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Pratt, Katie and Lasker, Jonathan and King, Philip (2016) Katie Pratt in Conversation with Jonathan Lasker. Turps Banana Magazine (16). pp. 4-13. ISSN 1749-3994

Official URL: <http://turpsbanana.com>

EPrint URI: <http://eprints.glos.ac.uk/id/eprint/3692>

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Jonathan Lasker Questions 3/3/16

1. Looking back to the start of your career, and the hostility to painting that dominated from the 1970s through mostly to the end of the 20th Century, what was the inevitability of you painting? How did you become a painter and an abstractionist?
2. Is your process the same since the mid-80's – sketch – study – painting? Do you still keep a book of titles? Has this evolved at all in the recent work?
3. Scaling up your studies into large paintings is a process that superficially appears pre-determined but is probably riddled with interpretative spaces. How would you describe the events or the slippage in transposition from your studies to your large paintings?
4. Has a study recently generated multiple artworks? If so, this would seem to me a politically charged position. What is the status of multiplicity in your work?
5. You once said that your paintings don't permit 'subtraction'. They are painted in layers and so any amendment leaves visible scars. Did that alter in the work you recently made, exhibited at Cheim and Read? It seems there is less opacity and more use of translucent and transparent paint – layers?
6. In 1994, Adrian Searle said of your work that it '...has been a scrutiny of intention and order in painting.' To what extent do you think that's true in your current practice?
7. I love the title of your work – 'The Plus Sign at Golgotha'. A 'plus sign' should be a pure abstract form, quoted from calculus, as it was for Malevich. Yet your painting's title introduces another context that is unambiguous. It seems anyone – including you – who inspects your work in any detail begins to consider it in terms of language and signs. Your forms are distinctive, often calligraphic and can insinuate repetition, like a lexicon. But they are also often 'unnameable'. How would you describe the evolution of and relationship between a grammar and vernacular in your work today? I mean the constant elements versus the intuitive and interpretive?
8. –'there is a visual language in my works'. Forms in the grey-zone of meaning.
9. Frozen moment versus temporality of screen-like progression – i.e. back into picture plane. Your work often emphasises the rectangular picture frame and its inherent 2-dimensionality, depicting rectangles within rectangles. Even though you eschew the impact of technological progress on your painting – how does the evolving way we think of image and screen (touch screen, the accessibility and proliferation of images, screen-shotting images, etc) affect your relationship to framing and the repetition and reiteration of your images?
10. Your studio practice, from an external perspective, seems peripatetic. You make small works and drawings in Munich, you make your large works in New York (as well as drawings and studies?). How does this separation impact on your practice?
11. Abstract painting as both herald and mirror of social developments – what are the changes rung by 21st Century?
12. Having committed large periods of your life to living in Europe – whether Germany or UK, do you feel that your work has an affinity to European culture? You have said 'America is a country without histories'. How do the respective histories of cultures manifest themselves within your practice?
13. The 20th Century History of Art tradition is palpable in your painting. How far back do you index influence on your work? The Giotto frescoes in Padua's Cappella Scrofegni, for example?
14. You have cited work that influenced your development – De Kooning, Johns, Rauschenburg, McLaughlin. Reading now what you said (to Hans-Michael Herzog in 1997) about violating the rational order of a geometric background with a gestural form, brought a very visual reminiscence of the graphics of the mid-late 80's. It also suggested something of the legacy you may have had in subsequent

generations of painters – in the text paintings of Laura Owens or Monique Prieto, for example.