

This is an interview that artist Ben Weathers did of me for *Big Toe*, an online exhibition that he curated in 2019.

Hey George,

Here are the interview questions. If you can send back your answers when you get the chance that would be great!

I hope you're doing well!

It's been a joy interacting with your work on Big Toe the last couple of months.

Talk soon.

Ben

1. What are some of your earliest experiences in making art? When did your interest in making digital art begin?

My earliest experiences in making art are from when I was quite young. I vividly remember doing drawings of underground tunnels where people lived and worked. They looked similar to ant colonies that you could buy when I was a kid. Then I remember when I was in sixth grade and flair pens first became available I did completely abstract compositions of doodle like lines filling up the entire surface of a page. The lines didn't cross each other so it looked like strings lying next to each other on a floor. In retrospect it looked like something that Tom Friedman might have done today. As to when my interest in digital art began, that was around 1998. A friend of mine who was learning graphic art had Photoshop and she showed me some of the basics on how it worked. I admit initially I was skeptical of computer-generated art but when I started to work with it I began to intuit some of the possibilities inherent in the medium. Afterword, I went to a community college to delve deeper into Photoshop as well as 3d graphic programs.

2. What or who are some of your biggest influences?

I would have to say one of my biggest influences is still Marcel Duchamp. Probably more his approach to making art. Serious play without attachment. This enabled him to explore many ideas and forms without getting locked into any one particular strategy or form.

3. What is the typical day in the studio for you?

Hmmm, typical day in the gallery? Usually that can involve engaging in one or more different activities. One would involve working on a specific idea for an art piece or just free form play on a computer graphics program. Another is engaging in the practice I like to call contemplative geometry, or more commonly referred to as sacred geometry. Also I frequently find myself working on tutorials to learn other techniques to apply in the application programs I use. Also of course some time is spent on social media where I share my work with others.

4. What do you find is the difference between working with physical materials versus working digitally?

The primary difference to me between working with physical materials verse digitally is that in the physical world frequently if you make a "mistake", or say, do something your not pleased with, it's sometimes difficult to impossible to go back and redo what you just did without the possibility of losing something. It could be argued that the element of risk in the material realm focuses the concentration of the person working in that, but it's really a matter of preference because in the computer world you can explore many more possibilities as well within a relaxed environment of attentive play.

5. Where do you think your sense of humor comes from? What kind of role does humor have in your work?

My sense of humor comes from years of observing myself and other humans. Humor functions as a mirror in my work, to see oneself in one's reaction. Humor can frequently provide a shock to create a break in the conceptual flow of thoughts allowing a brief glimpse into something new or overlooked.

6. What is the role of the supernatural in your work?

I don't do the supernatural.

7. Can you talk about the role reality plays in your work--what are the boundaries between what is real and what is depiction of something "real"? What is the importance of fiction in your work?

The whole question "what is real" IS the meta-thematic principle in most of my work. When we ask ourselves "what is real" we frequently point to an outside world which we are in, yet how I understand it is that outside world is merely a representation or projection of our naked awareness filtered through the lens (sensorial mechanisms)

formed from of our acquired experiential and genetic tendencies. So is there really anything like a boundary between an inside or an out? And if for the sake of a materialistic view which sees the world as ultimately made up of light energy, is there a fundamental difference between a "real" material sculpture or one within the circuits of a computer or even the mind stream of the brain of the viewer? Back to what is ultimately real. If different sentient beings such as animals and humans perceive the world differently (which is hard to doubt that they do) due to those particular sensorial mechanisms they possess, what then is there to point to as being THE real?

8. How does your engagement with buddhism inform your art?

By having a direct taste of the above.

9. Do you have any upcoming projects or shows?

I have an upcoming solo show at Marquee Projects in September '19.