

Michael Eudy

For the past few years, my work has exclusively taken the form of visual palindromes, or mirror images, that contain a multitude of methodologies and visual languages within the space of a single picture. Thick, built-up passages are set in opposition to areas of erasure and excavation. A naturalistic depiction faces off against an abstract one. Refinement and precision keep company with the raw and tactile. Strictly speaking, the content of each side of the mirror image is the same. But it's never identical.

I find that I relish reinterpreting my subject matter within the confines of the canvas, because my work deals in part with process and the physical act of painting. It's just as exciting, though, to go through the mental exercise of reinterpretation: to identify how I define, for example, a table, and to consider the possibilities if I were to comprehend that table in a completely different way. I think there are broader applications for this approach. As they get older and their identities harden, most people stop questioning their beliefs, their inclinations, their desires. In my work, at least, I do not allow myself that luxury.

It took me a long time to arrive at palindromes as a framework for my ideas, and it was a critical process. I had always worked as a sort of serial painter of series. While I was in Rome for my final year of graduate school, for example, I experimented with Italian kitsch painting and a sci-fi-inspired theme of space and time. The year prior to that, I was immersed in exploring the boundary and similarities between high and low art. I also explored image appropriation along the lines of Richard Prince. I was creating bodies of work based on a single conceptual model, progressing from series to series, with each discovery leading me to pursue new but related questions. As my ideas became more distilled, I began to combine multiple concepts into one painting. And as I did so, I saw a single theme emerge: the juxtaposition of opposites (or apparent opposites). Thus, my palindromes were born.

Though I am satisfied with this framework, I remain restlessly in search of answers to the eternal questions of what constitutes high art versus low art, good versus bad, beauty versus the ugly. I realize that it's impossible to find absolute answers, but I speak from personal experience when I say that it's possible to discover a great deal about the world, and yourself, if you at least embark on the quest.