

IN THE STUDIO  
WITH DRAGOMIR MISINA

*For those of you who haven't had the pleasure of conversing with Mr. Dragomir Misina, we give you the ersatz substitute for eavesdropping: a written interview.*

*No-one can quite remember how we met, but we did; we could even wax lyrical in the ecstatic way that some people like to remember their lives, looking at you Mr. Herzog. However, that's not us, we had the pleasure to shoot the shit with a very engaging human in an honest and open way.*

*Unfortunately, we ran out of tape and much of our chat was lost to oblivion, as is the wont of memory.*

*Unlike some, Dragomir, has lived many lives prior to that of full-time artist, thus like us can despise the 9-5, punch-in punch-out lifestyle. Yet, he doesn't let us believe that to be an artist is to unplug or disengage from working life. Far from it, he argues for their reliance upon one another...else who'd buy the art? Anyway, here's the transcript, brought to you by Mr. Gibson, the hack in black.*



Portrait of Dragomir Misina in his studio.

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The Bath based artist Dragomir Misina invited me into to his studio at 44AD for a cup of instant coffee, safe to say, we really talked it out. Here's the transcript...

Brian Gibson

*The first paintings of yours that I saw were from the Paper Boat and Dust to Dust series. In Paper Boat 1&2 what struck me most is the bold childlikeness of their composition. Tell us more about them.*

Dragomir Misina

The Paper Boat paintings are reflective of perception on the passage of time. The title suggests fragility of our existence. The paintings consist of several layers, a repeated process of mark making, over painting and sanding back to reveal the over painted layer. The ghostly canoe shape is flooded with marks and scribbles signifying memories, distant time and place.

Brian

*With the Dust to Dust Paintings there is a contrast between dark and light canvases. To your mind what does this achieve? And to what do they refer?*

Dragomir

Dust to Dust is a series of paintings with reference to the universe, aimed at evoking the feeling of passing time and decay. The large size of the paintings is aimed at immersing and engaging the viewer. These paintings are built in layers; dry layers are sanded causing decay in the process, interlocking the applied layers. There are several layers interlocked on the surface with coloured spots coming through the layers like pulsating light from a distance. The surface is covered with lines, connecting applied colour spots and referencing constellations; each mark literally reflects on time passing as the painting develops.



Dust to Dust 2, 2011.  
Acrylic, Pencil and Graphite on  
Board.  
200cm x 120cm

The series of paintings is inspired by the dead star phenomenon. There are three paintings in the series; each has a different coloured background, white, dark brown and black, signifying the earth's rotation.

Brian

*Historically, interacting with a painting was to decipher it. The search for and discovery of specific meanings granted appreciation and understanding. I think some people today, when faced with abstract art, clam up, as the lack of cues and cryptic nature to the uninitiated can be daunting. In other words, to see a painting as it is and engage with it can be a difficult task...is it important to you how people perceive your work?*

Dragomir

The paintings are a thought process; driven and reflective. My process is organic, beginning the paintings with gestural brush marks, impulsive scrawling and graffiti. I introduce the layers in stages which informs the direction of the painting, being influenced by each previous



Selfie 5, 2017.  
Acrylic and spray paint on board.  
50cm x 70cm

Brian

*Do you think painting is or will become obsolete?*

Dragomir

The oldest known cave painting dates to more than 64,000 years ago, suggesting it was

mark and colour. They are suggestive in possibilities and provide some insight into the experience of creating the works. I make paintings that are exciting for me but also aim to engage and immerse a viewer's imagination.

Brian

created by Neanderthals. The history of painting would suggest that we have a natural urge to make paintings. It is visual communication that provides evidence of our physical and psychological presence in the world. So, I don't think that painting is in danger of dying. We encourage our children when they are young to paint and make art, only to tell them a few years later "you'll never make any money pursuing art, drop it!"

Brian

*I enjoy outsider artists' work, in part I guess because it was never created with the notion of the art market or the art industry in mind. There is a certain playfulness in your work, a interplay between childlike and adult perspectives.*

Dragomir

Some art, including some paintings have been made to serve as a commodity and some have been hijacked to do so. As an artist you should stay true to yourself and embrace your need for making.

*We have talked so far about works you created a few years ago. What are you up to now and how does the work differ to what you were doing then? How has your work evolved?*

Dragomir

My reason for painting is still the same; to reflect and document my own existence as a way of engaging with contemporary culture. Recent work is looser; I have slightly



Portrait of ... 2  
Acrylic and spray paint on canvas  
110cm x 150cm

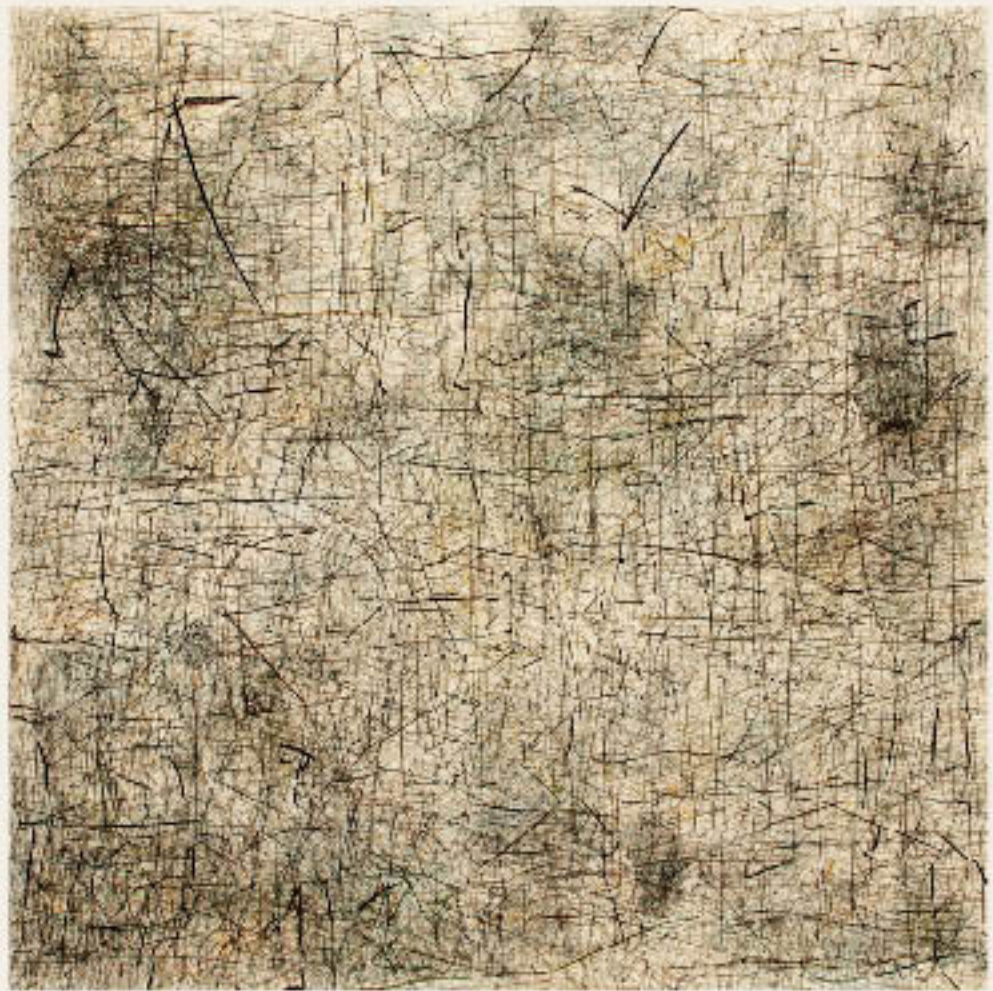
changed the way that I apply paint, leaving more room for elements of chance in the work. More recently I have started working with spray paint. Each painting has a different starting point, which makes work fresh and consistently challenging.

Brian

*Throughout, your works have contained familiar manmade objects such as boats and planes. These are archetypal, referencing childhood and also the power games adults like to play but they are not tied to any particular period of time or place. To me it seems you are ambivalent to a linear notion of time?*

Dragomir

The concept of time is very abstract, so my focus is not on a specific moment... A painting has a starting point; a thought, idea or a concept, which is informed by the present and past, and freely moves backwards, forwards and sideways creating the notion of a multi-dimensional timeline rather than being linear.



Time In Between 3, 2011. Acrylic, pencil and graphite on board. 110cm x 110cm

Brian

*As you mentioned earlier, your more recent work has become looser and the distinction between background and foreground is less pronounced. At first glance, it looks as if you have captured a moment of writhing colours and forms complementing together or competing for space.*

Dragomir

Layering and over painting creates perception of depth and volume, and is not about erasing or pushing away, but an invitation to step inside..



Almost Between 4, 2018.  
Acrylic, spray paint and permanent marker on canvas.  
200cm x 120cm



Paper Boat 2, 2012. Acrylic, Pencil and Graphite on  
Board.  
200cm x 120cm