

Unbreak my heart. Say you will love me again¹

Intro

I will begin this text by being sincerely personal, but hang on; I will get into academicism only a page from now. It is important for me to plant this sentimental ambience right in the beginning. I wrote this part after I finished the majority of the pages, but I have been thinking about it for a long time believing it was irrelevant to put into writing. So this little introduction is actually an excuse for the next passage and a promise that it will soon be over. Enjoy (- or at least reside though my disgrace).

The hen/egg loop

I always thought art practice come streaming out from the sentimental mode one lives in. As a thought experiment I started to map out my artistic practice and my love life. I investigated my own artworks as the core of what I emotionally allow for myself.

I found that through my work I expand the possibilities for emotions and even relationships. Through experiments in the studio I increase the capacities to feel, to suffer and to love. Through the work I understand what I need - definitely not literately but in a perplexing subliminal way. The reason might be because I spend all time in my studio alone. I can analyse situations around me without any interference. My job is to do that. To be in contact with these channels. My thoughts are free and I do not reject any emotions, I let them come and go while I paint. Much like mediation. I do believe that many artists feel the need to go to the studio and work out simple problems - for example with paint - in order to be able to be involved with someone emotionally. I think that we - by working with art - open up emotional spaces.

I will try to simplify this question I have puzzled with: Do I paint according to my emotional condition or do I work out dilemmas and then react on it in my love life after completing the paintings? Let's say the first idea is a fact and I paint according to my emotional condition - then I would be an illustrator of my own life. Is that possible? If I choose the other suggestion I must admit that working with art is magically important, since that idea would indicate that the work enables and opens routes of my life. Yes I know it is a hen/egg loop, but it is important for me to try to understand what is primarily determining the routes of my life - art or love? I am aware that it might not be possible to conclude either, but in the exploration of my past I was amazed how interlinked my art and my love life was.

So how do I understand love?² ... I am not at all trying to undermine the guys, the men, the man. I am merely suggesting that girlfriend/lover potential is formed by thoughts and emotions I have already practised - through art. Or... I don't know... Perhaps this is far out. But it works for now as a pre-conclusion. Looking at my past I found many specific examples of this art-practice/love-practice coherence, but I will not list them here.

I forgot which legendary person said it, but "it is not important what is *on* the painting. It is important *how* it is painted". I believe that to be true. Restraint, drama, enthusiasm, laziness, carefulness and carefree attitude is easily tracked down in painting despite the visual motif.

¹ "Unbreak my heart. Say you will love me again" is not only lyrics from a Tony Braxton song from 1996; it is also the title of the encyclopedia project and of my exam show.

² The relationship between two lovers

Re-intro

In the following I will talk a bit more about my relationship with painting. My paintings use the most traditional of subject matters. I paint still lifes, landscapes, portraits, the female nude and the choreographed history painting. Yet while apparently following the conventions of representational painting, I aim to challenge its established languages and unsettle its assumptions. I often return to the same subject but change the approach each time. Some paintings are purely experiments in composition, light, colour and technique. In other works, I choose to capitalize on the tension between subject matter and medium - my brush strokes both affirming and contradicting what they depict.

In my work I use a wide variety of painterly styles - not to give a hit parade of different methods - but in order to examine what kind of technique can host what kind of atmosphere. I will in the following try to explain this way of working. But in short, I am in my practice looking at what paint can be made to say and do - but also what it has said and done - and how that can be applied on canvas today. My interest is to question the activity and history of painting as well as being confined in it.

Painting 1 – The creation of fragments

I will now try to define the two methods that I tend to work in when it comes to painting. The first one is the creation of fragments, which I will start by introducing. After this section I will explain the other method; the creation of one single coherent painting.

When I decide to do a painting I seldom just start on *one* canvas. I almost always think in multiple frames leaving the idea hanging between the frames in the installed exhibition. For that reason my work is never finished until it is installed. I am more interested in building up a situation in a series of paintings than trying to form a statement in one painting. However I respect and at times even admire artists who are able to condense all into one type of painting - like Caravaggio, Hammershøi, Frida Kahlo, Magritte, Frank Stella, Peter Doig and many more. I find it interesting to look at their production. They are like brands because of their strong signature in their work. I admire that, but I also have trouble understanding how style can take over creative thinking to such an extent. Therefore I am also drawn to painters who use a mix of languages in the same painting - like Neo Rauch, Robert Rauschenberg, David Salle and Martin Kippenberger. However - strangely - their mixing seems like a brand to me as well. Their collages almost take the form of a brushstroke.

No matter how attracted I might be to the strong approach these painters present I am not interested in developing a certain style and be a producer of signature work myself. To me it is not possible to communicate a question through painting just by using a standard format. This problem is an ambivalent brainteaser for me since I admire the play with visuals and the consistence of these artworks. But I also wish painting could be more than that. At least painting for me is more than that. Working out a subject matter in paint is however not only an attempt to communicate a question. It is motivating for me to try to find the exact format for this question. Painting then becomes an examination of what kind of technique can host what kind of atmosphere, as I mentioned above. In that situation politics, emotions and the physicality of paint is cooperating with one concurrent goal - to make a functional painting.

In my studio I establish sceneries using different images - each image and each stylistic method on a separate canvas. I enjoy the building of different visual research achieves, but in the end "meaning" is created in the installation of the show. The installation is the key to understanding my process. I paint whatever and however I like - and by doing so there is a lot of spill energy and spill material - and then the play of making sense of it all is by sorting, trashing and installing the show. I simplify the energy and "publish" the work.

My work focus on the social, psychological and political relationships between the canvases more than it focus on a visual standard for communication and even a thematically point. I stumbled into a quote by famous food-writer Ruth Reichl; "Postmodernism is the practice of reintroducing traditional or classical elements of style or by carrying modernist styles or practices to extremes". I believe this is the way I work with painting. I am a sampler of things and I can allow myself to forget the pressure of having to perform originality. Originality in Postmodernism is when you make the choice. For me decision represents "work" as much as the actual implementation of a painting.

In my examination exhibition I showed an arrangement of eight paintings classified under the title (*Formatted contract*). The paintings are measurements of formalistic methods as well as they are figuratively telling the story of the overall title of the show *Unbreak my heart, say you'll love me again*. These lyrics wholeheartedly define my project. Working with painting means falling in love, developing crisis, believing in and enjoying the expedition.

After the pleasing honeymoon-period of beginning a painting I always stand at a crossroad. There are only two paths laid out for me at this point and I never deliberately choose either one of them. However I always end up on one of them. One leads to victory, the other to disaster. Conveniently, once in a while I do go down the victory path by giving up a painting (leaving it and perhaps rediscovering it again months later) losing control or even by cleverly solving a problem.

The paintings from the show I consider victorious. They might not “look better” than the ones I have eliminated over time but they represent victory for me since I recognize the original intention and I am aware of the exchanges between me and the will of the paint.

The elimination is important. For every good painting I always mess up or eliminate a few others. But the triumph is important to distinguish as well – not only the embarrassing bad and entertaining results. Otherwise painting would be completely useless. And it is not.

Since I do not map out in advance which paintings to create I end up with a bouquet of fragments and a sense of desperation right before a show. Then I need to sort out which ones are making sense in the group. I tend to select different formalistic ideas that collectively form a contract. They need each other to communicate their combined idea – the subject matter of show.

Thematically the paintings from my exam show are linked to Artemisia Gentileschi's paintings of Judith. Artemisia's dramatic and brutally graphic versions of the biblical scene where Judith kills Holofernes are a source of inspiration to me as well as the several paintings of the tense moments following this act. However my work has no relation to the biblical story. I look at Artemisia's pictorial language as psychological illustrations and I use her overall atmosphere as a direction for my idea. Since I am living four hundred years later than her my specific references to love and drama are not related to the bible. They are related to modern mythmaking. I find most of my source material in Google's image search.

Painting 2 – The creation of one single coherent painting

I have faced this challenge before. At least once every two years I start to work on one single isolated coherent painting that captures all truth in one single canvas. No fragments, no minimalism, no ambivalence. Rather propaganda and history painting. Just one. One coherent painting. In these rare occasions I am longing for a painted universe where I do not build up the narration from elements, which is my habitually preferred working method. I then long for a universe where less is not more but where exactly enough is enough. I want one canvas that contains the entire truth.

The painting has to be large in scale in order to enclose my body in the working process. I often turn to the effect of quantity in order to be sure that I will get bored during the process. By doing this I know also that I will be very proud when I finish the painting. Painting becomes a mission to conquer the boredom created by quantity.

I looked at Velázquez's painting *Las Meninas* from 1656 – the world's first snapshot. I too want to make a painting that captures me, my work, the surroundings and thoughts on my position as a painter. Diego Velázquez's complex and enigmatic composition raises questions about reality and illusion, and creates an uncertain relationship between the viewer and the figures depicted. In the painting Velázquez portrays himself working at a large canvas – the same canvas you as a viewer is now trying to understand. The artist looks outwards, beyond the pictorial space to where a viewer of the painting would stand. This painting talks about authority in terms of “the author”. Who writes history? Whose voice is speaking? For the first time in history the artist was speaking.

In my work I want to point back to the author as well. I then came across another painting that seemingly suggested a new direction for my work. In my mind I try to mix *Las Meninas* with my new discovery created in 1793 by Anton Hickel. The painting is titled *William Pitt the Younger addressing the House of Commons*. I was certainly interested in the architecture of the pictorial space but I was also paying attention to the arrangement of people in the painting. These men are in the process of decision-making

– as I am in the studio and in the installation process of a show. Another painting with a somewhat different starting point is *The Anatomy Lesson* from 1632, painted by Rembrandt. I found this painting attractive because of its staged composition. But I also found it fascinating that anatomy lessons were a social event in the 17th century. They took place in lecture rooms that were almost like theatres, with students, colleagues and the general public being permitted to attend on payment of an entrance fee. I felt that such an event captured the essence of my aim of illustrating the quest for knowledge.

With the help from these historical references I felt prepared to start my own painting, but what was the underlying base for these representations that became my research? Part of the answer I found in the first work of the young Artemisia Gentileschi: *Susanna and the Elders* from 1610. At the tender age of seventeen Artemisia depicts the biblical story of Susanna, a virtuous young wife sexually harassed by the elders of her community. Rather than showing Susanna as flirtatious (as many male artists had painted the scene), Artemisia portrays Susanna as repulsed by their demands. She finishes three paintings with this motif during her lifetime. This female artist was claiming her own existence in the art world. She completes this painting prior to her rape by Agostino Tassi - a painter hired by her father. The drama probably reflects the (sexual) harassment by him and other artists at the time when she began training at his studio. The painting drew attention to her professional promise and willingness to experiment with psychological dynamics. I see a reflection of the author and I feel the willingness from her to point at herself as a foundation for change.

The title of my now finished painting is copied from a later work by Artemisia called *Self Portrait as the Allegory of Painting*. She probably placed two angled mirrors to gain this unusual side view of herself while painting. As I reflect on my piece I feel that I allegorically have done the same thing; I placed two mirrors to gain a side view of myself while painting. Artemisia's important painting was completed by the mature and respected Artemisia in 1630.

I think at these five paintings and try to understand the position of the author in them as I spray a layer of varnish on my 240 cm x 180 cm sized canvas.

The physicality of paint

This next part of the text will be a little geeky, but it is however important for me to try to verbalize the practical process in the studio.

As I in some of my work build up the oil to create an almost a sculptural relief of impasto I feel that I very effectively speak the superficial phrase of formal painting as object. Also in other paintings I work on this issue more or less by illustrating the concept. For example by painting a painting or an exhibition space through the camouflaging of the actual paint. I am then playing the game of representational painting. I seemingly cannot choose which strategy fulfils my painterly desires the most. I understand the world in images, but I also understand it in materialism. In the previously described and more modernistic paths of my practice I feel that the dense layering of oil colours coalesce to form dense emotional landscapes that is of considerable importance to me. An importance that lies as much with the reduction of the motivation for doing the picture as with the actual paint. So whether I paint an image of a monochrome or actually paint a monochrome I have the same fascination of what the modernistic idea can perform. However, the intellectual liking of the idea do not separate me from practicing the actual monochrome. In fact I take considerable pleasure in moving around the thickness in the paste of paint³. I am endlessly trying to figure out the physical problem and the control of paint. Therefore I enjoy painting the most if the act has no aim. When it is pure play. A game against time. The time it takes for the paint to dry. Splashing and moving without any other reason than keeping the paint alive.

(I just realized that I never make a monochrome with the aim of making an artwork. Monochromes appear in my practice as a result of a passionate session of abstract expressionism or a half-hearted fatal figurative attempt on illustrating something, followed by a "cleaning up". The cleaning up is the act of erasing the original urge, mixing all colours that lay in the canvas and shaping the mass into a physical object by playing with different traces of the brush and transform the canvas into a field where I challenge the retaining of a physical purity and grace.)

³ No! I will not make a footnote concerning the Freudian analyse of that kind of pleasure! We all know it. Let us skip it.

Keeping the paint alive means to maintain a paint surface where an exhilarating fluidity controls the conception of the piece. A successful outcome of such a game is when the result looks as though the image had only momentarily settled into its current configuration and is about to return to liquid pigment. It is then less of an image and more material. This game amuses me. I feel that this converge makes the scene vividly present rather than safely understandable and historically referential⁴. I even found out recently that I could transfer the game of keeping paint alive into representational painting. I was really happy to learn that. However, it took me many years to understand how my aim of painting was to be executed in a satisfying way to me. I have thought for far too long that this "historical" visual quality was to be found in a special way of controlling a detailed master-like technique. I now realize that I can use historical references and render them through a more informal attitude. I am not interested in learning this method. I want to invest my time in the relationship between the canvases.

My tools today are different. I am still interested in learning what paint has been formed to say and do throughout history - and how I can form it to communicate today. Therefore in addition to my interest in classical painting, there is a branch of my practice where scenes emerge from an apparently impenetrable mass of sticky paint. And I blow a little kiss to the macho modernist tradition of the monochrome as an offensive wet painting stands as one element in a figurative narration in my studio. These works are part of "the creation of fragments".

Suspension pauses

I am often thinking about the colour field painters and try to understand what I have in common with them. I also sometimes fear that I am ironizing over their visual project, as I am not only practicing their religion to the fullest but take what I need from each religion I find interesting. It is comical that these traditions almost become religions today - that artists have so much faith in their art that other people build up an interest in it too. I often feel that there are certain protectors of the genius (for example - just to mention a man who is now *himself* protected by history - Clement Greenberg) who make sure that certain art practices are mystified. As long as it is mystic other people feel undermined by it and importance is created. This strategy has saved many half-talented painters in history.

However, the colour field painters wanted their paintings to introduce abstraction as an end in itself. I think that is a beautiful idea, but I use this kind of painting in my studio as "suspension pauses" in the formation of an atmosphere or sometimes I use them to formulate a symbol for an emotion. The last years I have used a few colour field moves when I had no words or figurative motifs to help me. That is also why I think of this direction as a religion - because I run to it when I am complete stripped and I have no other painterly solutions. But while these minimalists wanted to present each painting as one unified monolithic image - my colour field paintings are "only" the necessary element that makes the narration complete - the individual painting is not alone the whole truth.

The rhizome talk

Having insisted on the physicality of painting for a long time I realized that thinking and painting could go hand in hand. That painting *is* in fact thinking. A very surprising realization to me.

As I recently started to fight my way through Deleuze's and Guattari's thoughts and concepts I understood that my work had a structure, which these philosophers used in their writing as well - much earlier than me of course. Deleuze - being a post-modern thinker - lay out a suggestion on how to structure things in a new way that is not related to the hierarchical linear arrangement. I was very seduced by this (un)logic and understood that my practice in the studio was based on a similar idea that Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari called it "the rhizome". The idea is based on the botanical rhizome, which is another system of plants than the system of the tree that has roots, a trunk and a tree crown. The rhizome is a horizontal stem of a plant that is usually found underground. It is often sending out roots in all directions - seeming illogical. But in the end it is forming a strong net even though it is not mathematically logic. For me that is important to remember. That math is not the same as strength or even the same as "truth". I always wish for a way to estimate the value of unclassifiable concepts. I seem

⁴ It is perhaps forbidden to claim anything like that since all painting has historical references... (Except cave paintings)...

to always require things to be straightforward, black or white. So in that way the seemingly illogic order of the rhizome made me rethink my standard measurement strategies.

What Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari used this botanical term for was to explain theory and research that allows for multiple, non-hierarchical entry and exit points. I was happy to find this idea verbalized since it has been part of my work for a long time and since the idea also describes the post-modern world and especially the Internet in a very reasonable manner. They wrote this before the Internet was up and going and I (and probably many others) wonder if their idea sat a new standard and became a turning point for modern culture? No matter what, the online rhizome is a big part of modern culture today and it is impossible to neglect the fact that the way of navigation on the Internet has influenced the mind of the post-modern human being. I will get back to this later in my text, but the reason I am bringing up the internet and the rhizome is because it really does describe, if not the mind of human kind, then at least of my mind - and then of course by consequence it also describes my work.

This sentence also aims to describe the concept described above: *"The rhizome metaphor, which represents a critical leap in coping with the loss of a canon against which to compare, judge, and value knowledge, may be particularly apt as a model for disciplines on the bleeding edge where the canon is fluid and knowledge is a moving target."*

Written by an unknown author, this sentence is stolen from Wikipedia. Wikipedia is the ultimate rhizome within this larger rhizome I thought not get more rhizomatic; the Internet itself. And it seems like whoever wrote this is performing some kind of self-reflection in a sentence that claims to describe the opposite. Isn't that interesting?

But in actual fact how am I working with painting in a rhizomatic order? I will try to describe that as a conclusion on this paragraph: When I have a visual idea I seldom think twice. I paint it and more often than not do I paint it several times. I cannot make any judgement on how good or bad the idea is until I have painted it. It all happens as the paint is applied onto the canvas – here is then the moment of truth. This procedure - my act of painting – is therefore my research. Being a rational person (who nevertheless likes chaos and practices chaos more than I would dare to admit) I was displeased with the stylistic methods of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's writing. I mean; why are they writing about chaos in a chaotic way so that their well-thought idea has a hard time getting to the reader? I guess the answer is that they are practicing their religion and not just preaching it. Their text was not a lecture. Logic as I am I would probably better have understood a version like "don't do as I do – do as I say", but they were obviously too true to their invention to explain it better than they did. They were indeed practicing their religion.

Overproduction is research

But then, after having been open-minded and cherished the chaos in the studio for months, I select. I pick the best. I am then creating a hierarchy but behaving in order to suit the best setting of an exhibition. I am not interested in the best collections, but in the best *connections* between the pieces. Therefore I sometimes concretely benefit from my over-production later. I see a connection from a present idea to an older one. Most of the time my over-production serves me as research – 90 percent of the pieces cannot be used as they first appear. But that is fine.

I am proud of being able to make paintings that are not fit for shows. Unintentionally I prove to myself that working is more important than showing. And I enjoy having my studio full of small and large canvases that did not make it all the way. It is as if I have all pages of a handwritten cookbook open at the same time. Some works I keep as illustrations of what not to do. Others I keep because I like the immediate idea that I never really carried through. Others again are just marinating. They will get my attention later.

For years I did not understand that I had an over-production. The reason I did not understand it was due to the fact that I painted on the same canvas and spend the energy on changing, erasing and rendering. It was a constant frustration. Now I always have a blank canvas at hand for impulsive actions and painting urges. By controlling this energy I am the constant door opener for this other me who is just running fiercely in a big house – through doors and doors and doors.

The Internet and all that

I believe the rhizomatic system of chaos has applied to me from an early age. I have one example on how I enjoyed the rhizome but wanted to see and own every part of it. When I was introduced to "the internet" at the age of 15 the system was very slow but it had a lot of my favourite things in it. I never questioned where it came from and who had written the texts of the Internet. I understood the Internet as the truth. I could not figure out how to appreciate the fact that the pictures of Björk were right there for my eyes only, for now and for my memory. I had no computer, external hard drive, USB-key or memory-card on which to store this information - and facebook albums did not exist. As a result I had to print out hundreds of pictures and store them in physical folders. The format of the book was more understandable for me. Today it is almost enough for me to put a virtual youtube link on my virtual facebook wall. It stays there and my online goggle-bank is open for me all the time. However, it is not entirely enough. I still collect millions of files, mainly photos. I have about 600 categorized folders on my hard drives, all containing between 10 to 1000 images - all from animals, celebrities, nature, architecture. All sorts of things. And I use my achieve many times a week. I know what I have, or at least I have an idea of what I have collected. I should be able to just go online and find a picture when I need it, but for some anal reason I need to own it... and here comes my confession; I still need to print out *a lot of things* each week - ruining my economy - but helping me think. And as the last layer of this need for possession I am making a painting or I write a book for my encyclopedia project, which I will come back to later in this text.

Not until the idea (for example; "man walking in forest") has become a search - has become the file - has become the rendered Photoshop file - has become the print - has become a painting; I am able to remove the print from my studio wall. I have respoken it with my voice and that was the whole point of chasing the file/the thought in the beginning.

The Internet (and my own rhizomatic art practice) has three major related problems caused by its chaotic nature. First of all it is hard to find exactly what you are looking for, hence understanding what you are looking at. Secondly, users tend to "skim" sites and they seldom linger unless what they are looking for is immediately apparent. Finally, you do not know whose brain the source of information online comes from.

I am over and over again experiencing the same paradox of working on an art piece that is so rich in linkage to other information that my most common reaction is that of maniacally following links without pausing to examine deeper contents. The exact same behaviour pattern I follow while surfing the Internet. Marcos Novak⁵ describes this paradox in his essay "Liquid Architectures in Cyberspace"; *"Like mad cartographers, we seek to map the territory without lingering to visit the place. We reveal our preoccupation with ordering, not savouring, our resource" ... "The lack of a comprehensible underlying structure or unifying interface metaphor, reinforced by rapid growth in the number of sites, makes it impossible for users to form a mental map. The sheer volume of material available on the Internet does more than just make it difficult to locate specific information, it affects the entire mindset and, therefore, behaviour of individuals when they are on-line."*

As I concluded earlier I believe the post-modern behaving system is a zapping through channels - feeling not only stressed out, but lost and on track at the same time. I really do relate that to my studio practice.

The encyclopedia project

As a young and dedicated but hesitating painter, I began to study the walls I continuously ran into. I classified them and defined what they were to me. The reason for doing this was due to my own personal, practical and theoretical misunderstandings around painting. So the files of my encyclopedia are not as much a true encyclopedia for the world as it is a personal attempt to verbalize various problems around painting. The 5 meter long white sculpture was designed to fit the encyclopedia files. It is a cold cover for the repeatedly private and sentimental content. But it is ideally installed to work as a control panel for a specific exhibition space. I would like the viewer to step into the sculpture and

⁵ Marcos Novak is transarchitect, artist and theorist. His seminal work focuses on the swiftly blossoming architectural cyber theory. For Michael Benedikt's "Cyberspace: First Steps" he wrote the influential chapter "Liquid Architectures in Cyberspace", from which this statement origins.

navigate the titles, the processes, and pictorial ideas. This way the paintings on the walls function as elements of the encyclopedia monitored from the sculpture. All solutions come from somewhere and I categorized all that from A to Z. The viewer is now invited to interact with, search, or randomly explore the files. The sculpture only becomes an encyclopedia when a viewer starts to interact with it. Until that encounter, the sculpture stays a sculpture.

The final encyclopedia consists of about 350 books and 25 paintings. Each file is 22cm x 21cm and becomes a little twitter about a theme. It does not provide a broader perspective on the particular theme and can seem almost irrelevant. But as a whole – all books collectively in the encyclopedia bookshelf – the viewer will experience a melody in all the twittering. The complete piece allows the viewer to interact, as it is my hope that the books will create interest and will be read. But even though this project was not made in order to become an artwork I have accepted its qualities as a sculpture that people might not touch. The books are notes and sketches rather than long reports on the different subjects. Some of them will suggest explanation to a problem. Others are mere ramblings. They files are all the same size and the viewer will never know which elements of the encyclopedia is a book or a painting unless he interacts and pulls out a title from the rest. The paintings also have titles on the backs and are placed in the bookshelf structure.

This project is inspired by Gerhard Richter's Atlas. The heavy green hardcover book consists of groupings of newspaper clippings, photos and sketches that are the source material for much of Richter's work. My piece is an attempt to systemize my chaos and find a pattern of thought in my work. It is a way for me to clear my mind but also to remember solutions on problems and to look back at what I thought was a solution at a given time. Often I forget my process and my thoughts. This way I will be able to keep all outdated statements and opinions.

As many encyclopedists in history have probably encountered there are several problems with any approach you might choose as your system, including how to decide what to neglect as unnecessary, how to structure knowledge that resisted structure and how to cope with the influx of newly discovered knowledge and the effects that it had on prior structures.

This last part of my text is meant as a guide for the encyclopedia. Apart from the alphabetical logic of the installation, I will introduce you to 3 other systems that invite you to explore and search the files for information. These 3 systems are each illustrated by a map. Two of the maps are installed in the sculpture that holds the encyclopedia. The Chapter Map, The Field Map and The Pragmatic Map. The first two Maps are created after I finalized the largest part of the project. They are attempts to activate the collection as a didactic system. The Chapter Map was created to illustrate the education of the artist. It is divided into 7 chapters and each chapter has a number of titles from the encyclopedia attached to it. I will explain this specific map a little further.

The 7 chapters follow a linear system where chapter 1 is laying out all the basics of art practice as I see it. The files related to this chapter are primarily lists of materials and techniques, but there are also files with a more playful motivation tone. Because this is where it all starts! Painting is fun and easy! Chapter 2 is laying out elaborations and evils. These files list problems of material, technique and motivation. Is motivation talks real and how can you control the material you have chosen as your medium? This files connected to this chapter is dealing with internal conflicts between the artist and the material. Chapter 3 however aligns external problems. These files focus on the external factors that affect your ideas and execution methods. The external factors can be actual critique or it can simply be you own realization of an already existing solution of a painting that someone made a hundred years ago. Having tried to take in external factors the artist is then ready to go back to the studio. Chapter 4 exercises the material crisis. While chapter 2 was presenting the first technical problems, chapter 4 gives profound practical advise on material problems and technical misunderstandings. And as chapter 3 offered external analysis on its prior chapter (2), chapter 5 justifies the conceptual crisis the artist most likely has stumbled into at this point. Conceptual crisis in painting is in general the question of "the death of painting", but it takes many different forms. The notion of "the death of painting" can occur at any given time, but it may be strongest at this level of the education; at the point where the student of painting has experiences the 2 levels of material awareness (chapter 2 and 4) and 2 levels of analysis (chapter 3 and 5). Chapter 6 then maps out the accomplished breakdown of motivation and art

production. The files related to chapter 6 justify this breakdown but they also aim to communicate congratulations - as a genuine breakdown is truly necessary. Painting is a time-consuming practice of building up rules (historical and personal) that you end up being forced to discard in order to be able to continue. Chapter 7 is then "the acceptance chapter". Being aware of - and having survived - problems and general crisis it is time to accept painting. The artist has at this point experienced classical clichés and strangely enough they felt authentic. These files speak of the fact that it is now time for the artist to undertake painting as medium and practice. There will always be minor setbacks and realizations, but this superior 7-step development is the core for art practice and the encyclopedia aims to speak of that. I made the files in an illogic order but settled them into this linear course after the closing stage of the entire encyclopedia. Therefore the files operate as rules but were created in a diary format

The second system is the Field Map. This system divides the titles into regions. Similar to a spectrum the alteration here is not an exact point of reference. One arrangement blends into the one next to it and forms a gradually yet systematically changing atlas of fields. There are 6 fields and in the circle they all have an opponent. The ideal field opponents the drama field. The obligation field opponents the aspiration field and the flow field opponents the monitor field. The titles of the encyclopedia are in this particular system each representing a field. So if the viewer is interested in for example "drama" in art practice, there is a full list of titles that deals with this issue. The titles are of course picked from the seven chapters in the linear chapter system, but here they operate in an atlas of fields. There is no hierarchy but questions and solutions at all levels. The map of fields is also placed in the actual encyclopedia sculpture. The last system is the Pragmatic Map. The graphics of this map is not based in the sculpture. This map communicates the rhizomatic order. The procedure of randomly creating this collection of idea was in a way my overall research - in the same way the actual act of painting is. I strive to judge all thoughts equally and let them expand without manipulation. Consequently this map is the most honest illustration of the project. It is effortless in its system. To me that is pragmatism. The fields, the chapters, the joints, the missing links, and the misbehaving ideas. This became the system I worked in for the first two years of the development of the encyclopedia. I think the classical master/student teaching book is humorous and thought provoking. The master painters wrote notes for the students on how to deal with the cooking of material and the rules of for example icons and symbols in painting. With that in mind this encyclopedia for painters could be named "Past/present Ditte's encyclopedia for the present/future Ditte". It really is *me* being the master of *me*, the painting graduate, the painting painter. I always wish I could teach the artist I was 2 years ago a few lessons, since I feel much more clever today. Even writing this text has taught me a lot as well. I think this process has been like painting a picture. Starting, thinking, acting, rendering, enjoying, laughing, giving up, re-entering and concluding.

The encyclopedia was developed parallel with my work with painting and it will therefore always link back to and function parallel with my paintings. The files work to clear my mind but also to remember solutions on problems and to look back at what I thought was a solution at a given time. Often I forget my process and my thoughts. I tend to make the same mistake several times. By storing these files I am able to keep all illuminations under control.

While the encyclopedia is an attempt to systemize my chaos and define a pattern of thought in my work, my paintings are confirming the opposite. They become whatever I benefit from exploring. They are unrestrained obsessions. Still the installed paintings imitate the nature of the encyclopedia simply by their existence in the same room. Also the indexical characteristics of my paintings repeat the encyclopedic system.

The love song "Unbreak My Heart" from 1996 by Toni Braxton operated as working title for the mission of looking at "painting" and analyzing situations I was confined in myself. I concluded several times that the myth of the painter is not only pathetic and deceptive - as one could be let to think by the overly romantic aura it holds - but that it is actually sometimes sincerely true. The practice of painting is a useless practice - as is the terms a love song. But I like it. And I like that particular quality. To me the practice of painting is a relationship - you beg yourself not to loose yourself and you beg your lover to take you away. You cannot sleep at night if the relationship is in rupture. I cannot sleep if a painting is in rupture.

Autro

Essentially, while having worked on establishing a verbal language for describing my art practice, I am now able to sum up that painting for me *is* in fact magically important. I believe art practice matters. So as far as the hen/egg dilemma in the beginning of the text, I think God created the hen and the egg simultaneously in the beginning of time.

I as an individual influence my painting. And my painting influences me:

*O, Unbreakst my heart
Canst thou say thou wilt love me again?*

*I love thee before thou didst request it
And yet thou wilt not love me again?*

*O, wilt thou leave me so displeased?
Wilt we always be parting is such sweet sorrow?*