

Daniel Sturgis
And then again

noshowspace

A conversation between Pia Gottschaller and Daniel Sturgis in his studio

Peckham, London, 17 January 2014

Pia Gottschaller: You said that the two paintings in the exhibition, *Happy in Your Skin* and *Over and Above* will be dated to 2014 because that's when they leave your studio. That is a dating criterion different from other painters.

Daniel Sturgis: Yes, but I often tinker with them a little bit. I might repaint an area, or I might slightly change a colour, so they take a long time to settle even though they're very designed or carefully constructed paintings. In fact this painting, *Over and Above*, I did twice. In the sense that I made another earlier version of it, which I wasn't happy with. There was another version which I threw away, but it was very, very similar. The problem I'd got was to do with the surface of it. Because I wanted the surface to be very particular. In one sense you could say they're very graphic paintings, but if they look too graphic on the surface, there's a big problem. So it's to make sure that it feels sort of touched.

PG: One of the things I noticed especially in the black areas is a very particular texture: is it something which you intentionally create or does it simply happen when you apply several layers of acrylic paint?

DS: Yes, it is intentional, it is built up of many layers of thin acrylic paint. When I apply and mix the paint it is almost like milk, a very thin consistency, and then I build up with brushes, and also with rollers, maybe five or six layers of each colour to get an intensity of colour, to get enough pigment on each area. The surface needs to feel like something's happened to it, but you can't

necessarily see brushstrokes or see how it's been made. But you can see that it's been made by hand.

PG: That's a very fine line to walk, isn't it? You insist on doing everything by hand, but you don't want it to be immediately apparent.

DS: Yes, I don't want it to be immediately apparent. I think it is interesting to see a painting that looks quite graphic, or a surface that has a lot of 'presence' and is very immediate, but yet you're drawn in to question it. You need to think about how it's been made, and then when you see how it actually has been made, you find something which is quite democratic. Democratic in the sense that it's very straight forwardly made and therefore there's no mystery. But it is a very fine line.

PG: On the subject of line: when you look very closely, you can see that you've drawn the checked pattern with pencil first, directly onto the white ground, and then you painted in the black squares. But do you draw the lines also by hand or do you use a ruler?

DS: The way it works is that I rule them on the white ground, and then paint in areas, and then I will redraw, after I have put a few coats of paint on. Redrawing the line will enable the editing process to go on, but also, crucially, it will mean that you'll be able to see the graphite line. So that you can see that it's not hidden, it's very much there. Or not *very* much there, it's *just* there. Just noticeable for people who look.

PG: So usually you would draw a pencil line twice: first when you start, and then you add several layers of paint and then...

DS: ...yes, nearer the end, I redraw it. And there's this little editing going on at that stage. This process means that it begins quite carefully construed, but then, when you get closer to the end, because you're following the lines that you've painted, the width of squares or the width of areas will have more irregularity in them. It is all very subtle but that way of balancing something between the very precise, perhaps even mathematical, and something being just not, is also important. It is not a given, there's a human touch in it, in the drawing of it.

PG: And do you do a preparatory drawing of any kind?

DS: So there are preparatory drawings, but the drawing happens in three ways, let's say: one is that I will do drawings where I'm working with colours. These are small paper works, which perhaps are almost like parts of the larger paintings. They're just small elements and I am really working out the colours but always to the scale of the painting. In a way they are more like the small paintings. And then there are some very rough sketches where I am working out how the overall composition of the painting will work. And then there's the drawing on the canvas. And when I draw on the canvas to begin with, I use a very hard pencil, so that I almost can't see what I'm doing. It's like a distancing device so that you are not getting too involved in the standing back and looking at how it's all working because you can't quite see, you can only see it close up. And that drawing on the canvas is a crucial thing for me really, and the way that I can't quite see what I am doing.

PG: Let me think about that for a minute because it is a very unusual method. Does this relate to an experience you have in life in general?

DS: There's a worry I think that all painters might have of getting too good at doing something, of knowing how to do things too well, and therefore you fall into the trap of repeating yourself or being always on familiar ground. And one of the ways I think in which I can avoid this is to allow in disruptions, particularly in this drawing stage. So there's always a slight nervousness in doing the drawing, but that nervousness actually is a positive thing. And it's to do with control, I suppose. In one way you could say they are very, very controlled paintings, but in another way you can look at them and say: actually, yes they are, but there is an element in-built in them which is about things not fitting together, or not balancing, or not quite composing themselves as you would think they could, or should. And the way that your mind's eye operates and the way the painting operates are slightly different, and that difference is about being open or susceptible to change.

PG: In *Happy in Your Skin* I think it's very hard to make sense of what you're seeing: on the one hand your eye is constantly drawn to another area because you want to resolve in your mind what's going on, and on the other hand there is that very stark contrast between black and white that makes some of these areas seem to come towards you.

DS: Yes, it's a painting from a series which I call the 'stack paintings', because what we have really is stacked bands, and in this case they're very checkered, I mean they're completely checkered. There are in fact in two different blacks in the painting, which you don't really notice, but you do just notice, I think. So the black of one band is a different black to the black of another band, and I think that helps create some of the slight coming forward, that spatial discrepancy.

PG: So you primarily use these very subtle changes because of what they do to your sense of space.

DS: Yes, because in a way the paintings are very flat, and there's a flatness to them but there is still a depth, and when you think about what that depth is in a painting, that's one of the things that's intriguing. The paintings are objects primarily, I mean you see them as objects, but yet they have a very shallow depth, I think, which I see as ever so slightly technological. It's interesting when you then have the bands of solid colour, to try and make sure that they don't seem too out of kilter with this space.

PG: What do you think would make them seem out of kilter?

DS: If it feels too familiar, like a sky, or you read it too much as something else.

PG: Referencing nature...

DS: Yes. So they need to act as colours on their own, but also that you have associations with those colours, but you're not quite sure exactly what they are. And that's also with the metallic paints on the discs.

PG: Well that is a very peculiar unique hue. Does it come out of a tube like that or did you mix it?

DS: It would be mixed. It would be a slightly tinted pink.

PG: Is the lower one exactly the same hue?

DS: Yes they will be the same, but you often feel, because of where they're placed, you see them as slightly different. And what intrigues me is that the colours of the discs...because of the way the discs operate, sort of balance but don't balance. The colours of the discs also oscillate, slightly, not wildly, but they oscillate slightly. In this painting obviously, because it's a metallic pigment, as the light changes they become

even more unstable.

PG: Although the upper one seems more stable because it's sort of balanced at the centre of the square, while the lower one hangs out in space.

DS: Yes, so it takes a bit of time to work out what's happening, but the logic of it in a sense—because there is always a logic—is that the checks on the bottom band don't fit the band. So that creates a slight compression.

PG: Yes, when you look more closely you can see that the lower disc does sit at the edge of that white area, but I don't think that you see that when you're standing further away, because the one right next to it...well maybe that's just me! It's very unstable down there.

DS: No I think you're right, it's more unstable.

PG: And then you've got this grey element along the left hand edge. You know what, I am just seeing this third pink disk. I didn't see it before.

DS: Oh you know it's always been there. The way you look at the painting and the way your mind's eye looks at the painting is different. And that's one of the things which interests me, with all the work really. The discs can be read slightly anthropomorphically, in the sense that you give them character, or you feel that they have character, but also you feel that they're so unstable that you could move them—this field could be there or that could be there—and that again creates a kind of openness and conditionality. And then you can also have elements where you just don't see clearly at first.

PG: Yes, that was really bizarre. So do you think that seeing is a very unstable act in and of itself, as in we now know for example that there are blind spots in our eyes for which our brain compensates? Is that something that you're thinking of in a larger context?

DS: I am thinking two things: yes, you always have to question what you see, and the idea of using the very subtle black or colour variations, in something that looks quite simple, is a way of asking people to unpick how something has been constructed or something has been made. And I think that the idea of painting, or what a painting might mean, being open and not being a certainty or a statement of complete intent, having an element of doubt in it is also an important consideration. A very human consideration as well actually. So it's kind of partly to do with not taking things always for granted, or not assuming things in the painting, but there's a broader issue there which is in the world as well.

PG: Is it a perfect square?

DS: The painting's a square. It's always interesting with a square painting, you never read them as a square, do you? They're both perfect squares. There are various sizes that I work with, and the paintings tend to be either six foot squares—like these—or they're smaller works. On this scale you measure a painting by your body really. You read it physically with your body as well. And you know that you read it physically with your body in the sense that there are moments in which you want to move your viewpoint, because although they're big, clear paintings, they work on quite an intimate level. So they draw you in and you want to bend down and look at something and you realise that in fact the way you're reading it is quite a physical way of reading it. Although they're not physical in a kind of gestural sense, they don't look like there's been a great deal of... well there's been a lot of physical labour in it, which you can read, but it's of a refined manner, the physical labour.

PG: Just as a counterexample, I am thinking of the recent Sarah Morris exhibition at White Cube in Bermondsey, which had Brazil as a theme, and in the

first big room, there were maybe twenty paintings, some of them larger and some of them smaller than yours. But because she taped them so precisely, you do not relate to them in a physical way. She also uses lacquer which creates such glossy surfaces that you feel thrown out of the painting rather than drawn in. And if you come up close to see how something is taped or if there is any trace of a hand, you're not being rewarded in that sense. It is a bit of a repelling experience, not as far as the work is concerned, but as far as your physical engagement is concerned. You on the other hand have used a number of strategies to draw the viewer into your work and close up, to the degree that when you're down there looking at that pink disc, you're so close to it that you cannot take the whole painting in. Not unlike what happens with a Barnett Newman painting as well.

DS: I think it is all about balancing on lines really, or balancing between positions. Perhaps the paintings look as though they've been manufactured in a much more hands-off way, and you kind of assume that perhaps they have been taped or that they have been painted in a way which is about a mechanical kind of process. So you could be mistaken to think they were made in one way, but then realize they're been done in another, and that realization puts you slightly on guard. It creates an element of doubt or anxiety. Of not quite being certain of what you're getting. But then you also realise that this is actually a painting which has been made in a particular way and must have taken a huge amount of time, and why would you do it like that? There might be a better way! It almost feels a little bit wrong perhaps.

PG: Wrong in which way?

DS: The process of making. To do with being painted by hand, being drawn, in what I call a democratic manner—there's no mystery in its making. But the mystery actually is that the process that's being used is perhaps slightly at odds with the composition.

PG: Yes, there is a tension there. Let me ask you then if you have tried using masking tape, perhaps in the very beginning of these checkered series, or at any other point?

DS: I have used tape, and I use tape on the edges of the paintings because the paintings goes round the edge, and that edge shows a knowledge, I suppose, of the... the use of tape is obviously embedded within abstract painting discourse from the last century, and the decision to use it or the decision not to use it is a very loaded decision, I think, and therefore to allude to that just on the very edge of a painting seems to be an appropriate way to do it. Because you're showing an awareness of a precedent and then not using it. But what I do use is what I call templates. Often with all the work I might make cardboard cut-outs of shapes or various elements, which in a way is perhaps a slightly older process, which again is a kind of reference.

PG: A reference to someone like Malevich, for example? Or more as a general reference?

DS: I wouldn't say I'm referencing Malevich overtly with the use of a template, but looking at the pencil line and the templated shape, yes, there are many historical precedents for that. There are certain Bridget Riley paintings where she would be doing that, as an example.

PG: So the idea of using tape on the edge means that you're also saying: this is where the image ends, and I let you see that it doesn't wrap all the way to the reverse, because that makes the image you see into an image rather than something that tries to create an illusion of any kind?

DS: Yes, that's right.

PG: And you have painted more or less one third of the depth of the tacking margin. That is something which,

if I am not mistaken, the Abstract Expressionists started doing—some left it entirely exposed.

DS: The depth is quite wide actually, I mean it's clearly no mistake, and what I am doing is emphasising the object nature of the painting, rather than it being a purely frontal experience, and that partly again relates to the idea of the body. And yes of course it draws you to another historical precedent.

PG: A logical conclusion is then that you don't frame your works?

DS: No they have been framed, by people who have bought them, and it always is a bit of a dilemma, because what they tend to do is they make a box frame, so you can see some of the edge, but I am never very happy with that, because the vulnerability of the surface, which is something you do see, the way they've been made with the graphite lines, the slowness of the touch, you can lose in a frame.

PG: Perhaps one more question about this work before we move on: I am very impressed by how even this grey area looks, and I cannot tell if you applied the paint with a roller or brush.

DS: The way it has been done is that the primer is rolled first, and that would help create the slight kind of texture in it. And then I'll be using soft sable brushes. So it's to do with many coats and then you get it very even.

PG: So you basically keep putting layers on until you have an evenness you like?

DS: Yes, and sometimes there is sanding down a little bit, to get rid of imperfections, but you don't want to do that too much because then you lose the priming.

PG: In *Over and Above*, the texture is more apparent.

DS: Yes, well when I said I had to remake this painting, it was to do with getting that texture right, which as I said is really coming through from the priming, which is always such a crucial moment in making a painting—how many layers of primer you put on, and how you put it on, and the colour of it. The primed surface texture removes an element of the graphic from the painting and gives it a physicality. That's the point. The quality of surface surprises you. But also there's no mystery in it, it's not a mysterious way of putting on paint, it's just what paint does naturally if you put many smooth rolled layers on.

PG: I would not say that there is absolutely no mystery...

DS: ...oh really? Well, no mystery to me...

PG: You made it so if you don't know who does. You could for instance go for a higher degree of visible brushwork if you wanted to, so as we were saying before, it really is a very fine balance that you're aiming to achieve.

DS: Yes, the decision around not showing the brushwork or not using a brush in a very gestural way—because I would say that you can see that the paintings have been made with brushes—is that for me the usual physical or gestural brushwork is such a loaded element within painting's discourse that it's quite a problematic area to do with authorship, and Self. In fact not to do it is also very loaded, but in a different way.

PG: Let me ask you about the black form in the upper left area: I noticed that there is a thin matte border going around the inside edge, and the rest of the form is painted in a slightly shinier black. Is that difference in gloss intentional?

DS: The edge is the result of the redrawing and repainting of it, and you probably will be able to see it a little bit in other areas. And that will be to do with using a very fine brush at the edge of the line of each side, to keep it very sharp and crisp. But also this black is the most medium rich area as well. Using dark colours, using greys is very tricky.

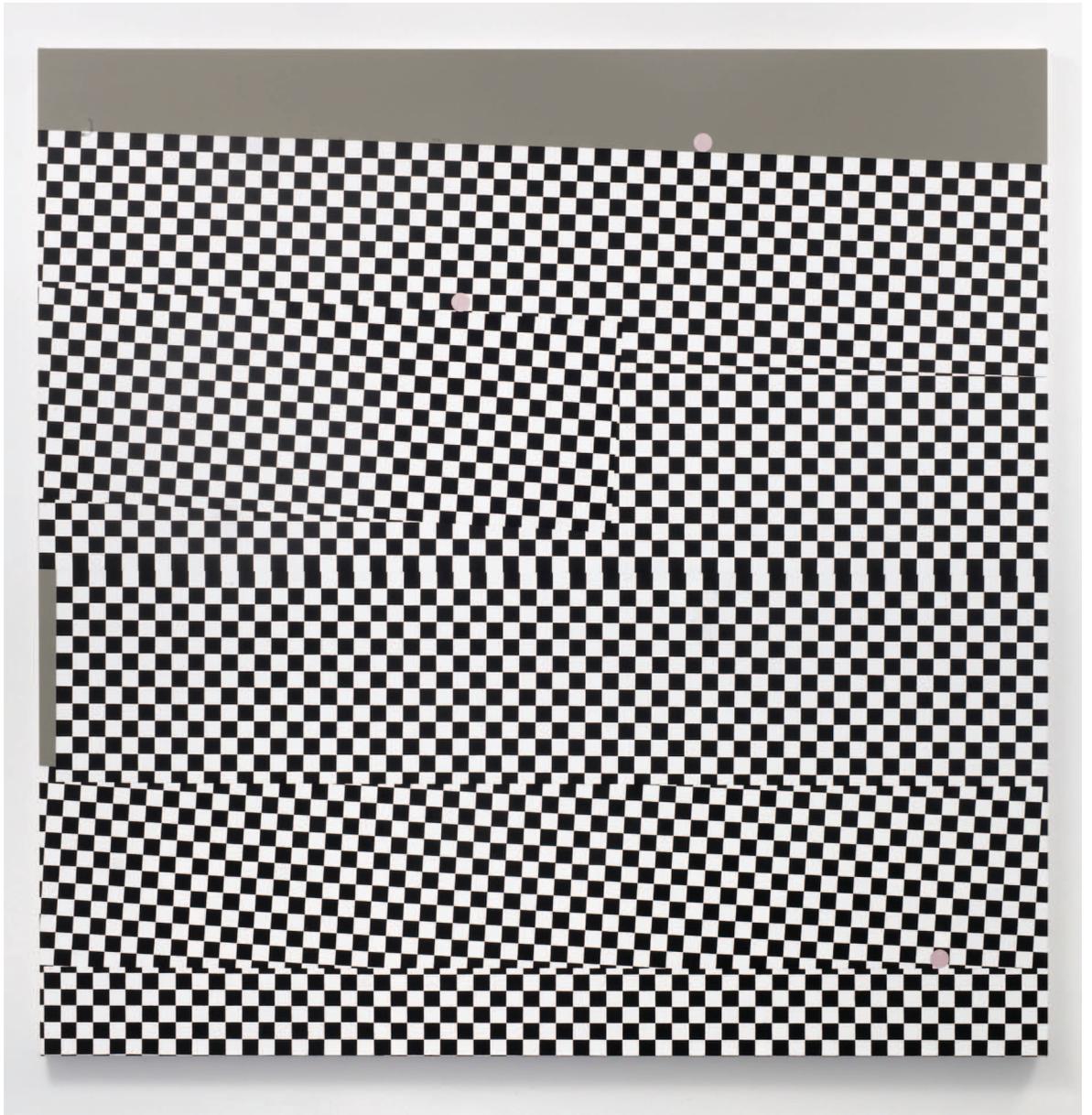
PG: Is there one colour that you stay away from because you think it's treacherous, or because you dislike it?

DS: I am not sure about that. There may well be, but there are certain colours which I find difficult to use and therefore go to. It's very difficult to use red, partly to do with the fact that it's quite dark. Or yellow is a colour which I think is very tricky because it is such a broad colour. It's one of the hardest ones to do a painting with. A few years ago I worked with another painter on curating a big exhibition of Jeremy Moon's, the British abstract artist, paintings.¹ Moon said that yellow is the hardest colour to paint and he did this amazing yellow painting *Golden Age* in 1966, which was like a spectrum of yellow waves, and he is absolutely right, because the way your eye sees yellow, whether it's near the orange or the green end of that spectrum, seems to change with light. It is a very, very unstable colour. You obviously read colour against other colours, and the slight discordances you can create between palettes is wonderful. I want those combinations to feel familiar but also not quite right.

PG: When you start work on such a large painting, do you know in advance which grey shade is going where?

DS: Not quite. I will have worked out the colours that I want to use, and I will have worked out the shapes, and

1 *Jeremy Moon a retrospective*, curated by Daniel Sturgis and Richard Kirwan, Harris Museum Preston and tour 2000.



Happy in Your Skin, 2014

Acrylic on canvas, 1832 x 1832 mm



Over and Above, 2014

Acrylic on canvas, 1832 x 1832 mm

then it's a slow process I suppose of how one matches and balances.

PG: It's a Kandinskyesque thing, in a sense. I saw the Palermo postcard up on the ledge there with his grey cloud object. He used the same shape and colour as part of a print set called *Four Prototypes* where every shape is balanced with its 'perfect' colour match: a blue isosceles triangle, a black square, the grey cloud and a different green triangle. These combinations are based on Kandinsky's idea that every colour longs for a specific form. Regarding the little round forms in *Over and Above*, and the fact that they are divided into halves, more or less, but always composed of the same hue but different values, light blue and dark blue etc., and the fact that you have placed the dividing line at different angles gives me the sense that they're rolling around.

DS: Yes, they make them more volatile so that again they are vulnerable, they create the opportunity that they can change. You know obviously paintings don't move, it's very solid, nothing's going anywhere, but within your mind's eye it gives you the possibility to rearrange, or the possibility that things are just frozen a little bit in time, that they're just paused.

PG: Well it looks really dangerous what two of them are doing, like they might just fall into a crevice, an abyss.

DS: I like the way one humanises shapes. It's something I first thought about in relation to Baroque architecture in fact, Borromini's use of decoration. I mean it's an extraordinary thing to be doing. And there is an element which is almost...the circles are almost cartoonised. But then you think, how can you just cartoonise a circle. It's just a circle.

PG: It is an extreme form of abstraction. In this context I was wondering if there is a sort of digital aesthetic to your work?

DS: We live in a digital environment and the space in paintings, and the way that very shallow space is construed could yes be a digital space, but it could also be a much more analogue space, a historical space even.

PG: The digital world is of course completely immaterial, while your paintings consist quite tangibly of paint. It really is interesting how here you've made these pencil lines that visible. What happens when you look at them is that you start redrawing them in your mind. It might compare to looking at a 'taglio' by Lucio Fontana where probably almost everyone imagines what it feels like being engaged in the same act.

DS: That's fascinating. I think there is something very known about a ruled pencil line. It's an understood...

PG: Because that's how we all learn to draw. Is it also your intention that when you step back the outline of the circles is also very noticeable?

DS: Yes, you should be able to see them. It's almost like a slow focusing, really. And then the pencil is very important, because otherwise that idea of the viewer being able to see how it's made and identifying with how it's made slightly goes.

PG: In this case you probably also started with a drawing on paper first?

DS: Yes. This is from a series of paintings which I call the 'boulder' paintings, in the sense that they're almost, but not quite, like boulders or rocks. You can think of them like that, but then they are so far removed from rocks and boulders you find the idea hard to believe. In a way I see them as acting as a homage to a tradition in British modernist abstraction. And using the greys is important. They begin with drawings working out how they're going to touch or not touch, whether you think they are all touching or not.

PG: That's what keeps you on your feet, or on your eyes.

DS: You're not quite sure how they balance, yes.

PG: I think the fact that the upper grey shape overlaps with the one in the centre is unsettling because otherwise you could imagine that all of these shapes are just purely diagrammatic forms. They move, but they never quite touch on a flat plane. The one exception is this bit there which gives you a sense of spatiality that you don't quite understand. With these shapes I would not be able to predict how they extend out towards the back.

DS: I see them as operating in a very shallow space, but there is a space there, there is a depth. But it takes some time to work what that depth is.

PG: Yes, and you've got a lot of tension between the spaces.

DS: The red is a dark colour, so the brightness of it is tonally quite similar to the greys.

PG: Talking about very fine differences, please tell me more about the first version of *Over and Above*, why you discarded it, and if it had exactly the same dimensions, scale and so forth.

DS: It was the same dimensions, same scale, same templated cardboard used to make it, and the problem was to do with the surface of the painting, and the solidness of the colour. I want the paintings to have a feeling that they've almost made themselves. As you know the labour and time and making process is evident in the paintings, but yet there's an almost relaxed quality to them that feels as if they haven't been laboured or worked on heavily. That was what was wrong. It was feeling like it had been worked on too heavily. And it

was to do with the way that the many coats of primer and the coats of red paint primarily were seeming too touched, too...

PG: ...visceral?

DS: Yes, too visceral. And if that does happen I think well actually there's something's wrong, and if it's bugging me, it has to change.

PG: And because sanding down acrylic layers is not that easy to do, is it?

DS: Well no, it's not that easy to do without leaving a trace. And of course one of the nice things about a painting is that you can just paint over it, but actually if you want it to look like it's just there, and it has that quality to it which is about time and labour, but also has a feeling that it is a composition or a painting that has a particular attitude to the way that it's been made. And if it feels too made, or too worked, that something can go.

PG: You mentioned Bridget Riley earlier on: when you think about the quality of a surface, which other painters do you remember looking at or whose surfaces would you try to emulate?

DS: Ah that's an interesting question. Thinking about the quality of the surface, or the way that painters use their surface.

PG: Yes, because you also alluded to paint being skin in the title of the check painting?

DS: Yes, it is really fascinating idea, and I think if one looks at early Bridget Riley paintings, perhaps. You know it's fascinating with her—I think I'm right in saying that with her late work she paints of course the painting initially in acrylic, and then puts an oil on top, so there's a final skin of oil paint. She used commercial

paints with the black and white ones, and then when colour comes in she begins using the acrylics. And the works I particularly love are the first colour ones, like *Cataract III* which is an amazing painting. And all those series have a surface that is very special in the sense that it reveals its making in a very exposed way, really. In a no-nonsense way.

PG: That's very British notion, isn't it? It's a huge generalisation, of course, but I mean it in the sense that a French or Italian painter perhaps would not be attracted to that quality in the same way.

DS: Maybe that's right. But as to other painters, when thinking about particular surfaces: I love Barnett Newman surfaces. The way the colour is held and the way that you see how it's been made, but it's not indulgent. In a different way I see something similar in John Wesley's painting or early Patrick Caulfield or Jeremy Moon work. But I think all painting surfaces draw you into their making, if one's intrigued...it is to do with that balance of seeing how something is made, but not indulging in it somehow. The idea of fetishising a surface, which you see in some painters' work, is something that I am not so interested in. That somehow becomes too loaded.

PG: It's always been interesting to me that art historians often lump together Rothko, Newman, Still, Kline, and Pollock because although they were working at the same time, and although they might have shared a basic idea of what you can make a painting do, as an object that sits on a wall, everything else differed widely: how they manipulated the paint, how they related to paint, how they put it on, with a brush or stick or a roller. Pollock applies it with a stick, Rothko sits on a chair and watches his assistants brush it on, in the chapel paintings at least, and you wonder what this physical distance to your surface makes you do? And then Barnett Newman didn't have an assistant, you

never see any real brushwork in his post-1948 works, no matter how large the painting is, except in the zips. The surfaces are very clear, present and modest. And I am always struck by how you can read so much from that, although it's very subtle, barely there at all.

DS: I think that the familiarity that people have with paint—having experienced paint as a child, or painted a house or a door, that the familiarity people have with the material means that you can see or imagine how something has been made, very evidently perhaps with certain works. But then when looking at works which are much more refined, that you still kind of read it, you know how would you do that? But maybe that's what a painter does, how would you do that, how would you make that? Because there is no mystery in the material, whereas if you're looking at special effects in a film, you have no idea how they do that. And that's one of the things that's very nice about painting is that a lot of people have that association with it. Well how would that happen?

PG: I found something very similar in the psychophysical test that I conducted recently, in which people, some of which have nothing to do with art at all, said that they based their judgements on whether they have any personal experience of having painted with particular materials or not.² So it seems to be very human to try to relate a physical trace to the process that created it. It shows how we see with our brain rather than our eyes. And just this morning I read that new research reveals that the human brain can process images in 13 milliseconds, much more quickly than the 100 milliseconds previously suggested.

DS: I think the way that time is held in a painting is interesting, that you think you see something very

2 As part of the Caroline Villers Research Fellowship 2012-13 at the Courtauld Institute of Art, London.

quickly. With the paintings I make—they seem to be present in a very immediate way, and then slowly you realise that the way you read it is slowed down, the way it's been made reveals a kind of slowness to it.

PG: It's almost like you're fossilising time.

DS: Yes, and that idea that there's a time that it's been made, all paintings hold the time that they have been made, you kind of see it, or you think you see it, but then is that right? That's when the tension arises, and the uncertainty.

Pia Gottschaller is a technical art historian who specialises in the artistic practices of modern and contemporary painters. Her most recent research interests concern the influence of masking tape on the development of modernist abstraction and issues of visual perception.

Daniel Sturgis

Born 1966. Lives and works in London

Education

1986-1989 Camberwell College of Arts, BA Fine Art

1992-1994 Goldsmiths College, MA Fine Art

1999-2000 British School in Rome, Rome Scholarship

Solo exhibitions

- 2014 *And then again*, noshowspace, London
- 2013 *New Works*, Galerie Hollenbach, Stuttgart
- 2010 *New Works*, Galerie Hollenbach, Stuttgart
Conversation Pieces, The Apartment, Athens
- 2008 *Possibilities in Geometric Abstraction*, Galerie Hollenbach, Stuttgart
Private Vista, Smart Project Space, Amsterdam
- 2007 *Equal Minds*, Westbrook Gallery, London
Everybody Loves Somebody, Chinati Foundation, Marfa Texas
- 2006 *Tough Love*, Galerie Hollenbach, Stuttgart
- 2005 *High Repose*, Cynthia Broan Gallery, New York
Abstract Logic, Wordsworth Trust, Grasmere
- 2004 *Daniel Sturgis*, The Apartment, Athens
- 2003 *Daniel Sturgis*, Reinier van Ewijk Projects, Amsterdam
- 2002 *New Paintings*, Richard Salmon Gallery, London
- 2001 *New Paintings*, Berwick Gymnasium Gallery, Berwick upon Tweed
- 1997 *Daniel Sturgis*, Camden Arts Centre, London

Selected group exhibitions

- 2014 *Crossing Lines*, & Model, Leeds
- 2013 *Theatrical Dynamics*, Torrance Art Museum, California
Delightful, Paisley Museum and Art Gallery, Paisley
- 2012 *Red White and Blue*, Chelsea Space, London
Ha Ha What Does This Represent, Standpoint Gallery, London
Means Without Ends, Pippy Houldsworth Gallery, London
- 2011 *The Indiscipline of Painting*, Tate St Ives and Mead Gallery Warwick
Friendship of the Peoples, Simon Oldfield Gallery, London
- 2010 *John Moores 26*, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool (Prizewinner)
Modern Love, Simon Oldfield Gallery, London

- 2009 *Fate and Freewill*, Contemporary Art Space, Riverside, California
Instants et Glissements, La box, École Nationale Supérieure d'Art de Bourges, Bourges
Arbeiten auf Papier, Galerie Hollenbach, Stuttgart
La Peinture est Presque Abstraite, Transpalette, Bourges
Plastic Culture: Legacies of Pop 1987 - 2008, Harris Museum, Preston
Invisible Cities, Jerwood Space, London
Superabundant, Turner Contemporary, Margate
- 2008 *Digital Romance: The Aris Stoidis Collection*, Vilka, Thessalonica
The Sublime Landscape, Project 4, Washington D.C.
- 2007 *British Painting*, Galerie Hollenbach, Stuttgart
- 2006 *Daniel Sturgis & Nina Bovasso*, The Apartment, Athens
5 Years, The Apartment, Athens
Sweetness and Light, Marksman Gallery, Reading
Fresh, Elizabeth Leach Gallery, Portland, Oregon
- 2005 *About Painting 2*, Galerie Hollenbach, Stuttgart
Painting: London, Gallery Holly Snapp, Venice
- 2004 *John Moores 24*, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool
New Paintings, Galerie Hollenbach, Zurich
Summer Breeze, The Apartment, Athens
- 2003 *About Painting*, Galerie Hollenbach, Stuttgart
Memory and Forgetting, Hatton Gallery, Newcastle and Arts Sway, New Forest, Angel Row, Nottingham.
- 2002 *Mathématique*, Danielle Arnaud, London
Paintings as a Foreign Language, Edificio Cultura Inglesa, São Paulo
- 2001 *Vivid*, Richard Salmon Gallery, London and Mead Gallery Warwick, Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art, Sunderland
Surface Tension - New British Painting, Gallery Holly Snapp, Venice
Complementary Studies - Recent Abstract Painting, Harris Museum, Preston
All of My Heart, Gallery Hotel Art, Florence
- 2000 *Perfidy*, Sante Marie de La Tourette, Eveux-sur-l'Arbresle, Lyon
Perfidy, Surviving Modernism, Kettle's Yard, Cambridge
Versailles, Trinity Gardens, London
- 1999 *Villa Crispi*, Naples
- 1998 *Dumbpop*, Jerwood Space, London
Close up on Pattern, Laure Genillard Gallery, London
Yellow, Todd Gallery, London
Liz Arnold, Jane Simpson, Daniel Sturgis, The Approach, London
- 1996 *Brian Eno, Richard Kirwan, Charlotte Von Poehl, Daniel Sturgis*, Todd Gallery, London
Out of Order, Independent Art Space, London
Really Out of Order, Cornerhouse Gallery, Manchester and John Hansard Gallery, Southampton
- 1995 *Hardwork*, 43 Exmouth Market, London

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