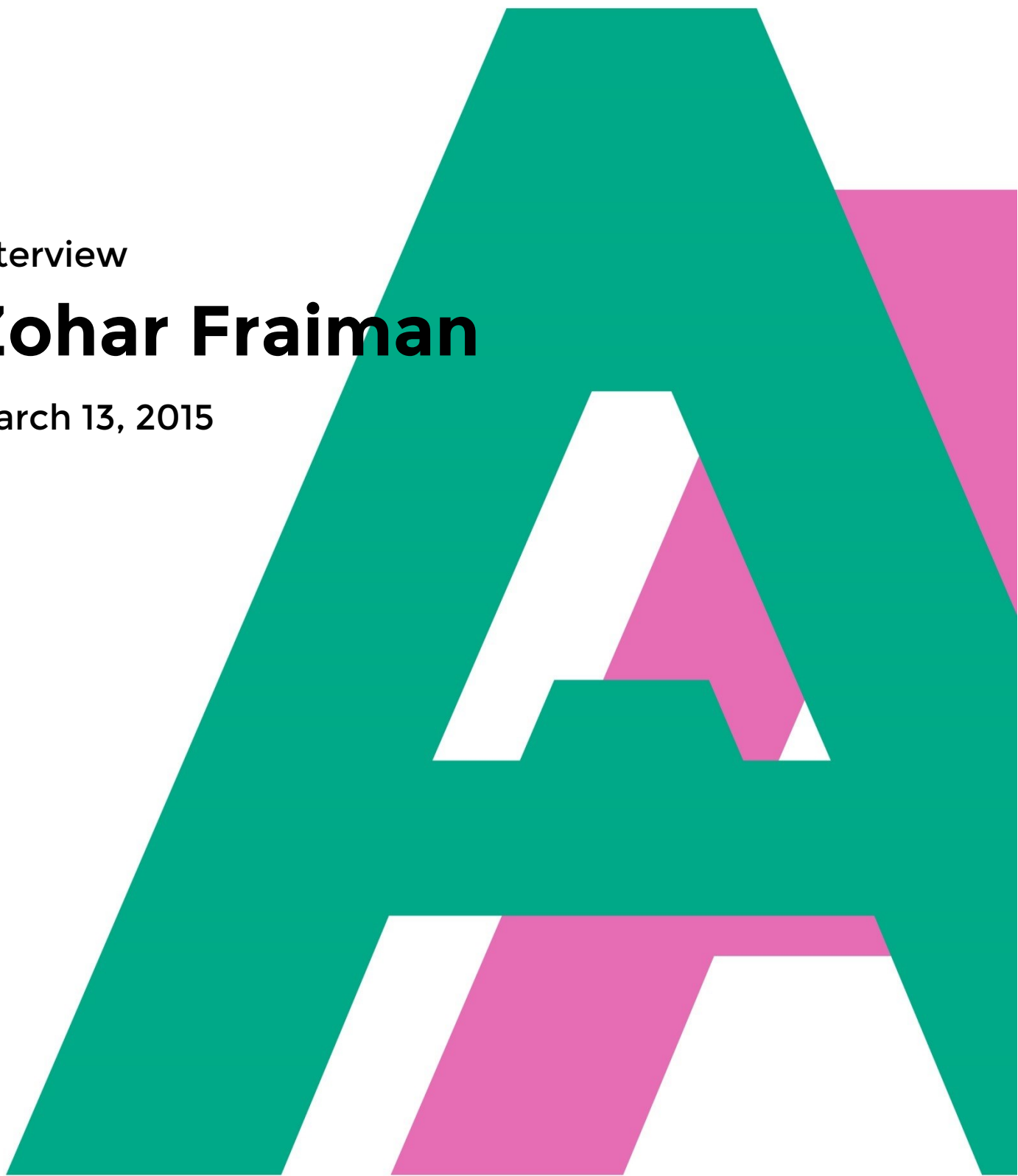


**Age of
Artists**

Interview

Zohar Fraiman

March 13, 2015



The interview was conducted by Dirk Dobiéy on March 13th, 2015 in Berlin.

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Interview

AoA: How did you get into art?

Zohar Fraiman: Ever since I remember myself as a child, I always have been painting and drawing. The background where I came from wasn't exactly encouraging, but I was very stubborn and I was very passionate. For me this was like a place or refuge to go to. My room, my sketchbook, or to my paintings, and just be able to engage with myself and to bring something out.

AoA: Do you know when it started?

Zohar Fraiman: I remember when I was in kinder garden, they tried to correct the way I was drawing and writing, because I write in a very funny way with my left hand and I remember that I've been insisting "No, that is the way, I am doing it this way". I was very stubborn about that from the beginning. Also now I write and paint with my left hand.

AoA: It sounds not like a very supportive environment where you could say “my family, my friends, the society pushed me towards art”.

Zohar Fraiman: My family is very business oriented. In my family, there are a lot of engineers and entrepreneurs. They were all hoping that I would go into the same direction, but for me it was very clear that I did not want to do that. It was clear, that my first agenda wasn't making a decent living or even a very good living, but for me it was more like “you have to pursue, what really interests you”. For me it was painting and drawing, and being an artist.

AoA: But they did not stop you?

Zohar Fraiman: They couldn't (laughs)!

AoA: One thing is to draw and to see it as an alternative, but when and why did you decide to become an artist?

Zohar Fraiman: At fourteen, I met my best friend in high school. In her family, they are all artists! Her mother is ballerina and her father is a Jewish calligrapher. In her family they have people that are doing photography, also fine arts etc. I remember saying to her when I was fifteen “All I want to do is to be an artist”, and she said, “Then, just do it! Having her, her mother and their family as role models suddenly opened up for the possibility to really be able to see that happen.

AoA: That it could work in a way?

Zohar Fraiman: Yes exactly, and I think these role models, especially a woman, so her mother, who was very strong and that encouraged her children to “Do what you want to do!” I think that was very important for me to see that as a teenager growing up. Before that I hadn't such an example in my family. A year after, I

enrolled into a painting and drawing high school in Jerusalem. I instantly just couldn't stop! I just could continue taking upon myself more and more extra studies and then when I was seventeen, I enrolled there for the full studies. That's where I studied before coming to Berlin.

AoA: How about setbacks or crises along the way?

Zohar Fraiman: Well, there are inner conflicts and there are outer causes that can make it difficult for you to pursue your will and your need to be an artist. The thing is that inside me actually becoming an artist and a painter helped me to deal with them and with myself. Like I said before, it was kind of a refuge.

AoA: Therapy in a way? I am not suggesting you have to heal yourself but it does sounds at least like meditation.

Zohar Fraiman: Yes I think so. I think it is very meditative, I mean it can also be the opposite being an artist! It can be frustrating like "Oh, what I am doing isn't coming the way I wanted to!", but it's a process. You are learning how to grow and develop yourself. This is the sort of inner reflection place that painting and being an artist has given me. From outside, there are always the usual conflicts, especially I feel that lot of people don't accept the fact that you are an artist. A lot of people they say "So, what do you do?", and you answer "I am an artist". I guess in Tel-Aviv it's like "Oh Yeah! Cool!", because Tel-Aviv is very different and it's like an island when it comes to this sort of things, but a lot of people are just simply like "Yeah... but what does that mean you are an artist?" They don't recognize you for what you do. There are so many difficulties in Israel except for the known conflicts. I mean financially and socially it is very difficult there. On a daily basis many people don't recognize artists; they think that it is useless or unrealistic. Also financially, it is a very big challenge, because it is very unpredictable. That is an outer conflict. You really do not know when your next pay is going to be. You could sell very well

and suddenly nothing comes. You have to kind of know how to deal with that.

AoA: Uncertainty.

Zohar Fraiman: Yes!

AoA: What is your working process? How does it start and where is the end, if there is any?

Zohar Fraiman: My working process starts with inspiration. I need to be inspired by certain ideas or I engage usually in several topics over and over again. Now for several years I am relating to the theme of possession in my work. I am constantly looking, reading, watching things that are related to the subject of possession.

AoA: In all aspects: possession of things, possession of people?

Zohar Fraiman: I mean possession as a very broad definition, but what brought me into the theme of possession is a Jewish folklore story called the Dybbuk, where a woman is possessed on her wedding day by a spirit, a demon, a ghost. There is a lot of interpretation to what it is. There are many folklore stories about possession and also as a question today: "what is possession for us?" Is it about somebody that has gone insane? Or is it something that really physically happens to you, or a spirit that enters your soul? I mean, depending on whom you ask, there are many different perspectives. So I read a lot about this, I watch films- I gather a lot of images and then I make a lot of sketches.

AoA: Where do these images come from? Is it in newspapers and you think "Oh that fits the theme of possession" or where do you find them?

Zohar Fraiman: Anywhere! There are also images that I create when I imagine possession.

AoA: Where do you think this inspiration comes from initially?
Where does that theme come from?

Zohar Fraiman: Well for me, it is the story of the Dybbuk. There are many versions of it. The classical film that was made in Poland in the late thirties, is about a woman possessed on the day of her wedding by someone she used to know. She cannot proceed with the wedding, she basically goes into a trance, and they have to exorcise with some kind of mystical power to try to remove the spirit from her soul. She chooses to die with that spirit that possesses her. She would rather die with this spirit than proceed with the wedding. So to me, I see this as a woman, who is not physically or emotionally ready for a fixed marriage and for me a lot to discuss: forced marriage and women that are not aware or able to get to know their own sexuality. It has a lot to do with the society where I grew up, a religious society.

AoA: On the other side, the positive aspect of the story would be the expression of free will.

Zohar Fraiman: Maybe possession is your own way to gain free will.

AoA: Exploring your own sexuality. Choosing the husband you like. These are aspects of autonomy as an individual. You said your background and your life drove you to that theme and this theme now defines what you work on. Then comes the inspiration and ideas around the theme and it can come from everywhere. How do you proceed then?

Zohar Fraiman: I mean it is a lot of ideas, a lot of sketches and then from the sketch I go into a painting.

AoA: But every sketch becomes a painting?

Zohar Fraiman: No (laughs)!

AoA: Tell me about that decision process between sketches. How many? What is the right sketch to move on with, how does it look like?

Zohar Fraiman: I spend a certain amount of time collecting. I have an idea in my head but I am not sure how to realize it. I collect for that idea many different sources that I could use. I guess, it's very intuitive when you say "that's it". It's not a rational decision like "Oh, it's going to work!" It's a very intuitive to say "this is the image that I was looking for and this isn't".

AoA: Does it happen sometimes that you make a decision for a sketch and the next morning you decide that it was wrong?

Zohar Fraiman: Of course (laughs). The next day I come like "Oh it was terrible" and the next days "No, that was great! My mind is playing a lot of tricks on me, saying it is good, it is not... Sometimes I am just like "Let's just do it" and then see if it's good after.

AoA: So when moving from sketch to painting however, it is about doing it instead of doubting further. You need to put it out there?

Zohar Fraiman: Yes, sometimes you just need to take that risk to see if there is really something there that is sustainable, that is strong, that has some sort of impact in it or if I am just imagining it. A friend of mine used to say "sometimes it's not good to think so much".

AoA: Your decision-making process seems to be an emotional one with subconscious elements. You don't sit there and make a pro/con table or balance sheet with arguments? Is there special state of mind that you need in order to make such decisions?

Zohar Fraiman: Yes, I would say so. I think also with time you learn to prepare yourself. There are certain moods that I have that make

it very difficult for me to paint, because painting needs a lot of concentration I think. I build also things, I build this wooden boxes and I do drawings etc. The mood that I need to build, I mean for me it's really easy to do that, because it is quite technical, but when I am painting, I need to give a lot of different sides and qualities within myself at the same time. So you do need a certain condition, but with time you learn how to put yourself in that state or to ignore little things that might be bothering or interrupting you.

AoA: Do you have an example that brings you into this state? What are the tricks you use? It seems to me that you are describing a necessary focus. You said with time, you learn how to put yourself into that state. Can you describe that?

Zohar Fraiman: I can try to describe it, because it's very abstract. Again, it comes back to inspiration. I try to think about what I really want to express with the painting. The painting is at first a white canvas, and I imagine everything that I could put into it. It's again thinking about inspiration. I think about colors and paintings I love, and things that I want to see, that are only in my head but that are not out there. Then I just try to say "Everything else? Doesn't matter!" (laughs). Everything else is on hold and I need to just think about this inspiration turned into color, and textures, and shapes.

AoA: You speak also of time in a way. For instance a couple of years ago you haven't been able to get rid of distractions easily and that you are able now to put the distraction away more easily.

Zohar Fraiman: I think it is the contrary. When I was young I had fewer distractions and as you get older you have bigger problems. When I was younger, I think, I was five times more productive than I am now, because my goals were different. For me painting was just like "paint". Now I have the need to put much more context

into each painting. Before it was just like I would throw up a painting. Well, this sounds very vulgar (laughs).

AoA: Do you think that art education in itself supported this sort of complexity that comes with becoming more mature, and thus requires you on the other side to focus better and more? Is your art education limiting the freedom you had when you were younger?

Zohar Fraiman: No, no, no, it has nothing to do with that. It has to do with life itself. You were telling me before that you met artists that went to different countries, doing different things and they came back to their art and something changed in them. I think this is really important. I went to a residency in Greece a couple of years ago, which completely changed my life. It was not really long, just a couple of months. After I was there, I felt it had a huge impact on me and on my work, and that was a good thing! You could say that was also a distraction, one that had a lot of impact afterwards. It's like allowing yourself with time to be exposed to more and more things in this world. This only brings more into your art, but as you said, you need to know how to focus and bring it out, because you can't take everything in the world and just put it into your art. You need to have a filter.

AoA: What is your filter you think?

Zohar Fraiman: I think it is a lot about what I like. I need to enjoy what I am doing. For example I know from other experiences that I had, I wouldn't enjoy now making clay structures. For me painting is my main medium.

AoA: So another filter is that you need to put it on a canvas?

Zohar Fraiman: Maybe not canvas, but two dimensions. The wooden boxes that I make, I also paint on them. I make an object, but they are being painted. So for me, painting is the main medium. Other filters are aesthetic choices, so what is interesting

or appealing. It is a lot about personal taste I guess. I feel that I am doing what I am doing mostly because it interests me and not because I am trying to be appealing to some sort of market or some sort of buyer or some sort of fashion. So maybe in the long run that doesn't work for my career, I don't know (laughs). I'm hoping it will, because I am trying to be true to myself. I am trying to be true to what I think, is really interesting, engages the viewers as well, and I enjoy the process of making it. These are the filters that make me not go into another medium or do other things that are also very removed from what I am engaged with.

AoA: What happens then, once you've made a decision? You had a sketch and you say "This is going to be a painting!"

Zohar Fraiman: Then I go through my palette and start mixing paint. Then I just start painting. We talked before about focus. For painting, you need a few things: you need a lot of guts, you need to be passionate and you also need to be attentive and listening. If you don't have these guts or this kind of strength in your painting, I feel that things don't really come through. You need like to take it from inside and bring it out. It has to have this power to it, this essence to it, but if you are not listening to the painting itself, then you are losing as well.

AoA: So it's not a monologue, it's like a dialogue?

Zohar Fraiman: Yes, because sometimes you are doing something and then you have to stand and look, and say "Ok, this world that I put into the painting is saying something; how do I react to that?"

AoA: This passion, these guts, this strength, this force - where does it come from in the moment you are standing in front of the canvas?

Zohar Fraiman: What helps me a lot to paint is listening to music. While I paint, I listen to music 95% of the time.

AoA: What kind of music?

Zohar Fraiman: (laughs) I listen to a lot of hip-hop.

AoA: (laughs) I would not have expected that.

Zohar Fraiman: Nobody expects it! A lot of my works have titles from these songs, but they are also related to the theme. I had a solo exhibition in 2014 and a lot of the songs were turned into titles of the works, because during the creation of all of these works I have listened to a few albums. I was really listening to the lyrics and thought "Oh that's so beautiful, that's so poetic", because hip-hop actually has a lot of poetry in it. It has a lot of beat, like this hardness and force in it, but on the other hand, it is actually poetry. I am not talking about mainstream hip-hop. This has a very big influence on me at the moment since I feel it [the music], while I am painting. This is what is different from drawing, because when I am sitting and drawing, I am sitting and drawing. You are in one position and you move your hand. But when you are painting, you are using your whole body. You are standing on your feet, moving back and forth, using your arms, moving your head. It's like a dance. So the music enables me to connect all of that.

AoA: And the canvas is your partner?

Zohar Fraiman: I guess!

AoA: How is this dialogue emerging?

Zohar Fraiman: You have to take time and look.

AoA: You said that there is the white canvas, and then you envision all it can be. How much of what you envisioned is still there on the finished painting? How precise was your vision?

Zohar Fraiman: Every time is really different. Sometimes I think “Oh that’s exactly how I wanted it” and sometimes I am like “Oh my goodness, what happened?” It can be also a good thing to surprise yourself. It’s very necessary in fact. If there are no surprises, or disappointments, everything turns still and planned out. When I look at the canvas I want to destroy the white, blank, nothingness (laughs). I sounds so evil and harsh when I say these things but it’s a lot about passion really.

AoA: How much of your working time goes in the first part: preparation, drafting, deciding etc., and how much of your time goes into completing your painting?

Zohar Fraiman: It changes a lot. There are times where I just paint, paint, and paint, and even though I’ve made a plan, all of the painting is just like running out of my hand; it just flows in a way that I can’t control it anymore. I have an idea. I don’t plan anything, and it just comes out in the painting. But then there are times, where the planning takes a really long time. It is not 50-50. It is like 70-30, with 70% planning and 30% realization. Because I trained for so many years in a painting school and I started so young, I paint relatively fast. The planning is actually something, which is really complicated sometimes, because you have an idea in your head, it is not even a visual idea. For a series that I am working on now, I was thinking a lot about a certain kind of air to exist in the paintings. These characters that are covered in these sheet or white clothes, they are between existing and not existing. There is sort of a breath to them. I am still working on it (laughs). I am still figuring out what exactly that idea of “breath” in the paintings is, how to physically bring that out.

AoA: Going back to your working process - what does this dialogue with the painting look like? Is it telling you “Give me more colour” or “This one figure is at the wrong place...” ?

Zohar Fraiman: It sounds funny when I say this but it is actually me talking to myself. I mean the painting talks, but the painting is also me. It goes back again to the vision that you want to put on the canvas. You want to see a certain image, a certain feeling, a certain something out there on the canvas. Then you have to take a minute and sometimes I leave the room for ten minutes, sometimes I just don't look at the painting for a couple of minutes. Then when I look at it again I'm like "Oh! Who are you?" It's like I having a fresh look at it. I do a lot of different things to gain a fresh look. I look through a mirror at the painting, I turn the painting upside down, I turn myself upside down, I don't look at the painting for ten minutes, for days... Well, as many things as possible to get a fresh view. Everyone in the studio is laughing *at me* [Zohar shares a studio with other artists].

AoA: They are not doing that?

Zohar Fraiman: No, actually they are not (laughs). I mean some people turn they stuff around, but I think I do more than anyone. I think that it is really important but I also think that people have different working processes. People sometimes walk in here and they see me looking at that mirror for like ten minutes, and they think that I am looking at myself, but I am looking at the painting. They are definitely thinking that I am narcissistic (laughs). But I am not looking at myself! I am looking at the painting!

AoA: You are forcing yourself to take different perspectives in order to reach what you want. Wouldn't it be easier to just skip those steps?

Zohar Fraiman: Yes, but then you repeat yourself and I think that is quite boring. Take for example of Giorgio Morandi, he is an Italian painter from the early twentieth century, and he painted most of his life bottles, still life and landscapes. People are like "Oh, he always did the same thing, it is so boring", the thing is that he was actually doing the same thing over and over again, but always

questioning “What is this that I am looking at?” He turned this bottle into a whole abstract world and sometimes these bottles look like landscapes, and sometimes his landscapes look like bottles. He is engaging with this fascinating world of his. I could technically say that “I am going to paint the same thing my whole life, and repeat myself.” That would be really boring. The fact that I always take new perspectives makes it fascinating. I don’t think I am going to paint the same theme my whole life. I know that when I am interested in a certain theme that I get very deep into it. It leads to the next theme that I begin to deal with.

AoA: You develop ideas for a next painting while you work on one?

Zohar Fraiman: Yes, like the series I am working on now. The paintings display covered figures and ghosts. It comes from a ritual in Judaism where men cover themselves with this cloth ‘*Tallit*’ and they do this for a specific prayer every morning and on the weekend. It is related to the theme of possession. So far I was thinking of possession with the perspective of the story of this woman who is possessed on the day of her wedding. It developed into a woman being covered and unseen, and then developed into figures that are unseen and so on. It was developing into something else, like a chain, with these links that connect each other.

AoA: You said you paint quite fast, how long does it take you to complete a painting, from start to finish?

Zohar Fraiman: It varies a lot. Some painting I do very fast, I work on it once or twice and some others it takes me weeks to finish. Again it’s depending on what I want to achieve and if I feel that sense of achievement or not. Sometimes I give up because I am not happy with the painting and then people say to me “No, it’s great”, then I am like “Really?”, and after looking at it for a while, I see it from a different perspective. Like these paintings in the corner there [pointing to some paintings in a corner of her

workshop]. I did it and I had such expectations that I was so disappointed but everybody said to me “It’s a fantastic painting”, and I was like “No! Really? Is it?”, and only now, in the last two weeks, I am just like “Wow, I really like these paintings.” I couldn’t really see those things before, because I was so disappointed about what I thought I would reach.

AoA: Does it happen when you are not happy that you destroy a painting?

Zohar Fraiman: Yes, I think that happens. Yet if I ruin something, I can always fix it.

AoA: You can? So you don’t destroy the painting if you are not happy with the result?

Zohar Fraiman: I do. I destroy them, but then something new comes out of it.

AoA: You just gave the example of people coming and saying “Yeah, it’s great”, but you feel it’s not that good. What about feedback and critique in general? What do you get from it?

Zohar Fraiman: I have a lot of friends that are artists; they are not just here in Berlin, but in other places in the world and when we need, we talk a lot about art and especially my friends that are painters, that I studied with. There is a very deep connection when we talk about each other’s work.

AoA: So you look for feedback from such people?

Zohar Fraiman: Also. When I have an exhibition and somebody that I never met before says something. I try to listen and to see if there is any substance of any given view. They don’t know me and they just see the end results of the show. What do they have to say? Because it is just like an average viewer, they have no insights in all

my history, and who I am and how I painted before, and how I do paint, and I mean, they don't have any insights, and they can see something that can be really refreshing and very simple, that can give you a better understanding of where you are standing now.

AoA: Could that lead to a change in how you work?

Zohar Fraiman: It could, it depends who says it, and how it is said. For example when I met Therese [Therese Thürmer of Schauwerk Berlin is organizing exhibitions of works from young artists and collaborated with Zohar on an exhibition of her works]. I don't remember when we met, because I think there were a lot of people at this exhibition, but she wrote to me later. She wrote to me about how certain things in my work reminded her of Edgar Degas, she wrote it so beautifully that I was really touched. I really wanted to meet her after that, because I felt she really looked at the work and just said "nice work". She described something really specific about the color, about the impact it had.

AoA: And you are not worried about such association with the past? I mean Degas. You also try to separate yourself and develop something original, or?

Zohar Fraiman: Of course I am worried about that, because I am a figurative painter, and there are a lot of people in the art world that don't paint or enjoy figurative painting and there is always this label that it's old and bad, not relevant anymore. But when she described it, it was just very poetic. She wasn't necessarily saying that I was also dead (laughs). The thing is, she could have just said, "Oh you remind of Degas, it's so pretty". But the things she said were very sensible and I felt that she had good intentions, and good observation skills. She was really looking. So it meant a lot to me.

AoA: This is thoughtful response to your work, but does such feedback then lead you to do things differently?

Zohar Fraiman: No, I mean, I have looked a lot at Degas, I have copied his work and I have had an influence from Degas a long time ago. Now the things that remain from that influence still come out in the paintings at times.

AoA: That's also why the feedback was so good. You had a connection.

Zohar Fraiman: Yes, there was a connection. I did look at Degas at a certain age. One of my good friends was a curator, I made him come to a show of mine and he said "Oh Balthus!" And I was super happy, because I love Balthus, and he had a huge influence on me. So he is also somebody that has an influence on my work so that feedback made me respect him because I felt he was looking very deeply at the painting, and he managed to find that connection. But I don't look at Balthus anymore. He is already inside me, I already absorbed a part of him and I am looking at other things to continue.

AoA: How do you see your evolution as an artist over time? Are there any things that you do fundamentally different from when you started couples of years ago? Any steps in the process that you don't do anymore? Or anything that you added over years?

Zohar Fraiman: Well, I think now a lot about my work in series. I used to think of each painting individually. I still do, but I mostly think about a body of work, a group. In 2013 I had a solo show. I made practically completely new works, only for the show, within several months and it made me very engaged and focused on putting that body of work together for the show. Usually I am not the kind of person making work for a show, but the fact that I knew the space and the capacity of how many works I would put in there, I wanted to make build a connection between all the paintings.

AoA: So there was this objective, which was the exhibition that forced you to think holistically?

Zohar Fraiman: That was the first time that I thought about so many works that were connected to each other and that would be shown at once. After that I made a huge change, because now it is the way I start to think in general. Now I am also working on a body of work, with many paintings relating to each other and talking about the same thing. I mean, I had this before, but I would just do one painting at a time and figure it out as I went along. But now I am like “Ok, what’s the big picture?” Even if they are not shown together, they don’t have to be shown together, but they are all related to each other.

AoA: And then when your work is all completed, do you need new body of work? Let’s take this exhibition. Is it possible that you continue with this body of work after such an important milestone is reached?

Zohar Fraiman: I think, there is never an ending. It is always a chain. Like one connects to the other. Like this painting here, where I pointed out before how disappointing it was. Now, while looking at it I feel that it had an influence on me. And these works [pointing at other paintings], I did not plan to begin with, but it’s always things from before make it into the next phase. There is never a “dot” at the end of the sentence.

AoA: You spoke earlier about your friends, who you learned with, is there any type of collaboration in your work with others?

Zohar Fraiman: Yes. Well, I am not supposed to go into all the details, but I am working on a performance with a good friend of mine. I am not a performance artist but collaborating with him is very interesting, because we come from coinciding backgrounds. I am from Israel and he is from Syria. I grew up Jewish. He grew up Christian. There are a lot of themes of the male identity in his

work. For me it's more about females. We thought a lot and we were talking together for a long time on how we would like to collaborate and bring these worlds together. A lot of things from my work are going to go into the performance. It's a lot of his medium and my themes, and it's all mixed together and relate to each other.

AoA: What about your individual art and collaboration?

Zohar Fraiman: Lot of people come and visit me at my studio, I show my work to people.

AoA: Also when it's in progress?

Zohar Fraiman: Sometimes. Sometimes I don't want to show anybody anything and sometimes I am showing non-stop. It depends where I am with the work. Also in this studio, there is a dialogue. In the University, there are several people I enjoy talking to about the work itself. This is very important. This is something that has always been going on from when I was studying in Israel until today. Only now it's not only painters. Earlier it used to be more painters and now it's everyone who's opinion I appreciate, it doesn't matter if they are painters, or if they do whatever. As long as I see what they have to say as something sincere.

AoA: That's interesting, because most of people would say that the visual artist is a quite lonely person just in a workshop all day, not engaging with others and so on. But it seems that you look very much to "letting the sun in".

Zohar Fraiman: The thing is, because you spend so many hours not talking to anyone but yourself, then you look for that dialogue. For example I go to a lot of exhibitions and openings, and museums. It's very important for me to see a lot, because it is also a dialogue. If you see what's being exhibited today, whether it's good or not, doesn't matter. That's a discussion.

AoA: A jazz composer and musician, Daniel Prandl, told us he can learn more from a concert he dislikes than from a concert he loves.

Zohar Fraiman: Yes, that's the thing. I think I used to have this attitude to not go to exhibitions unless it's good. But this is nonsense, because actually most of the exhibitions that I see are not necessarily about what I like. I mean, most of people that you meet, they are not necessarily going to be your friends. You only choose very specific people that you like and want to be friend with. And I choose certain artists and things that I really enjoy, but that doesn't mean that you shouldn't meet anyone outside of your studio, and that you shouldn't see things.

AoA: How do you describe your attitude?

Zohar Fraiman: As an artist, I would not be lazy. I would not wish for myself to be shallow. Maybe people see things that I do as not motivated and shallow, but for me that's not my agenda.

AoA: You want to have a certain depth in your work?

Zohar Fraiman: I aim for that yes! I mean, it would be arrogant to say, "I am deep". It's an aspiration to have a certain depth through my work and at the same time to have playfulness, to be curious. There are so many things, I don't know how to put it, but I would really not want to be lazy about all these things. I think it's really important to challenge yourself. I think that challenging yourself, could be said or defined in so many ways, but I think choosing to be an artist is a lot about wanting this challenge. That things are not set out for you and that you are also kind of looking for the next thing.

AoA: Is this for you a path that comes natural or is it also a painful trajectory?

Zohar Fraiman: It can come out of me: “My life is hard” [ironically, laughs]. I mean, there are people I know, they are working really hard, and they are doing something completely different. We talked about “predictability” before. It’s not predictable. You have to be creative, you have to find different ways to develop yourself and there are no rulebooks. Nobody is there saying, “This is the way you do it”. Some people they have more assistance from the background they come from. I mean, if you come from a family of artists for example, with a role model and someone that says to you “You do this, you do that. I’ll introduce you to him, to her”. Then you might have some sort of guidelines. That could be helpful, but it still doesn’t mean that you will reach what you want to be as an artist.

AoA: What do you think people in Business or in other disciplines can learn from artists?

Zohar Fraiman: I think that artists have a certain ability of reflection because they are engaged all the time with being creative, challenging, engaging in certain themes, etc. I feel that artists have a very strong reflection of society and of people and of who we are. I think that these things are connected. I had a discussion with a friend of mine, who is politically very active, and he keeps saying to me like “Art is useless, you don’t need it. It doesn’t give you anything”. I kept answering him “It gives everything”. There are no more taboos today in the art world.