

Interview: Alexandra Munroe and Max Gimblett, 2012

AM: So, let's begin with the essential question. What is your philosophy of art?

MG: Well, as a young painter I read Kandinsky's *On The Spiritual in Art*. I understood that drawing was a necessity for me and that I have a deep spiritual longing. Kandinsky went on to say in that essay that modernism was going to help change the community and make a better life for people. So, I'm primarily a modernist and I've retained those values.

I was brought up in the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, Christian, and I married into a Jewish family and then I became a Rinzai Zen Monk. The spirituality is from my childhood, from my upbringing, but it's something innate, it's something I was born with, it's something that I have. Prayer and meditation and compassion and my ego have been absorbed into my technique to the point where the Indian gurus, like Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj wrote, "I am that," So, the spiritual was available to me as a child. I went to Sunday school and bible class with great relish. I loved it. I still have my Sunday school Bible I was awarded at age seven. I loved my ministers. I loved their sermons. In fact, when Reverend Owen Baragwanath died, I phoned his wife in Auckland and said I was in a position to help publish his sermons. And she said to me, "Oh Max, Owen didn't keep them." So, it showed you the stature of a man who didn't keep his own sermons, his humility

So art is spiritual, you know. Art is presented at the altar of perception to encourage and change and present core values. It's moral. Art's moral. And you know, art needs the museums, because the museum is anima. The museum is the muse. The museum is the feminine principle.

I went to Sri Aurobindo's ashram in Pondicherry and lived there six days. Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj says recognize the fact that you're not a human being. No such thing as a human being. So broadly, universally there is 'being.' One word: 'being.' And if you get the ego out of the road, and you get the self out of the road – the West has a preoccupation with the self – you get the self out of the road and what's left is all consuming love. So you know you have the picture plane. You create a plane in canvas or in wood, and that's the autonomous primary plane. But you don't paint on that plane. You paint in a plane forward of that plane, as de Kooning kept telling us, to try to make entry into the third, fourth, and fifth dimensions. And you want your viewer to be very central to the work, to spend forty-five

minutes with the work, to enter the work, move through the work, move around in the work, move into the fourth dimension, and emerge changed.

AM: That's pure Kandinsky. His was really the first manifesto for abstraction as the language of the modern, and, as you say, the language of social transformation. So there was a utopian aspect to what Kandinsky was writing about and painting about. Tell us how abstract art supports that entry into the fourth and fifth and sixth dimensions.

You entered the New York art world at a time when a second generation of abstract expressionist painters were working, and when movements like geometric abstraction, minimalism and post-minimalism, were gaining currency, expanding the boundaries of essentially *abstract art*. And your friends you used to hang out with, like Harvey Quaytman or....

MG: Yes, Harvey Quaytman, Jake Berthot, Phil Simms...

AM: Jake Berthot, Phil Simms....these are artists who were deeply intellectually engaged with the problems of abstraction, and with the next phase of abstraction in the history of painting. Do you see yourself in that lineage?

MG: Yeah, I guess so. I guess I do and I don't. What I think artists do is they give you a series of permissions, and you stand on the shoulders of giants, and you make a tiny little contribution to art. A tiny new contribution. But, yes, I do see myself in that tradition...I mean there's no going back. There's a sense of progress.

The dilemma an artist has is where to enter the stream of art history, where to enter the stream of art history. Art history's long. You can't paint it all, and you have to paint copies of the masters to become a painter. So, you know, I entered with Picasso, de Kooning, moved back to Cézanne and van Gogh, came forward to Matisse, moved to Indian Mogul miniatures and David Hockney. Because, you see, I had bought a notion, I think it was from Clement Greenberg, of a linear avant-garde that I thought I could get myself to the position of doing the next important paintings after Stella's black paintings. Well, that got beaten out of me. I realized that that wasn't going to be the case, that I was living in an era of pluralism, that I would be one of many painters working away, that I wasn't going to be the leader of the avant-garde. In fact, people were telling me the avant-garde was dead, which I've never believed.

I believe in progress. You know I'd like to think that wars are over. I was a child in World War II. I had American soldiers living in my house on the weekends when I was six years old. I formed very strong friendships with them. And they came back in pieces to our hospitals. We nursed them back to health. Most of them died. That was Green Island, Iwo Jima, Guadalcanal, and Okinawa. So I am formed by that. And when I got to America and I stood in the Met I realized that I was in a country that had a level of design that was equal to Roman design. A level of design that was awesome. I was at the crossroads of painting, and I had come here to learn how to paint....

AM: So, how did you come to New York and how did the conversations here influence you?

Around 1960, after some traveling around the world, I was in a pub in London and Billy Apple, a conceptual New Zealand artist, said he was going to New York, and the light bulb went on. I could go to North America. So I visited a Canadian writer friend in Toronto, became a potter, married Barbara Kirshenblatt. Went to the San Francisco Art Institute, lived two years in San Francisco. Went to Bloomington, Indiana, where Barbara got her PhD in folklore. Lived there three years. Went to Austin, Texas, where she got her first teaching appointment and I showed with Dave Hickey in the Clean Well-Lighted Place. And I showed with Delahunty Gallery in Dallas. And then Barbara got invited by the Yiddishists, and Mikhl Herzog to come to New York and teach in the Linguistics Department at Columbia, and we got to New York in 1972.

Now I understood America as being the cutting-edge of Modern Art, being the place, understood...having left New Zealand I had to go to the center. I had no choice, and England felt quite used up. England felt somewhat bankrupt in those years.

When I got here, I just mixed with artists. And some artists invited me to join their critique group. And in my critique group was David Reed and Ron Janovich and you know fifteen other artists. And we met once every three weeks in somebody's studio and the criteria for the group was if you had them to your studio you had to go to theirs. And we had free interchange and that lasted for about two years. There was a critique group sort of on top of mine – Harvey Quaytman, Jake Berthot, Ron Gorchoff – that I wasn't invited to join because it was full. But Harvey Quaytman's wife, Frances Barth, made a phone call to Barbara and I in Toronto when we were visiting Barbara's family and we were offered this loft on the Bowery after two years in New York, which we bought from

James Rosenquist, and that was really like the art community saying, like, 'welcome,' you know, and taking me seriously. And then John Walker said to Betty Cunningham 'Max is doing something about color out of Matisse' and Betty Cunningham came to the studio and offered me my first one-man show, which was a total success. It almost sold out. In 1976. And that was a gallery that showed Ross Bleckner, John Walker, John Elderfield, Lynton Wells, Alan Cote, a good group of artists. So that was the milieu I was in and Saturday nights we were hanging out in cafes and bars...

AM: What were you talking about?

MG: We were doing that folded surrealistic poetry<sup>1</sup>, where you write a line and fold and the next person writes. And we were talking about art and we were talking about getting into group shows and getting one-man shows and talking about curators and writers. And I was beginning to collect writers and curators and museum directors.

AM; What happened to your art when you moved into this space?

MG: When I got to this studio in 1974, I started painting a single bar and double bar geometric paintings. Those are my first mature paintings.

AM: The geometric paintings. What was that geometry all about? How did you arrive at that geometry? The power of such minimal geometry of form and color reminds me of Ad Reinhardt, who was looking at Islamic art and architecture, at Borobodora and at mandalas, right? It's not mere formalism; it's a formula for accessing the sublime.

MG: I was never a monochromatic artist. It was a reduction from going from many colors to a few colors and understanding color as feeling. So it was like having a central feeling or two and concentrating on that, and sticking to the point. But I always had a figure in there, so it was figure and ground for me. The monochrome painters in New York at that time were just in their field, in their ground, which I didn't go for.

I was thinking about Tantric Indian Art, about Borobodora, about Malevich, and I was thinking about color, and I was thinking about Barnett Newman and Burgoyne Diller, and I was thinking about single bar at center and

---

<sup>1</sup> Exquisite Corpse

double bar at the sides. And quite frankly, I saw a drawing<sup>2</sup> NASA put on the moon shot<sup>3</sup>, on the Apollo capsule. We put this drawing up there in space so that people other than ourselves, that couldn't read our language, but had abstract thought, would understand this was a human being. Double bar, space between. Space between two conditions, two people, two states, dualism – dualism is you know firmly embedded in my work – dualism, state of two, a bridge between two, like Barbara and I and the attraction of opposites. So the color is simplified, the surface is articulated, and the bars are at center or at the edge.

Color is alchemic. Yellow, Red, Blue. Green, Orange. Black and White.

AM: You have often spoken of the geometry or colorgram of these paintings as related to the idea or ideal of dualism. How did the dualism of your own identity as being a New Zealander, a foreigner in America, influence this feeling of dualism?

MG: Well you have inside/outside. You have either/or. You have up/down. So the dualism is inherent. It particularly comes to a head in adolescence. You see it in students. Inability to complete a project. Can get it started but can't complete it. Go here, go there. Get drunk, don't get drunk. Over eat, under eat. You know it's endless. It's endless. Too much of this, too little of that. Too much money, too little money. So dualism basically has to be slayed. And one way it can be slayed is in those geometric paintings. I put the viewer in dead-center, at dead center. I am the painting in their heart and in their solar plexus. I would watch viewers go up to my paintings and the viewers that left I disregarded. And the viewers that stayed in the center and looked at the paintings I went up and talked to. Those are the ones I respected. Those are the ones that could look in the center of the painting and journey into it. I mean most people don't look at paintings. Most people walk past paintings, they're kind of like shopping.

AM: Can you describe what the quatrefoil means, how you came to it and things of that nature?

MG: In 1983 I had a year where I didn't paint, I just drew. and I drew about thirty shapes from memory on arches paper, 22 x 30 inches and one was the quatrefoil and it struck me as very convincing. I ordered six or eight 90 inch stretchers, 90 inches was to be monumental, to hang about twelve

---

<sup>2</sup> The Pioneer Plaque

<sup>3</sup> The spacecraft Pioneer 10

inches off the floor. I painted them one after another. they took about a week each. I was in the studio alone at that time, no assistant. I looked at the quatrefoil when the paintings were completed and i was quite startled by them, of course i was very startled by the shape. and i thought to my self “this is a eucharist no one’s going to swallow - this is an awkward shape, this is going to be difficult.” I took them to a show in New Zealand and my memory is that three or four sold in the first couple of weeks. New Zealand just accepted them and I was off and running.

I’ve painted the quatrefoil ever since and it came to a head as a commitment when a German art patron was in my studio, and he owned a few quatrefoils, and he said to me, “Max you’ve painted enough quatrefoils” and I looked at him and i thought to myself “I will always paint the quatrefoil.”

So, what it means is that it’s quaternic, we’ve moved from a trinitarian age to a quaternic age in i believe 1952 and it’s an aspect of the four moving towards five. so it’s a world clock, it’s the compass, it’s four Jungian functions. it’s particularly the rose mandala from cathedral stained glass windows. In spiritual terms it’s a mandala. and a rose is a very important symbol spiritually. There’s a Borges<sup>4</sup> story of Paracelsus bringing a rose back to life which is a beautiful story. it’s a rose mandala, it is a mandala and when we dream of a mandala, a quatrefoil or a circle or a square with a circle in it it’s a dream of wholeness, we feel whole. It’s cross cultural, lets me reach right around the world. It’s in every culture in some aspect as a symbol. In Japanese culture it’s a tsuba<sup>5</sup>, in Irish culture it’s a four leaf clover. It’s an aspect of Willendorf Woman, an aspect of fecundity. It’s an aspect of the Vitruvian Figure, da Vinci’s investigation into the Vitruvian Man. It’s an aspect of Le Corbusier’s Modular man. The quatrefoil is curvilinear so it’s feminine, it comes from this loft having a curved ceiling. my head went up into the curve and I put a half circle on top of a rectangle and that’s how I got started. the curvilinear happened just after my midlife crisis at the age of 46 when basically dualism ended for the first time. i’m absolutely mystified, i welcome responses, to why no one else paints the quatrefoil. I just don’t understand it. I’m mystified by it. you think there'd be 20-30 people around the world painting the quatrefoil and maybe there are they’re just not well known people.

---

<sup>4</sup> Jorge Francisco Isidoro Luis Borges (24 August 1899 – 14 June 1986)

<sup>5</sup> a Japanese sword guard.

AM: As long as I've known you, you've been talking about Carl Jung. What is your connection, and how does that connection influence your living and then again your art?

MG: Well it's the sacred. And it's mythology. And it's understanding that it's your psychology that's driving you and that you have complexes. And in analysis you can name your complexes. And when you can name them you can see them coming. When they arise, instead of being caught in consciousness by them, you can side step them. He marries insight and dreams to action. So you can understand your actions Jung is also cultural, he is a true European. He's high on the tree of culture.

AM: And then at what point did the practice of Rinzai Zen come into your life and also into your art?

MG: In 1965, I started ink painting in San Francisco after Kenneth Patchen's drawing in ink example. And I initially thought it was Matisse. And in '67-68 I realized it was Japanese calligraphy. And then I started reading about Zen. And in 2002 a monk from the San Francisco Zen Center came to one of my openings at the Haines Gallery in San Francisco and invited me over for a cup of tea and I went to the Zendo. Then he turned out to be a calligrapher and he was interested in doing calligraphy with me. So I did some calligraphy with him. Then he asked me if I'd give the Zendo some money, so I did. Then he asked me if I'd like a Buddhist name, and I said yes and I got a Buddhist name. Then he asked me if I'd like to take my vows, and I said yes. All of this is taking a few years.

AM: Who was that?

MG: Dairyu Michael Wenger. He's my teacher.

I believe in karma. The text is Christmas Humphreys' book<sup>6</sup>. I absolutely believe in karma. I have done a drawing of myself in my former life one, the one before this, when I was a Japanese woman. And I drew her in very beautiful robes. She was in the court. She was of some distinction. This drawing is in the collection of the Auckland Art Gallery. You know, I believe there're three levels of karma. There's birth karma, cause and effect karma, and death and rebirth karma. So how we die is crucial to how we're reborn. The Tibetan Buddhists say we're reborn within forty-

---

<sup>6</sup> Humphries, Christmas. Karma and Rebirth, Theosophical Pub House, 1983. 110 pages.

nine days. Whether that's true or not I don't know, but the Tibetans are experts in this area...

AM: You don't know for sure? {laughter}

MG: I don't know. [laughter] The Tibetans are experts in this area so I tend to take their word for it...

I went to India in 1983 and I stepped off the plane and I was Ganesh. I became Ganesh, I was Ganesh for five weeks, trunk and all. I saw Indian deities. I saw the sculptures come alive in front of my eyes, they came alive and they moved. They were living forces. They weren't like plaster casts in a Christian church, watered down plaster casts, like the stations of the cross are often sort of watered down. They were living forces, they were adorned, given red pigment, given milk and flowers. People were very sincere in their praying to them. The main thing is that they are living forces, they are alive. India is the place where I found the most wisdom and most alive ritual, the most exotic color, the most exotic dancing, the most exotic smells. I got to sit on the banks of Mother Ganges for five weeks at dawn each morning, sit there all day, and I really felt I'd come home, that India was my home. I feel I go to India every life.

AM: How does the living force in Indian shrines inspire your work? Are they one and the same?

MG: Yes, the living force is on the altar of perception and I think you're born in your various lives with different veils to the unconscious, veils to the other world, and I think Carl Jung's veil was very transparent, very thin, and he was able to see into other worlds. he did a tremendous amount of spiritual writing, a tremendous amount. they say his published works aren't but half his writings. and his published works are vast. so, my veil is not like Carl Jung's or not like Thomas Merton's but it is somewhat available to the unconscious. The biggest single factor about me probably is my autodidact nature. I'm an only child with an abbreviated education, I've educated myself.

AM: And did you, coming from the Pacific, also feel some identification with that?

MG: Absolutely. My first identification in America was with the ceramists in San Francisco. And the ceramists in America were the living masters in the world. And the Asian culture had washed up on the shores of Mother



Pacific quite directly and led to those fantastic ceramists. You know, I spent a couple of years wondering about placing one twig in a pot.

AM: Did your pots look like their pots?

MG: No. My pots looked like my own.

AM: Were they utilitarian?

MG: Yeah, they were functional. There was a big element of form-follows-function. That's why I got to painting, it was good to get rid of function. Very freeing.

AM: Back to your encounter with Zen.

MG: Well, you know, I'd somehow gotten hold of book on kōan. I don't know who gave it to me, I mean...because I'm autodidact, and an only child, I'm used to coming up with stuff myself. And it all comes from reading. Like, I don't need to go and see Krishnamurti. I just look at a photograph of the book and I get him. I get him completely. I didn't even want to see a film about him. Didn't want to go and see him. He was my teacher for twenty years. So somehow, I came upon a book on kōans and I studied kōans for thirty plus years, and when I got to Michael Wenger, I realized I am in the Rinzai lineage and not Sōtō. So, I came to Zen through kōan study.

AM: And what was it in kōan study that..

MG: Well, kōan study is not unlike maori parable. Maori parable is pithy, and short, and wise, and comes from the earth, and not unlike it. And I knew maori parable. From books. But basically, you know, it's karma. I'm very recently Japanese. It's not China I relate to. It's Japan. And, you know, the temples in Kyoto are really my home. They're my home.

AM: And what's the relationship, if any, between that feeling at home in Japan, and yet you grew up in a time of war when the Japanese were the aggressors.

MG: Well it's a conflict. That's dualism. That's dualism. It's a conflict. But, you know, what you understood as a child is not what you understand as a man. You leave your childish ways when you grow up.

AM: Well, nothing too childish about that war.

MG: No, but I was a child during it. But, it is possible to be influenced by a culture, like Islam, without knowing much about it. It's possible to be influenced by the aesthetics of a culture. By separating the aesthetics from life, or from knowledge, just the aesthetics. So it's like, Edo period ceramics are just extraordinary. And the work of Tesshū, Sengai Gibon, Nantembo, Hakuin, I mean this is the work that means the most to me. It means as much as de Kooning.

AM: What is it in their work that captures your imagination?

MG: Well it's the direct expression of wisdom. It's spontaneous release of wisdom and knowledge and love and compassion. And it's the drama of it, the drama of the ink. And it's the fact that most of them are roshi's, most of them spent thirty years in the Zen temple teaching and studying and leading people...

AM: And sitting...

MG: Sitting. Sengai said, 'You know people give me their bum wipe.' I mean, Sengai would do a drawing for anybody that brought him any piece of paper. Remarkable. Spiritual training. And Tesshū did 4,500 sutra drawings as IOU's for a temple that burned down in one day with five assistants. And his wife said to him, 'Tesshū why are you doing so much work?' He said, 'I'm doing a painting for everybody in Japan.' She said, 'You're fucking mad. There's 38 million people in Japan.' He said, 'I don't care. Pretty soon, I'm going to get rid of this shitbag of a body and get another.' Now, I'm not so sure I'm not his body. I could be his body. Alfred Manessier (5 December 1911, [Saint-Ouen](#) - 1 August 1993, [Orléans](#)). see: Alfred Manessier, Editions Ides et Calendes, 2000. 160 pages.

AM: Right, gosh. And so that leads us to the whole...back to the art, and to performativity or – I love your word – release. And your work is, you know, there's great embodiment in your work. There's a lot of body. You want to transcend your body, but to me this work it's all about trace. No trace but trace. So tell us about this...the importance of action. During the period you matured as an artist, art was on one hand moving towards conceptualism, but on the other hand, it was all about body and performance, and the here and now, and the immediate, and the everyday. And it kind of all brings us back to Zen and its celebration of the everyday.

This is me eating, farting, drinking, and making a painting with a mop. Now. How does all this link back to your work?

MG: Running along the plain. Swinging through the trees. No language. Touching. First thing is touch. Touch comes before language. So, touching the surface...surface is extremely abstracted. It's invented. The surface is flat. The surface is a psychic slice of reality. I started in Toronto with gestural oil paint and damar varnish, with European abstract expressionists in mind. People like and Manessier<sup>7</sup>. Then I got to San Francisco and I immediately started painting de Kooning's. I would charge the canvas with a loaded oil painted brush screaming, and, you know, that was me painting a de Kooning So all mind, no mind. One stroke bone. Loaded brush to unloaded. The drama of acting fast in the body gets you ahead of the mind. Gets you out of mental conditioning into physical body conditioning. That's what I want to transfer to the canvas.

Now, the dilemma of the young artist is where to jump in in the history of painting. So by the time I got to San Francisco I jumped in with de Kooning. And I was to come back to de Kooning in 1983, having done a wide arc through the history of painting to teach myself about other options and other things. Now, there's some caution in that: classicism is, if you... someone who paints an apple makes it look more like an apple than somebody else painting an apple. That's a classicist. Cézanne. There's some caution in that in finding the road you are to travel is the correct road. So you have to take a divergent journey to find that out. I started with de Kooning and I came back to de Kooning in 1983. Now de Kooning, of course, is a European.

Pollock is the American classicist. Pollock makes the breakthrough. He makes the breakthrough into space and the field. But de Kooning brings culture to bear. Brings philosophy and, you know, written culture and the culture of Europeans. Brings that to bear. So it's an extra dimension. I mean, the abstract expressionists were very fond of presenting themselves as having just arrived. That they weren't coming out of any art. That was just ridiculous. They were coming out of art like we all do. That was like a ploy. De Kooning didn't do that.

De Kooning was also a colorist. He painted light. You know, light is color. Color is feeling. Feeling is the presence of light. And the presence of light is...you know, you can see remarkable things in light. Over there in that

---

<sup>7</sup> Alfred Manessier (5 December 1911, [Saint-Ouen](#) - 1 August 1993, [Orléans](#)). see: Alfred Manessier, Editions Ides et Calendes, 2000. 160 pages.

corner on the radiator, Sengai Gibon sits and gives me calligraphy instructions.

AM: A magic corner. I also see there a picture of your friend Len Lye. He's there in your seen and unseen pantheon. Who was he for you?

MG: Well, Len Lye and Hans Richter were the first two artists to directly draw on film. Len could spend two years on a three-minute film. Len was a filmmaker, a kinetic sculptor, and a sort of theoretical writer on art. Like Buckminster Fuller, who I visited a few times, Len had a rap, which lasted four or five or six hours, and once he got started on his rap you didn't interrupt him, you just turned on a tape recorder. And the rap was different every time. So he was a Renaissance man. And he was an original. He was absolutely original. And us being New Zealanders, I like to think in my own way I'm an original too. He cottoned on to me and I became his man behind the eight ball. I took dealers to him, and curators to him, and writers to him...

What I learned was his way of being an artist. His style of life. His freedom. His going for broke. His all-or-nothing. He was 100% an artist and he sort of okay'd me as an artist, which meant a lot especially because I was a latecomer.

He used to phone me up and say, 'Max, you still working?' And I'd say, 'Yes, Len.' And he'd say, 'Good, I don't have to.'

I saw Len five days before he died.

AM: Max, you talk about death a lot. You're not afraid of death.

MG: No.

AM: You live with it.

MG: Yes, it's a daily thing with me. It is with Zen Buddhists. I think about death a lot. I mean, I'm ready. I'm ready.

AM: You're ready. And...

MG: I think it's an opportunity to have a magnificent experience. It's very important not to blow it...

AM: So you don't agree with Woody Allen who says, 'I'm not afraid of death, I just don't want to be there when it happens.' [laughter]

MG: No, I want to hold my teacher's hand. I want to say my prayers. I want to handle my rebirth. Birth, death, intermediate being. Birth, death, intermediate being. You sit in intermediate being. You come out again. It's pretty obvious we've had thousands of lives. They say everybody you're close friends with has been your mother three times. You know, makes for a friendly relationship. Its true, I talk about death a lot. I mean the cabinets over there are full of skulls.

AM: So talk to me about your skulls. Why do you make skulls?

MG: A Zen kōan is, 'What was your face before your face in your mother's womb?' The skull is bone structure. It's what's underneath the face. In the womb, the first two organs that are made in the child are the brain and the heart. They're united. Older people when they're dying drop their head forward to return the head to the heart.

You know, I think it's a shame we don't have our ancestors skulls in our home to handle and live with reverence. So I have a woman – an anonymous woman's skull, you know, that I bought in an antique shop in Amsterdam. A woman who died of Syphilis. She has a hole drilled in her skull. They used to let in the air near the end of the travail. You know, Bellagio, the Rockefeller Foundation, there was a deconsecrated chapel, and downstairs the monks were in behind the wall, in behind the plaster – cross-legged, seated, looking out. Skulls I think are the most potent thing there is in the world.

AM: Your paintings don't visually appear to be narrative or story telling devices but there are always stories attached to them in hearing you describe your work, like the rose coming back to life story, and all these myths and teachings attached to the works. Do you think there is a narrative that follows along your work? What role does story telling play in your practice?

MG: I think life is largely made up of stories and one of the things I think an artist does is to believe in his or her own stories. So, when I'm doing an ink drawing if it says in my mind "throw the ink" I throw the ink. To not throw the ink is to be dishonest. So I must follow these intuitive commands. and I'll look at a painting and the painting will say "yellow" and i'll paint it yellow. I'll look at another painting and it'll say "turn me upside-down" and i turn it

upside-down. So i think there are a lot of stories. Now, some of the stories are very liberal and very much an act of my imagination. Stories are crucial

The Paracelsus story is this: Paracelsus was in his workshop late one night and there was a knock on the door and a young man had traveled many many miles to come to Paracelsus and ask to be his apprentice and he brought a bag of gold with him and put the bag of gold on the table and said to Paracelsus "if you make me your apprentice you can have this bag of gold" and Paracelsus just sort of looked at the young man. Then the young man said "I've brought a rose, a dead rose and i want you to bring it back to life." and he looked at Paracelsus's furnace and he said "Your furnace is cold, you haven't been working your furnace." And Paracelsus spoke, for the first time, "I've gone beyond the furnace, I don't need the furnace anymore." And the young man said "Well I'll be your apprentice if you bring this rose back to life." Paracelsus said "i won't be doing that, you can just leave and take your bag of gold with you." And the young man left. He left the rose there and it was sitting in Paracelsus's hand, Paracelsus looked down at the rose and the rose sprang back to life.