

On Being an Artist

Noah Landfield



Nepperhan, 2014, oil on canvas, 72 x 132 inches

I've had a direct experience with art as a way of life. There are artists on both sides of my family. Growing up, I was often surrounded by art studios, paintings, sculptures, drawings, art materials, artists, galleries, openings, art books, et al—the artist's life. My father, Ronnie Landfield, is an artist who currently teaches at the Art Students League. His studio was one floor below where we lived in Tribeca. His studio always felt like ultimate freedom, a place in which it seemed anything was possible. At the same time, this place of freedom was also how my family lived. My dad sold his art and that's how the family was supported. As a kid, I never really thought too much about it, it was just natural, but as I got older I understood just how unusual it was.

My experiences growing up have had an impact on my ideas about what art can be, and what it means to be an artist. To me, being an artist is directly related to a way of life or a different sense of living, and this somewhat unorthodox approach appealed to me pretty early on.

When I had just finished high school in New York City, I was given the opportunity to spend the month of July at the Vermont Studio Center, by the generosity of an "art angel" at my school. The

independence I felt in my own studio that summer really jump-started my journey as an artist. That fall I attended the School of Visual Arts and began figuring out what I wanted to say with my paintings.

I've had the great fortune to meet and work with many amazing people throughout the years. Many of them have inspired and helped me a great deal. In fact, I cannot stress enough how grateful I am to have had all the help I've received, as it is so important to young artists to gain traction and support. One of my teachers at the School of Visual Arts, Jack Whitten, was a great voice to have as a young artist. His approach to art making is almost akin to scientific discovery. His studio felt like a laboratory where research about materials and processes go hand in hand with the art that's made. He has helped me in many ways and is a constant inspiration to me. Mentors like Jack and my father, Ronnie Landfield, are truly hard to come by and have been so valuable to my development as an artist and as a human being. 📍

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