



after September 11th became addicted to the media. I started collecting images from newspaper and Internet sources and surrounding myself with them in the studio. It wasn't long before I began incorporating these images into my work and the hood appeared as a reoccurring theme. In the beginning, I worked directly from the found images, but eventually I started constructing my own photographs- designing my own masks and taking photos of models wearing them. The hood was compelling because it was draped over the faces of victims and worn by terrorists. It presented me with the challenge of representing someone that I could not see. I understood this issue as resonating deeper than the hood itself, highlighting the media's limited ability to represent conflict and cultural difference.



Q4 There is several types of masks in the series of hoods. What do the "Bird" hoods represent? Are there different themes for each design?

Each hood generally references a design of an actual head covering- a ski mask, a scarf, a religious covering and so on. As I experimented with the range of references, I began to think of my paintings as a system of organizing the multiple ways groups cover themselves. I've often thought about this kind of categorical study of my subject as referent to the paintings of the 19th century naturalist/artist John James Audubon and his "Birds of America". Though different in intention, since my approach is more about reconstructing the manner in which we see these images in our daily life. Audubon set out to represent visually every bird species in North America and in doing so, claimed a type of ownership over his subject. Conversely and with humor, I consider my project a distortion of ethnocentric desire.



Q7 Is there a dream project that you would like to do?

As of yet, I just dream of having more time in my studio.

Q8 Could you tell us how you like your workspace? What does it look like?

My studio is clean and well organized. I'm constantly rearranging the space according to the stage of my process- sketching and planning, flattening paper, working at the computer and then, of course, painting.

Q9 Where is your favorite place to see art?

I love seeing art in the place it was made for- like frescos- because it provides a context for how the artists originally envisioned the works and the way viewers first experienced them.

Q10 If people are interested in learning more about your work how can they do that?

Visit my website: www.julieweitz.com and contact me directly.

Julie Weitz
<http://www.julieweitz.com>

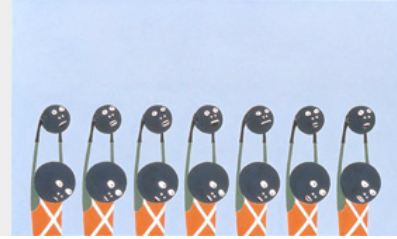
03 Shazia Sikander



For her conflation of traditional technique and contemporary content.

Layla Ali 04

For her graphic style and subversive imagery.



05 Fra Angelico



For the intensity, labor, and religiosity of his paintings.