

**PETER BLUM** GALLERY

**ERIK LINDMAN**

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Born 1985 in New York, NY  
Lives and works in New York, NY

**EDUCATION**

2007 Columbia University, B.A.  
2006 Yale Norfolk Painting Fellowship

**SOLO EXHIBITIONS**

2020 (upcoming) *Fal/Parsi*, Peter Blum Gallery, New York, NY  
2019 *Parsifal*, Almine Rech, London, UK  
*Whelping Box: New Sculptures and Paintings*, Ribordy Thetaz, Geneva, Switzerland  
*Sculptures: a Project by Erik Lindman with Photographs by David Schoerner*, Emmanuel Barbault, New York, NY  
2017 *Erik Lindman*, Almine Rech, New York, U.S.A.  
2016 *Metal Paintings*, Almine Rech, London, UK  
*Torso*, ribordy contemporary, Geneva, Switzerland.  
2015 *Blanks*, Almine Rech, Paris, France.  
2014 *Open Hands*, Almine Rech, Brussels, Belgium.  
2013 *Do not touch doubtful things*, ribordy contemporary, Geneva, Switzerland.  
2012 *Human Personality*, Almine Rech, Paris, France.  
*Studio*, ribordy contemporary, Geneva, Switzerland.  
2011 Hannah Barry Gallery, London, U.K. ribordy contemporary, Geneva, Switzerland.  
*One Year Edit*, Golden Age, Chicago, IL, U.S.A.  
2010 *Erik Lindman, Photographs / Zak Kitnick, Stamps*, West Street Gallery, New York, NY, U.S.A.  
2009 *House Wine, House Music V&A*, New York, NY, U.S.A.

**SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS**

2020 *100 Sculptures*, Curated by Todd Von Ammon, No Gallery, Los Angeles, CA.  
2019 *Lineup*, Almine Rech, New York, NY.  
2018 *100 Sculptures*, Curated by Todd Von Ammon, Anonymous Gallery, Mexico City, Mexico  
*Excavation*, Peter Blum Gallery, New York, NY .  
*Gorchov, Lindman, Provosty*, ribordy contemporary, Geneva, Switzerland.  
2017 *The Surface of the East Coast: From Nice to New York*, Curated by Marie Maertens, le 109, Nice, France.  
*Painting or Not*, KaviarFactory, Lofoten, Norway.  
2016 *MUTATION (S)*, ribordy contemporary, Geneva, Switzerland.  
*Expanding Frontiers: Propos d'Europe 15*, curated by Rolf Hoff, Foundation Hippocrène, Paris, France.  
*In Different Ways*, Almine Rech, London, U.K.  
2015 *30 / 130: Thirty Years of Books and Catalogs, etc. Bob Nickas at White Columns*, White Columns, New York, NY, U.S.A.

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*Bill Bollinger, Paul Czerlitzki, Erik Lindman, Ariel Schlesinger, Alan Uglow*, Bischoff Projects, Frankfurt/M, Germany.

*The Painter of Modern Life*, Curated by Bob Nickas, Anton Kern Gallery, New York, NY, U.S.A.

*The Shell (Landscapes, Portraits & Shapes)*, Curated by Eric Troncy, Almine Rech, Paris, France.

2014 *Lost and Found*, Inigo Philbrick, London, U.K.

2013 *White*, Dickinson, New York, NY, U.S.A.

*The Stand In (or A Glass of Milk)*, Curated by Alexandra Gaty, Public Fiction (The Museum of), Los Angeles, CA, U.S.A.

*LAT. 41° 7' N., LONG. 72° 19' W*, Curated by Bob Nickas, Martos Gallery summer location, East Marion, NY, U.S.A.

*Neo Povera*, Curated by Harmony Murphy, L&M Arts, Los Angeles, CA, U.S.A.

*19 Rue de Saintonge*, Almine Rech, Paris, France.

2012 *Pour une grammaire du hasard*, Curated by Corrinne Charpentier, Fri Art – Centre d'art de Fribourg / Kunsthalle Freiburg, Switzerland.

*Creature from the Blue Lagoon*, Curated by Bob Nickas, Martos Gallery summer location, Bridgehampton, NY, U.S.A.

*Telephone Paintings*, Curated by Nicolas Trembley, Almine Rech at Art Basel 43, Basel, Switzerland.

*Traces*, ACME, Los Angeles, CA, U.S.A.

*Soft Op: Strategies of Material Transformation*, Modern Collections, London, U.K.

*Into the Surface*, Brand New Gallery, Milan, Italy.

*Ruins in Reverse*, Room East, New York, NY, U.S.A.

2011 *Golden Age: Reference Work*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL, U.S.A.

*Summer Meltdown*, ribordy contemporary, Geneva, Switzerland.

*Addicted to Highs and Lows*, Curated by Richard Aldrich, Bortolami, New York, NY, U.S.A.

*Alley Oop / The Kingsboro Press OMMU*, Athens, Greece,

*Harvest Moon*, Curated by Ryan Foerster, 425 Ocean Avenue, New York, NY, U.S.A.

*Abstract and Traces*, ribordy contemporary, Geneva, Switzerland.

2010 *New Work from New York*, Golden Gallery, Chicago, IL, U.S.A.

*Young Curators, New Ideas III*, PPOW Gallery, New York, NY, U.S.A.

*New Work, New York*, Hannah Barry Gallery, London, U.K.

## AWARDS

2019 Artist Honoree: Artist x Artist Gala. Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC, USA

2007 The Louis Sudler Prize for Excellence in the Arts

2006 Ellen B. Stoeckel Fellowship, Yale Norfolk attendance scholarship

## PUBLICATIONS

2019 *Photographs of Sculptures*, 2019. Hassla Books, New York. ISBN: 978-1-940881-30-0

2016 *Blanks* Published by Almine Rech Gallery, Belgium. ISBN: 978-2-930573-16-8

2014 *Open Hands* Published by Almine Rech Gallery, Belgium. ISBN: 978-2-930573-12-0

2011 *On Painting* Published by Hannah Barry Gallery, London.

SELECTED PRESS

- 2019 Lindman, Erik. "John Zurier with Erik Lindman," *The Brooklyn Rail*, October 2, 2019.
- 2016 '5 Questions with Erik Lindman' by Emily Steer, [Elephant Magazine](#), September 20, 2016.
- 2016 Espinasseau, Antoine "'The Shell'", *Frog*, Fall-Winter 2015 – 2016.
- 2016 Zahm, Olivier, *The Shell*, *Purple Fashion*, Fall/Winter 2015.
- 2016 The editors of *ArtNews*, "'Erik Lindman: Torso' at Ribordy Contemporary" February 17, 2016.
- 2015 Corwin, William *Around Town*, frieze, Issue 172, Summer 2015
- 2015 Loret, Eric "'The Shell'", *patchwork in progress*, *Liberation*, January 21st, 2015
- 2014 Trembley, Nicholas *Erik Lindman* Numéro, Issue 150, February 2014
- 2014 Lorent, Claude *Peindre sans frontières mais dans le cadre*, *La Libre Belgique*, February 2014.
- 2014 Marcelis, Bernard, *Labyrinthe et Environnement Pictural à Bruxelles*, *Le Quotidien de l'Art*, January 22, 2014.
- 2014 Wynants, Jean-Marie, Erik Lindman: Visite du Soir, *Le Mad*, January 22, 2014.
- 2013 Rosenmeyer, Aoife *A Grammar of the Accidental*, frieze d/e, Issue 153 March 2013
- 2012 Vogel, Carol *Large Works and Big Changes at Art Basel*, "Inside Art", *New York Times*, June 14, 2012
- 2012 *Into the Surface* [Mousse Magazine](#) February 6, 2012.
- 2011 Brazda, Bozidar *Studio Visit* *Flash Art*
- 2010 Wullschlager, Jackie *Critic's Choice*, *Financial Times (UK)*, May 22; *Life & Arts*; Page:W17
- 2010 Cashdan, Marina *New Work, New York: Abstract Painting from America* [Modern Painters](#)
- 2010 Wullschlager, Jackie *Driven to Abstraction*, *Financial Times (UK)*, Issue 37,298
- 2009 Coburn, Tyler *House Wine, House Music*, *Art:Review*, Issue 31
- 2009 Kerr, Merrily *Erik Lindman, House Wine, House Music*, *Time Out New York* Issue 700
- 2009 Russeth, Andrew *House Wine, House Music*, [ArtInfo.com](#)
- 2008 Gartenfeld, Alex *Bring Me Back a T-Shirt* [Artforum.com](#)

# ELEPHANT

## 5 Questions with Erik Lindman

Erik Lindman's latest Metal Paintings are formed using found elements, chosen by the American artist around his studio neighbourhood: New York's Harlem.

Words by Emily Steer | 20 Sep 2016



Erik Lindman, *Untitled*, 2016, Found Surfaces (Wood, Paint) Oil and Acrylic on Panel, 198.12 x 116.84 cm (78 x 46 inches)

### Can you tell me a bit about Metal Paintings?

These paintings are a continuation of my work with anonymous found surfaces. As I've become increasingly interested in paint itself as a material, my engagement with found surfaces has evolved. The absorbency, luminosity and superficial variation of the found surfaces inform how paint, when applied over and around these found surfaces, is experienced. There is a subtly startling way in which light moves through oil paint and reflects off of the found metallic surfaces and the painted grounds in which the metal surfaces are embedded. The paint and the surfaces fully complement each other, visually and materially. I've found this synergistic relationship very productive.

**You're working with found materials for these works. Are you quite methodical in your search for these items, do you tend to know exactly what you're looking for?**

I have never gone out with the specific intention of finding materials. I have certain interests, formally linked to a historical language of abstraction, that inform what surfaces catch my eye. The surfaces I use tend to just appear when I need them! A painting develops from the specific surface itself.

**There's an element of disguise in the works; which switch between high end and everyday materiality, and often hide their true surface. Do you hope for those who encounter them to feel a sense of uncertainty?**

Yes, these paintings embrace a liminal space — both in their materiality and even in their status as 'paintings'. The experience of assumptions falling away through a process of personal engagement with the painting is an important part of the work. This process itself is where I feel the power of painting resides. To stop and consider an object, to contemplate, creates space within a certain 'thinness' of contemporary visual and material culture.

**How have ideas of abstraction changed for you since you began making work?**

When I began making paintings, I didn't believe it was possible to make a painting. I understood a physical painting as a prop in the artist's arsenal to use while performing the role of the painter. I've since experienced this hyper self-awareness as unproductive. I've moved from seeing abstraction as an emptied-out, historically determined visual language towards an open engagement with making. I don't think about abstraction as such, but about art in a broader sense.

**You've chosen some very electric blues and turquoises on this body of work. Do you find the materials lead your colour decisions or is that a choice much earlier in the process?**

Colour- hue- is just one aspect of paint. As a material, each pigment has highly distinct physical qualities. A Pthalo blue, for instance, is very transparent, chemical, and overwhelming in its infectious tinting strength due to its small particle size. Cobalt blue, on the other hand, is a dense, solid, mineral — it's linked in my eyes to a history of using precious materials to describe elevated spiritual characteristics of painted subjects, akin to the use of Lapis in the painting of reliquary images. Indanthrone blue is interesting to me as its particle size is largely determined by the auto industry as its used in many commercial applications. So colour choice, what oil paint to use or to grind myself, is a decision based on the surface and the overall presence of the painting itself as an image-object. Should the paint leave visible or obscure what's beneath it? How can the paint help make visible what I see in the found surface?

# frieze

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## Around Town

### Various Venues

Curated by Rebecca Lamarche-Vadel at the Palais de Tokyo, 'Le Bord Des Mondes' (The Edge of the Worlds) featured work that is consciously not art, often DIY, hails from the periphery of visual culture, but is created by 22 artists. Inspired by Duchamp's question: 'Can one make works which are not of "art"?', the show included inventor Kenji Kawakami's menagerie of 'Chindo-gu', the Japanese movement he founded that fosters the creation of amusingly useless inventions, such as the umbrella necktie or an underarm deodorant stick-style butter dispenser. A selection of Bridget Polk's riveting 'Balancing Rocks' (2009–ongoing) were featured throughout the exhibition, linking the block-building game Jenga with references to minimalism and land art. Jean Katambayi's festive re-creations of hi-tech medical equipment in cardboard and foam address the near-magical nature of life-saving equipment in a culture of scarcity: *YLLUX* (2012), for example, is a mess of cardboard spools, found and repurposed pressure gauges displayed on a sporty grey and orange stand with wheels fabricated from paper. Jessi Krimes created his soap-transfer portraits of fellow prisoners, 'Purgatory' (2009), during his incarceration: for Krimes, artistic motivation became a means of commemoration and contact between the prisoners and their marginalized friends and family on the outside.

Across the city, in Bellville, Balice Hertling presented 'Sculptures and Collages', a compelling exhibition by the Lebanese, Paris-based artist, Simone Fattal. Fascinated by the archaic era, Fattal's small but monumental sculptures with their blunt terracotta forms – including *Warriors* (2011) or *Homme Portant un Animal* (Man Wearing an Animal, 2011) – might be at home in the Sully wing of the Louvre. Fattal engages with archetypes – the placid, seated figure of Gudea of Lagash or the striding form of the Kouros – in varying degrees of abstraction, playing with a primal sense of familiarity. In her wall-based collages, the artist overlays snapshots of antiquities – ceramics, sculpture and ritual objects – onto meta-forms of the body and landscape.

Much like the gorgeously repetitive architecture of the nearby Place des Vosges, Xavier Veilhan's exhibition, 'Music', at Galerie Perrotin (a different iteration of which was held simultaneously at the gallery's New York branch), employed a kind of sculptural classicism. The show was an homage to music producers; Veilhan depicts them in plywood and resin sculptures, of varying sizes, either reclining or erect. Some of

### About this review

Published on 28/05/15  
By William Corwin



Bridget Polk, *Balancing Rocks*, 2015, installation view at Palais de Tokyo

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his subjects are also performers – Brian Eno, Quincy Jones and Pharrell Williams – and, as such, are immediately recognizable; others, such as Trevor Horn or the composer Éliane Radigue have remained behind the scenes. These meticulous sculptures are generated via digital mapping and three-dimensional printing, which creates a distance between the artist and his subject: Veilhan's desire to both elevate and democratize his subject somehow negates any sense of individualism. The smaller portraits were symmetrically arranged on a shelving structure that vaguely evokes ancient mausoleums: Alexander the Great or Julius II might have been satisfied.

Michael Dotson's exhibition 'A Whole New World' at Galerie Zürcher approaches the sublime via Walt Disney; the title is taken from a song in *Aladdin* (1992). Referencing Disney sends out a mixed message: the production company's films typically re-enforce race, gender and cultural stereotypes, whilst remaining a familiar conduit to the realm of fantasy. Dotson's psychedelic paintings situate the brand in a very freaky place indeed. Choosing key moments in several movies – *Cinderella* (1950) and *Peter Pan* (1953) are recognizable – Dotson takes iconic compositions, heightens them with even brighter colours and repeats characters with multiple limbs and heads (*Sleep Walker*, 2015), and disembodied hands poised over phosphorescent flames (*White Magic*, 2015). Like Veilhan, Dotson's reliance on appropriation posits the role of artist as a detached creator rather than a hands-on craftsperson. It is in his more eerie abstract paintings, *Showtime* (2015) and *Wet Window* (2013), that we gain greater insight into the artist's unique imaginative aesthetic.

Receding further back into the catalogue of human gestures, Erik Lindman's show, 'Blanks', at Almine Rech addresses mark-making. In these large-scale oil paintings the artist uses found surfaces, which are then layered onto a larger canvas and framed by colour, almost like heraldic standards. Despite the title of the show, the paintings shy away from minimalism; essentially, they're expressionistic. Much like Fattal's sculptures, Lindman's works seem to offer some secret spiritual or ritual use-value without disclosing their meaning.

Valentina Liernur's exhibition 'ahhhhhh' at Campoli Presti alternatively offered the literal blank – the erasure – as a means of creating language. Her bleached denim canvases resemble monochromatic Rorschach tests and, as with Lindman's restrained paintings, these drippy calligraphic works question the linguistic assignation of meaning to line and form. This is further explored in Liernur's painted canvases, from which areas have been excised. The paintings read like redacted NSA documents, in which the voided sections have even greater meaning than what remains. While Dotson, Fattal and Veilhan flirt with the familiar and figural, all of these exhibitions are, in essence, conceptual: thoughts of futility, nothingness, the ecstatic, and the gulf between the historical and the eternal were in the air in Paris this spring.

#### **William Corwin**

**One Year Edit:** 'Erik Lindman and Paul Cowan', by Paul Cowan, March 12th, 2011

Paul Cowan: Alright. How are you doing Erik?

Erik Lindman: I'm good. A little cold.

PC: One Year Edit opened last night at Golden Age, great show. I'm also interested in editing and painting. I get excited thinking about editing as a tool, but I wonder about the ethics of modifying something. Is that a valid way to finish something?

EL: I think editing has become a more concise way of articulating the idea of destruction in the creative process. If a work becomes more specific and personal, it actually opens up to a wider audience. It is reductive editing, but it's not essential editing, where something is being distilled. It's editing out. I use materials that seem very transient, but formally the pieces are very direct. They have an authority. I create meaning and significance in the work through editing and selection and distance.

There is a directness in terms of lack of ornament that also becomes ornamental. I'm interested in the way that art and art objects can live in the world—especially the idea of a painting itself being a decorative object in its physicality, as opposed to just its visual decoration. I see that in your work too. It's like the painting hung askew in the door jamb, the other ones are doing that too even when they're not actually hung in the door jamb. They're obviously a physical thing that exists in the world that still needs to be worked upon and edited. They're a forced selection of things both real and imagined.

PC: We both have an interest in perception. The production of the work embraces some really nice literals, or even clichés. You're setting up a preface for us (the viewer) to see the editing in other paintings.

It's a very generous way to access your work.

EL: The pieces in the show are also super indirect in terms of creation. I have no predetermined idea of what the work is going to end up being like or look like. I have an idea of the way I want paintings to function, a general set of concerns, latent tastes, and things. The work itself is all—it's a lot of chance. The chance is either acted upon or it's not, that's the editing. It's not an aestheticization of a destructive principle, which I think is kind of interesting. It ends up becoming positive in a way, instead of nihilistic. It's the way this leftover stuff becomes the material.

PC: It presumes that something happened. The work becomes about the excess or the peripheral becomes. It's an interesting way to subvert/challenge/question content.

EL: The leftover aspect is also a visual product; the leftover aesthetic experience that happens from this indirect object. The object is happening askew from, or incidentally to what it's referencing. But the work is also a literal thing. It's a one-to-one relationship between the thing and the work, but then it still functions imagistically and within a painting language structure. The work is not necessarily questioning that language, it's using it, because it exists.

PC: That's a much better way to think about the work.

EL: Instead of saying that I understand that it is functioning this way, I understand that's a way that composition is happening. I understand that the pieces are framed and also framed within the art space, etc. That's almost beside the point, because I see the paintings and it becomes transcendental. And that's not a bad thing. Why does that have to be a bad thing? Why can't I just accept that for its happening and enjoy it? I'm trying to see if that can become productive instead of saying no.

The work says no to a lot of things, but it has to come out of a love of what's happening within a studio practice. That's really important, because these works don't exist within any sort of post-studio practice, which is what we're supposed to be doing right now. Just painting and painting in the studio is political right now. So even though the work itself doesn't have any representation of politics, or anything political

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inside it, it's almost content-less, but it's not because in literally being a part of the studio, I'm aestheticizing studio space. I'm taking little bits of the studio space and making them travel to some other place.

PC: It's like a re-testing of those tactics. You're extracting them out of the canon of painting, almost, but still resting on it. I keep going back to the reception part. That's a huge concern for me in general. It stumps me. Another interesting part of accessing your work is that it does ask you to get up and inspect. I think that's a funny way to look at art. You're embracing the subjective in painting and still love making it and the real expressive elements that happen within it. You use the structure, the language of painting in a really fresh way.

EL: I'm interested in the way that the work makes itself, but I'm also making it. I'm making it become a representation. I'm re-framing, re-presenting it so that the presentation or expectation is a big part of the work.

PC: For others?

EL: Yes, for others. You come and you have an assumption of how the work is made from different perspectives, or expectations about what a painting does. That's either confirmed or denied through further engagement with the work in a material way.

PC: In a sense, there's a democracy to it. It does open up. Your work has that massive language of painting and can really navigate and live there. But it also backs up, or in, or wherever, and becomes more obtuse in order for the viewer to reconsider how he or she looks at any form of art. In another interview you used the word "prejudices," and I think that's a nice way to put it. When I encounter your work I become less concerned with looking at and inspecting it, but I start to notice how or why I'm even doing that.

EL: I've found more and more that I can't see what I make unless I see it through the reflection of other people in terms of their engagement with the thing. Even though it's something that I can make in with very, very selfish expectations. The work itself arrives at point where I see it as desiring another work of art. It's not like the work becomes an allusion to another work, it's more like the painting arrives as itself as a painting through my experience of other paintings.

PC: Other paintings in a museum or other paintings in a gallery?

EL: Paintings in my head.

PC: Paintings that you're going to make or that you've already seen?

EL: Paintings that I haven't made, that I've seen of other artists, and other... fantasies.

PC: I think our generation is total effect sometimes. I like thinking that cause and effect have sort of been reversed. We are the ones making paintings because we're acknowledging how informed we are and how many paintings we've seen and how fast we've seen them because of the internet. I can go to ten different countries and look at all these paintings, then go to my studio and make one, and then find its source later. It's like I know how to function socially because life imitates art now. I can act like Jerry Seinfeld. Now I know how to sit and function, and that becomes how I define myself or how I define my painting practice. I accept that it's totally balancing on this weird painting tower.

EL: I was talking to Martine about this, sometimes I don't understand if my experience of love comes from an idea of a representation of love, or a relationship from the history of film, something I was brought up with, or from experience. It's almost like it doesn't matter, because that has become my experience. You spend a lot of time looking at art and the experience of the time looking at the art also becomes your experience.

PC: It substitutes that or becomes a stand-in.

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EL: It can be a stand-in, but then it isn't. It's its own thing. It becomes enmeshed.

PC: It's like, there are people that actually deal coke, there are rappers that sing about it, and then there's me listening to it. I'm allowed to have this new experience of this hyped, amped situation. I get stuck there. I want to make a parallel between that and this new theoretical painting that's happening. It's so informed by all these different angles that it can't help but be this really obtuse thing.

EL: [Laughing] It's definitely an exciting time to be making paintings, because everything that seemed to be a problem about it is exactly what's interesting.

PC: Everyone's embracing it.

EL: Painting is totally absurd right now and that's precisely where it gets its power and why it's interesting. It makes absolutely no fucking sense. There's absolutely nothing pragmatic about it right now. Or about it's development, which seems to have had some sort of pragmatism from a historical standpoint. In no sort of judgment or anything, but everything should be Paint FX or just not exist. Still somehow painting exists, you know despite itself. [Laughs]

PC: How much does that fuel your work? Something that also gets me stuck in a nice circle is knowing how to paint, but not knowing why to paint. That helps me trivialize subject, or content, or the medium, and build off of that.

EL: For a long time I was trying to figure out some sort of content. I also never learned to paint properly.  
PC: You're not trained? I didn't study it either. I'm studied photography and sculpture. After all of it was said and done, I was in my house without a studio and just being like "Oh. Painting." And it came through— I can't think of the word... the household, works

EL: Rather than feeling that I have to point it out. I use it because it's there. I'm interested in scales and sizes that seem very specific, but remain general. That scale is precisely the size of a poster of a work.

PC: It's also very accommodating to the brush. I like to squirt straight out of the tube, so I can't make a huge painting, because it will instantly fetishize the paint. In your work there's this healthy, but weird relationship with painting. You're like "Whoa painting, I'll go get a drink with you, but we're not going home together." Like make it a brunch, you know what I mean. There's this weird distance between it. You acknowledge the limits, of painting's language and painting's modes. I'm always wondering how to manage, or to avoid, being didactic. I want to learn how to talk with people rather than at them. How can it become more social? How can we all embrace those practices?

EL: The limit is super, super, super important. There's an idea that freedom will come from anything. That you can do anything you want. You can do whatever. And you can somehow justify it. This is what our culture wants us to do. Whatever. It's all good. But everything is not good. You need rules and limits in order to create meaning.

PC: And to even break the rules you have to have them in the first place.

EL: You need limits to have any semblance of freedom to make stuff. Otherwise it's just unbearable.

PC: That introduces another type of freedom. That "ignorance is bliss," assuming bliss is happiness.

EL: You want things to be simple, to be direct, but there's a crazy desire when you make something and it's perfect and just enough to stop and move on. I think that's what's interesting about the music note paintings. There's an anxiety about stopping. For me, sometimes the work will arrive at itself, but I can't stop. I want to keep going and it gets really, really bad. That really, really badness and cluttered-ness can come back to having the simplicity that it had at first, but it will now be a complex simplicity. Or it just gets worse and I have to throw it out. [Laughs]

PC: That's how the editing turns into a resolution. You're reacting to the reaction you had in the first place.

EL: It's a whole series of reactions against previous incidents.

PC: Ok, what about failure? Let's go to that zone for a minute. What's that about for you? I think what is more interesting in your painting is what the painting isn't doing rather than what it is doing.

EL: I like that because it's tricky.

PC: It is. If someone asked me that I wouldn't know how to answer it either. I guess I'm wondering if we can try to answer it.

EL: When I think of failure and painting, I think of Michael Krebber, just from people telling me that's what his work is about. I'm not so interested in failure. Failure is associated with the non-confrontational attitude, which can be very good or very bad. I think it's very bad when it gets in the zone of whatever world. On the flip side this thing exists as it happens so I'm going to work with that, instead of having some slacker art aesthetic.

PC: You're not trying to achieve failure.

EL: I love Sergej Jensen's paintings, but not because they're lame. Despite their lameness something happens that's not lame, that's powerful. That's not a failure. I'm not interested in painting that directly accesses a Rothko-esque didactic experience. Which would be a painting that wouldn't conceptualize itself as a failure. I'm trying to find a way of working that can become productive, but not didactic. A painting that didn't consider itself failed would probably just be an uninteresting painting.

The paintings that I consider failures, the ones I throw out, the paintings that don't work, are failures because they don't exist in terms of a popular ideal. They may be relatively good paintings for someone else, but they're not functioning in an interesting way.

PC: You're offering a spectrum of ways to think about the work.

EL: Art exists in the world and the painting exists in the world, so when the art is making itself seem like it's part of the world and also not part of it, it's kind of inescapable.

PC: It's problematic to even want to become involved in it.

EL: The goal is to re-evaluate or redefine the idea of beauty in terms of failure, in terms of impotence, in terms of power, in terms of everything. It's a pretty contemporary goal and it's also a goal that is timeless. No one is talking about beauty because of political correctness, but it reveals itself again and again. We're back at it. There's a beauty that parallels taste in your work. Your paintings are weird. They feel like very specific references, but then there's something very wrong about them at the same time. They oscillate between just right, just enough and like "what crazy person decided that this was a painting." It's weird, but I because it exists it's worth doing. Anything that's worth doing a little bit is worth doing. It goes back to what you were saying before about having every single image or Deleuze's read of Bacon, but then I want to see this thing in person. I want it the way I want a really nice bicycle. I want it to be worn and I don't want to buy a pair of pre-ripped jeans. That's crazy.

PC: There's no integrity in that.

EL: I want my basic Levi's that I bought and then I wear them in and they become mine somehow, even though they're the same thing.

PC: That is the basis of my practice.

EL: I want that time when I'm in the studio by myself, and I feel totally by myself, alone but not isolated.

PC: Like when you're at a coffee shop.

EL: No, better than at a coffee shop! It's really, really fun and challenging to make paintings. It's not challenging

to be at a coffee shop. Painting is so fucking hard.

PC: Because it's so easy.

EL: Sometimes it's really easy and sometimes it's the hardest thing in the world because there's no end. There's no end to it. I think there's so much pressure to make work that you already know how to talk about it before you make it. And somehow thinking that... I don't know, I think people think that they're too smart. [Laughs] And then you overlook the thing that's so dumb. But the dumb thing is more complex than you can understand. The simplest thing is mind-blowing.

PC: You almost have to talk your way out of something rather than into something. You have to kind of say what they're not doing rather than what they are.

What else? I found another interview where you said at the end, "I'd rather give someone the key to get out of hell, than show them the door to get to heaven." That's a really nice introduction to your work. There's a nice clarity to that statement. It goes to this spiritual place rather than staying in the theoretical, because you have to practice what you preach. When you use that statement, what are you thinking?

EL: I love the idea of a key and a door, because they are functional in terms of image. They also allude to the idea of a painting as a prop. Although I agree with the attitude behind that thought, a painting is not a prop. The problematic of failure is exactly why it's interesting. A key is functional. It's not a fake key. There's no such thing as a fake key, it just wouldn't be a key.

PC: The key metaphor makes me think about access and escape. You're saying, "let's get out of hell," and asking us to leave that. This key helps you get out of something, rather than get into something. I think that's a really eloquent way to describe the beautiful, problematic state of making and receiving painting.

EL: I don't want to be afraid to discuss spirituality. That's also something you're not supposed to talk about. [Laughs] But anything worth doing has to have some sort of spiritual dimension to it.

PC: Totally. I see that integrity in your work. I think about hitting the end of a painting. There's only so much to engage in and when I leave there I want to question more than just morals and ethics and how

relative they are. You instantly go to this spiritual place, you instantly start to question life.

EL: We say that there are no words to describe things, but I think there are words, we just overlook these words. "God" and "spirituality" are words conjure a lot of the things that we mean, but we want to avoid that because of the connotation.

PC: You want to be PC. It's interesting to know that heaven and hell start to have capital H's to them. Where does that come from for you?

EL: I see a relationship between working alone in the studio and the historical idea of a religious experience. In regards to art, there is a history of objects existing in a Catholic liturgical practice that connect objects and architecture to God. Objects are interesting themselves, but they are also guides to meditation, to thinking. This is all parallel to contemporary dialogues about art. Relational aesthetics—give me a fucking break, people have been doing this for years. I want objects. I don't want to get rid of objects. This is how people have been experiencing the world so long that we forgot about it. Art and life have always been there.

We have to come up with new limits. I'm never really trying to specifically make something frayed, preworn, like the pre-made vintage shirt. It's more like these things are happening from being around.

PC: That's how the integrity is developed.

EL: I think so. With the materials that I'm using, it's interesting it hasn't really happened before in terms of the language. It's not the aestheticization of trash and garbage in terms of [Ed] Keinholz and it's not the aestheticization of shopping like Jessica Stockholder. It's a middle ground and there shouldn't be meaning in that, but then there is. So that becomes right now

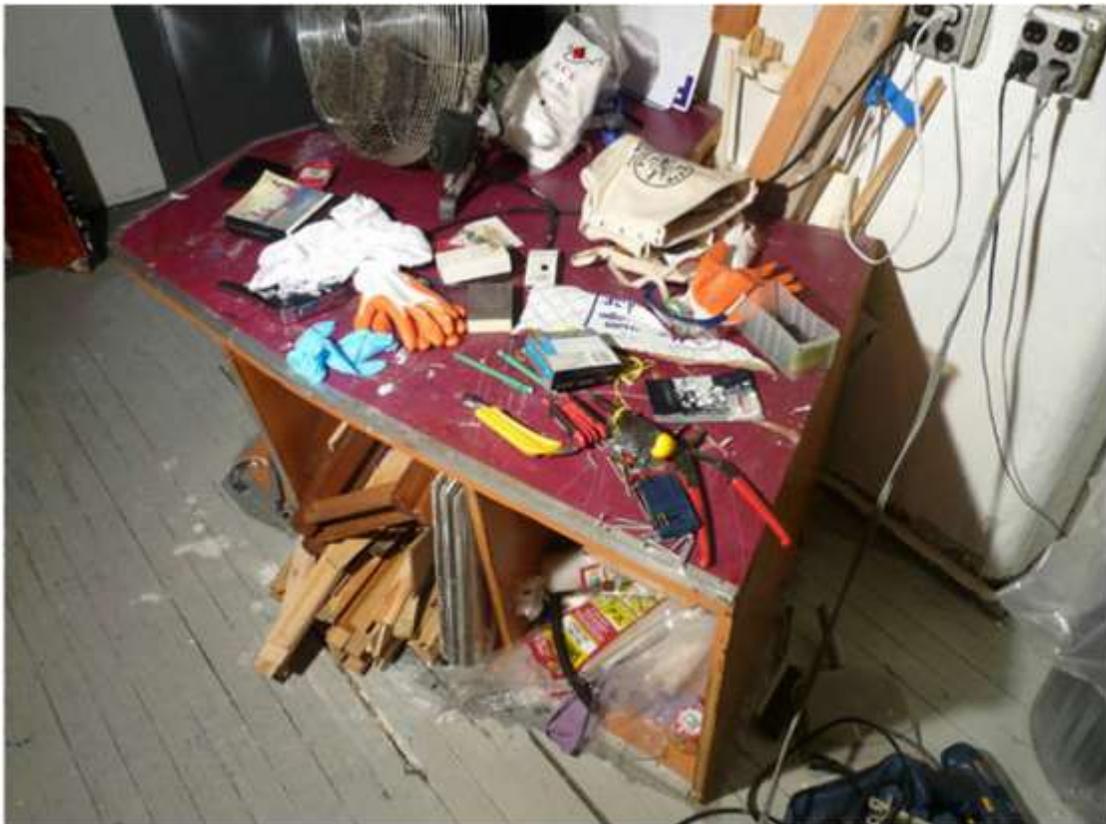
# FLASH ART

**Erik Lindman**

*Bozidar Brazda*

*January 2011*

Erik Lindman makes small to medium-scale abstract paintings and sculptures using a variety of techniques. The most interesting of these being perhaps the recycling of existing paintings to make new and presumably more successful works. It is a structuralist technique of turning material (and technique itself) into imagery. The simplest example of this latter approach can be seen in the diamond pattern that reappears painted, scratched, or otherwise affixed to the surface of his latest paintings. The shape references various iconic examples of abstract and geometric painting. The right angles found in Frank Stella's Polish Village series comes to mind, but more interestingly the pattern also parodies the diamond shape found at the center of cheap stretcher frames. This structuralist bent, and the mutable quality of each painting, suggests a kind of celebration or portrait of process and lends the paintings an air of suspended completion; it's easy to imagine the artist pulling one off of a gallery wall and using his box-cutter to quickly re-arrange its surface, which in turn follows Picasso's sage advice that to finish a painting is to "kill" it.



Courtesy Juan Antonio Olivares

**Bozidar Brazda:** So how long have you been here for?

**Erik Lindman:** Two years.

**BB:** And the space is free?

**EL:** For me: I take out the garbage.

**BB:** Oh, really?

**EL:** I'm the groundskeeper.

**BB:** This area is officially Harlem?

**EL:** Yes.



Courtesy Juan Antonio Olivares

**BB:** And what kind of building is this?

**EL:** I think it used to be a brewery. Then it was a movie studio of some sort. It's a steel factory on the other side.

**BB:** And there's obviously other artists in the building. Do you socialize with them?

**EL:** Nope, no one's ever here.

**BB:** That's great.

**EL:** It's kind of weird in here; there's no lights.

**BB:** There's no windows.

**EL:** No windows.

**BB:** No daylight. Obviously daylight is less important these days to painters than maybe it was historically.

**EL:** Yeah...



Courtesy Juan Antonio Olivares

**BB:** Is this big enough for the scale of what you do?

**EL:** Well, I make very domestic-sized paintings and this kind of feels like a little house.

**BB:** We were talking about scale when we were at White Slab (restaurant) and you were saying that as it stands you're not interested in doing the giant, alpha-male oversized thing.

I don't want to generalize but there's a bit of a trend towards moving away from that scale which kind of defines more my generation, without naming names, people making super-sized work.

**EL:** Yeah.

**BB:** What do you think that comes out of this move away from large painting and sculpture?

**EL:** Personally, it's just unmanageable for me to make large-scale paintings. I'm interested in having a painting that can travel easily: taxi-size paintings. Keeping them smaller also helps me to focus.



Courtesy Juan Antonio Olivares

**BB:** The wooden frame on the outside of this canvas [pointing to a work on the wall] suggests a window or something you can enter. Is that intentional, that suggestion of 'perspective'?

**EL:** Well, I think it's pointing at that. It's somewhat corny in its literalness. But I think you need to give a little bit, literalness isn't so bad actually.

**BB:** Being literal is almost full circle from irony.

**EL:** I hate irony. I think irony is too easy.

**BB:** You were born here or raised here?

**EL:** Both.

**BB:** In this area?

**EL:** No on the East Side. I've come to terms with that.

**BB:** What does that mean?

**EL:** My mom's from Coney Island and I used to say that I was from Coney Island. And my Dad's from Sweden and I don't speak it, so it's very difficult to pretend to be from there.

**BB:** A few years ago, if you had stock in overhead projectors you could have gotten rich. There was so much appropriative re-painting and deconstructing of images taken from the internet, pop-heavy art. It feels like that moment, for the time being, is being kicked aside for people more interested in surface. I wonder what attracts you to making work that isn't Pop?

**EL:** I'm interested in painting, but I want to consider myself an artist. I'm not interested in a practice that is not based in the studio. That, I felt, was coming out of the 'projecting thing' – this idea of being a conceptual artist.

**BB:** So you want to make stuff. It's not about the making of ideas but instead it's about the idea of making. I guess this wood [pointing to a canvas which has a replica of a wood stretcher frame attached over the canvas] has a kind of basic carpentry aspect.

**EL:** Very basic carpentry, and it is made to be taken apart.

**BB:** Right.

**EL:** This work is all made of stuff that I find, and existing work of mine, that I reassemble to make something that I would normally never have thought to make. If I have an old painting that didn't work out, I take it apart and figure out how to make something else out of it.

**BB:** So you're recycling too. That's very green.

**EL:** I'm very cheap. But it's not some sort of aestheticization of trash.

**BB:** Those aren't yours, right? Those [pointing to three highly varnished, assemblage sculptures] are a bit of an aestheticization of trash. There's a bit of Ed Keinholz going on there.

**EL:** Yeah. They're mine. They make me feel uncomfortable actually. They're really un-cool.

**BB:** Which is ok.

**EL:** I think that's probably good.

**One Year- Golden Age:** essay by Hunter Hunt-Hendrix, 2011



Erik Lindman considers himself to be a painter, but the body of work comprising One Year Edit clearly has more to do with scraping, like the peeling away of a cocoon. William Blake writes about scraping off "all that is not of God alone". Alongside the scraping there an innocent bubbling, as of a spring.

This scraping-and-bubbling is a journey partitioned into three vectors. Maybe these three vectors pertain to socially mediated (digested) gestures that Lindman plays like the keys of a piano (patches in a sampler), producing a melody that rises above the social and historical. Or maybe it's not such a complex operation - it's hard to be sure. What's certain is that the state of balance between these vectors opens a stable window into pure Innocence.

The vectors are Residuum, Selection, and Struggle.

**Residuum.** Everything that is presented is and is presented as detritus, as a leftover, as a side-product of a creative process. The residua are produced outside of view, in the dark, intimately connected to the field of intention (a piece of the studio wall, a portion of a failed painting). They are part of the creative process but not the essential part - they are the chaff. Here Lindman is the Catalyzer, no more and no less. The residua are concretely existent, aleatoric indices of a creative act, perhaps one that failed.

**Selection.** The residua are chosen, arranged, recombined and revised according to the heart, intuition, taste. The result has an unmistakably generic beauty. This is because the chance operations are subjected to selection. They are reanimated, given new breath. A pure universal creative selection subject neither to attack nor to defense. Lindman is an interior decorator, a fashion photographer, a basketball card collector. «Ah, this is right». A flicker of the Good - the moment of selection and recombination is scraping and bubbling combined into one.

**Struggle.** The struggle is obvious. The existent exceeds and escapes the intention as the reins of revision drag the process around. Lindman here grapples with the reins and struggles to define what he is doing. He acts according to a quasi-pure creative urge (a secretion or a bubbling) interpenetrating with the struggle both to define (invent a story about) the result in a way that matches critical expectations of current discourse and at the same time to not do this. Here is the spectrum between Virtue and the Possibility of Possibility. The works in One Year Edit lie at the impossible and penumbral point where Mind and Being kiss; the vertigo of self-awareness resolves into the earnest, naive, pure act, cutting its balloon cord so as to touch together the ends of the alpha and the omega.

**New York, New York - Hannah Barry Gallery, London: essay by Benjamin Eastman, 2010**

"We need to look extremely closely at the particular things before us, because in art we do not make things any simpler by making simpler things. Reduction does not yield certainty, but something like its opposite, which is ambiguity and multivalence." (Kirk Varnedoe)

You have to get up close to Erik Lindman's paintings. Their immediate effect resides in detail – the reaction of the paint to the material to which it is applied; the play of light on texture; the variations on a pre-prepared form that ground each piece in the physical object. The viewer is compelled to look at, not through, these canvases.

Taking an aspect of the physical canvas – an imperfection, a stitch, a fold – Lindman uses the idiosyncrasies of the material as stimuli: "you articulate an accident or you cover it up." Each gesture on the canvas interacts with every other in the creation of a whole that simultaneously acknowledges and transcends the material circumstances of its production. Cut, scrap and pattern contribute to the inclusivity of work that incorporates elements from the real world without reducing the finished canvas to objecthood.

The generosity of the works extends beyond the circumstances of their composition. These works are acts of communication, establishing a reciprocal or bipartisan field between the artist and viewer for the creation of new meaning or the summoning of an emotional response associated with the personal experience of one or both of the participants.

Lindman identifies two stages in a viewer's engagement with the work: the first as the audience addresses the formal "idea of a painting"; the second occurring as the first "slips away". There is a contest enacted in these works (and our engagement with them) between the latticework of technical learning on which viewers draw in a first engagement with an artwork and the capacity of the work itself to supplant or elude these established prejudices. The status of art as purely "learned game", delimited by the corridors of the canon, is challenged:

"The work must push up against something to mean something. The work pushes up against preconceived notions of its meaning, aesthetic formation and context; in either failing to meet or in superseding these aggregations of beliefs the work can slip through and become new and active within the audience's experience."

These canvases encourage the viewer to cast aside the conceptual apparatus to which we are trained to refer. Lindman and I talk of how people feel obliged to stand stock-still and open-mouthed in front of a Rothko. Most must surely be awaiting, forcing or faking the quasi-religious transcendence that textbooks tell us we must encounter when confronted with these works. Lindman prefers Blinky Palermo.

The works here are determinedly non-didactic and non-prescriptive. The painting cannot be treated as a statement articulated in a specific visual language which, once deciphered by the viewer, will introduce her to a set of decreed emotional and aesthetic responses. Instead, the paintings open up a "space" for the viewer's engagement, in which her own contribution is essential to the effect.

"I would rather give someone the key to get out of hell than open the door up to heaven", Lindman tells me, and we part.

Interviewed by Ben Eastham in New York, 14.02.10