

DELAY

"It's a cycle. I always know whether I'm before or after an exhibition. Right now I'm after an exhibition – And that makes you vulnerable because you've handed over all your weapons."

MAMMA ANDERSSON – INTERVIEW AT THE STUDIO "PAINTINGS AS WEAPONS", 2015

In the morning, I woke up at the cottage, at Pålsholm island in the inner archipelago of Porvoo. I had been woken by fierce rain in the early hours. It was still raining, and it was damp inside. I had optimistically set the alarm for five past eight (because I intend to write in the morning, by the water, in peace and quiet). I choose such waking-up times: five or three past something – it is meant to add a personal touch to the alarm, a greater chance of success.

In the end, I dozed until half past ten. In a state between sleep and wakefulness I kept whispering to myself, "Go on, rest, you must recover."

By the time I was up and wobbling down the wet forest path, I thought that since now I'm rested, I can write, later in the day or in the evening – "tonight's the night" – pained laugh on the path. I have had the desire and the intention to write about painting for some time now. And maybe this desire is in some way forever present alongside working. An attempt to understand or tell about it – this attempt should just be commenced – it's been a while since the last time.

After HIAP's previous Open Studios in May, I decided I would write in the summer. This decision was fuelled also by the conversations during the Open Studios.

"You have a lot of books in your studio – do you ever read them or do you just browse them?"

EXCERPT FROM CONVERSATION IN MAY 2019

I look at my studio and the things in it. It is logical to think that all the things in it are my equipment. If I think about concreteness, I too see books, magazines, printed pictures and texts. I see a sofa and a blanket. I often note down my thoughts on post-it notes and spread them around the room on the walls, in different groups and for different purposes.

On a more abstract level, all the activities taking place at the studio are part of the equipment and techniques of working. It is, of course, also the clearest concreteness of my work. Maybe the most important piece of equipment for me is the studio, it is figuratively and practically a roof for the work, under which I can consider the other equipment as settling. What I am trying to do before working itself, which naturally is a part of working, is to create the circumstances that enable painting. I am trying to make of myself a person who can function when they go to the studio.

In the hierarchy of necessary abilities, *concentration* is likely at the top. I just read how the painter Luc Tuymans finishes each one of their paintings in one sitting, Tal R claimed to do the same. Nice of them to tell!

I was surprised by how I haven't been able even to start my text, all summer long. By how it just is a distant, closed door, and I don't have the legs to walk to the handle.

"The first three hours of painting are hell."

LUC TUYMANS, THE GUARDIAN, 2012

Painterly thinking begins when painting begins.
When there exist places in which to get lost, and from where you can try to find your way out.
Before this, thinking about physical painting is impossible. Because it doesn't exist yet.

I am back at the studio.

"It's so easy to forget."

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Afterwards, when the pieces are finished, I often write down notes on them – I avoid forgetfulness– and gather motivation for future pieces, attempt to keep the cycle linked. A finished piece quickly starts to feel alien. I drift into the same un-state I was in before starting it.

"The painting to me should have an authority like a presence of a person."

TAL R, THE BROOKLYN RAIL INTERVIEW, 2015

A painting must survive independently, and it is not asked what they have read or possibly leafed through.

Through this, I also understand the personal nature of the question I was posed in May 2019. A question that is often asked of painters in particular.

"You can't start over every time.

So you need a lot of books."

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Karoliina Hellberg

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Translation: Anna Rawlings

Editorial support: Saara Karhunen

Layout: Otto Donner