

# JOHANNES VOGT

## CARETS AND STICKS

KIRK STOLLER ON GREG ITO

JANUARY 16, 2014



My favorite type of studio visit is when I walk in and the art studio is filled with experiments and nearly finished pieces...all being created under the impending deadline for an upcoming show. I had such a visit the other day with Greg Ito.

Ideas seemed to be streaming in and out of him at break neck speeds. He appears to jump into every idea to its fullest irregardless as to if it will take him so far out on a tangent that he might not be able to bring it back around in order to make sense showing it next to the creation next to it. Greg had large patterned canvases in one room; chain link fence sculpture in another, and stacks of materials of all shapes, surfaces, and colors in every corner.

There was fluidity between media and material, none grabbing a hierarchical power over the other. It all seemed visually like a Google search...with your eye desperately looking for something on which to be able to rest...and your mind open to bringing more knowledge into it once allowed to stay long enough to absorb it. Part of this was the studio activity, but part of it was what, I think, Greg is intending as his motivation or goal for the viewer.



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I don't think he is much interested in detailing a particular narrative, but instead, he is juxtaposing various signifiers from daily existence that mash up to produce alternative interpretations of each and maybe...something new when understood collectively. Part joke / part serious critique; these moments have the viewer questioning such wide topics as painting's roll in art today to one's place in the world all together...all tinged with slap dash irony that doesn't allow you to wallow for fear in the end of being the brunt of the joke. All the better to get his points across...no matter how hidden and camouflaged his method of expression is.



Greg has woven white plastic strips into chain link fencing held up by common metal poles resting on casters. The fence as a signifier of security is thus confronted as its permanence is questioned. It becomes more like a screen particularly when plastic bamboo painted black is placed on it making it resemble a Shoji screen with traditional landscaping. However, he then cuts a big hole out of the plastic strips (and the fencing itself) allowing someone to view what is behind it. So much for the concept of concealment! Ideas of exclusivity and hierarchical status in society come to mind as well, with Greg referencing the various construction sites everywhere in his south of market neighborhood; condominiums being built for purchase at astronomical prices not easily available to your average San Franciscan. They all seem to have this same chain link surrounding them.

Moments we have all witnessed (or experienced) like having to pull a tennis ball from a fence, take on a more thought provoking roll when the placement of such a ball is not simply the ramification of an errant over-hit from a racket during a match. Instead in Greg's hands the chain link fence becomes the canvas and the ball is a daub of paint. "Brush" five tennis balls on the fence and patterns start to form. Or, if he hangs a canvas with Op Art patterning on that same fence, next to the balls, does this put the fence and the balls back into a less abstract more casual everyday context? And what does the patterning of the fence on which the painted canvas is hung say about what is depicted on that canvas? The everyday manufactured patterning of the fencing doesn't have any less weight then the pattern Greg painstakingly has painted. The weight and thought provoking subtleties one can find in the work seem endless.

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F E C A L F A C E D O T C O M

## Gregory Ito @FreeGoldWatch

Written by Austin McManus  
Monday, 04 October 2010 14:59



In his mixed media-on-panel paintings and installations, Gregory Ito experiments with 2-dimensional surfaces in an effort to affect viewer's perceptions. Gregory's visually stunning geometric patterns and intricate constructions inspire a Zen-like calm. He skillfully integrates organic and celestial themes with a hypnotic use of vibrant grades of iridescent color that both assault and soothe the senses. Applying paint in thin layers of pigment highlight the wood's smooth beauty. Gregory received his BFA from the San Francisco Art Institute in 2008. He is Co-Founder of the Ever Gold Gallery, and Co-Founder/Editor of The San Francisco Arts Quarterly (SFAQ). He currently works and lives in San Francisco.



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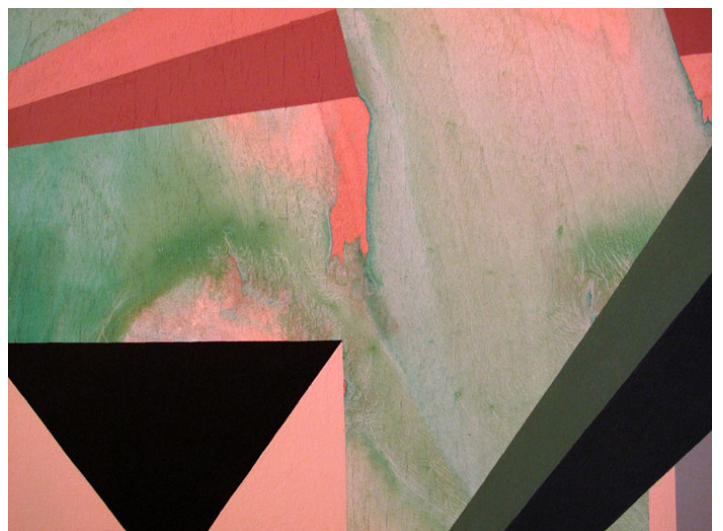
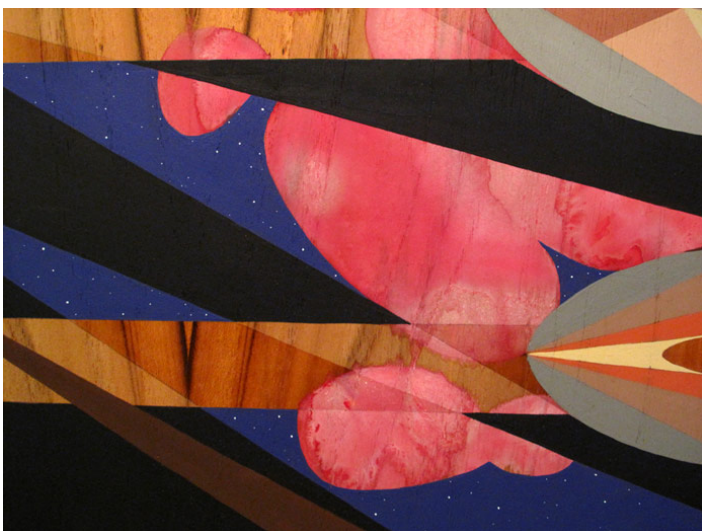
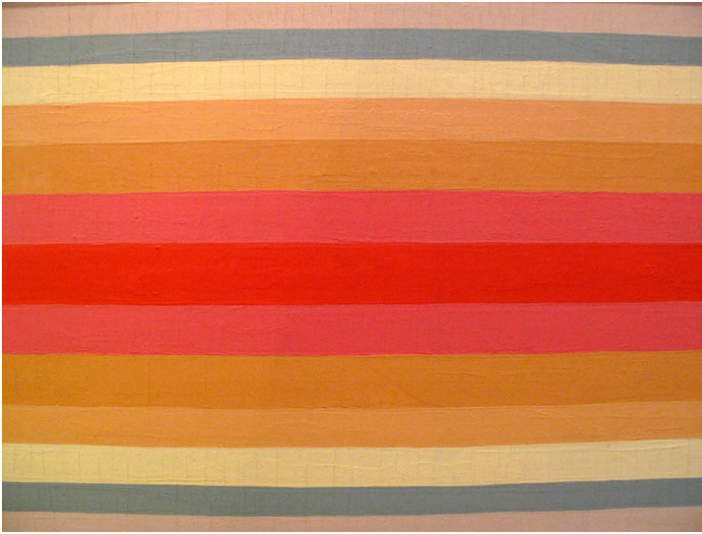
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## SWARM GALLERY PROJECTS

### Studio Visit: Greg Ito

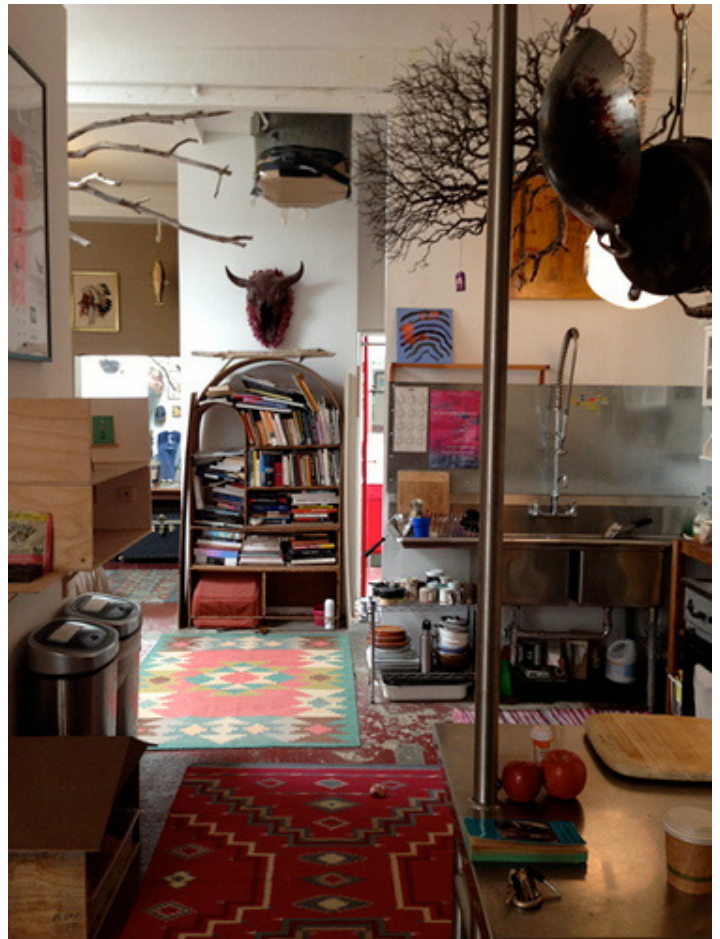
July 29, 2013



Preamble: If I were being brutally honest with myself about running an art gallery business, I would admit that the studio visits, time with the artists to establish and develop critique and in-depth discourse about the work and production of an exhibit are all compromised by the daily details of keeping the doors open. I'm not saying having a financial drive is problematic for art galleries. It's as necessary as any other business. I'm just saying as a sole proprietor, I had to prioritize the more pragmatic aspects of running the gallery over the ones that inspired me to open the gallery in the first place. In an ideal situation, like having a co-director or two, one would be able to balance the creative and curatorial needs of working with artists and developing programs with the administrative needs of the business. One thing I very much look forward to in my post-brick and mortar era is more studio visits and dialogue with artists about, yep, you guessed it, art.

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Michael and I visited Greg Ito at his San Francisco live/work space. Greg is an SFAI grad, former owner/director/co-operator of Ever Gold Gallery (with Andrew McClintock), presently the Co-Founder and Asst Editor of SFAQ, and full-time artist. He was proud to give us the tour of his epic self-fabricated space, and share recent exploits in his own practice.



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After the tour we reviewed Greg's past projects and talked about the trajectory of his work. For someone so ensconced in the art world, Greg was refreshingly casual about discussing his art. He obviously takes his practice very seriously, but nothing was too precious. Packed with ideas and the wherewithall to fabricate pretty much anything he wants, Greg talked for over an hour about the arc of this process, with some interspersed questions and comments from us. Greg definitely develops his relationship to themes, and then arranges objects (he refers to them as "ready-mades") along the lines of these themes. There is a evident sense of humor in his arrangements but it's not over the top. I laughed out loud with one particular piece, but that was because it symbolically represented a way I feel when trying to relax. "Yep," I thought, "that is pretty much it." The piece was a semi-inflated beach ball strangled with a cord around its midsection and a head-scratcher on one end.



Greg also makes his objects interchangeable. He has a staging area in his studio where he creates installations and moves things around as he sees necessary. It's like his own play space. Conceptually, Greg is working with ideas of our connection to the natural world, with somewhat of a spiritual slant (what moves us inside to seek this connection?), along with ideas around leisure time (what do we do with it?). Some of the second tier themes focus on asinine aspects of our human rituals around vacation (spray tanning before going on a tropical trip, for example). Another sub-theme Greg works with is accessibility. Perhaps not coincidentally, Greg is highly concerned with how his work is received. He places a high value on people understanding what he's trying to say without too many conceptual hoops to jump through. He wants his viewer to "get" it. He showed us some images from a solo exhibition at Eleanor Harwood Gallery (November 2012) where he said this was successful. Greg's upcoming projects are definitely going to be worth a visit. They are a development of the work he has already done, bringing in new ideas of objecthood, space, and an immersive experience for the viewer. I'm excited. Hope you are too. Stay tuned at [gregoryito.com](http://gregoryito.com).



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## Artist Interview: Gregory Ito



Gregory Ito is a busy man. Not only does he have a strong studio practice, he is the co-owner of Ever Gold Gallery, a space in the Tenderloin district of San Francisco dedicated to pushing the boundaries of contemporary art, and co-founder of SFAQ (San Francisco Arts Quarterly), a free publication of international art and culture. I caught up with him at Eleanor Harwood Gallery, where he recently had a solo exhibition, to meditate on the work and ask him a few questions.



**Art-Rated:** Tell me about your background. I understand you are originally from Los Angeles. Why did you come to San Francisco? And why did you decide to stay here when LA seems like an obvious place to live as an artist in California, especially if one has roots there?

**Gregory Ito:** I am originally from Venice, Los Angeles. I went to school at SFAI (San Francisco Art Institute) and shortly after graduating I opened up the Ever Gold Gallery and started a magazine with my good friend Andrew McClintock. San Francisco is great. I stay in SF because of the community here. I have artistic endeavors here that I am dedicated to. The idea of going back to LA comes up sometimes but I find new things in the city to fall in love with. San Francisco has a consistent flow of artists that come to the city. Right now there is some pretty interesting work being made and art spaces that I really enjoy. When you don't find anything that holds your interest, that is when you know you should leave.

**AR:** Can you talk about the origins of your work and it's personal implications from your experiences?

**GI:** Originally I considered myself a painter. I was producing these celestial, spiritual geometry influenced paintings that were vivid, hard edge and symmetrical. Many people related them to Tibetan mandalas, old astrology and astronomy diagrams, and freemasonry imagery. I was really influenced by those things, just how everything works, these monumental identities of the Sun, Moon, and Earth and the relationship between the three. Being from Venice, I grew up going to the beach and would watch the sunset everyday it seemed. These moments where you could see time passing from the dramatic colors during twilight. These ephemeral moments are really special, where you can really reflect on life and yourself. It's one of those golden moments. This is how I became interested in the ideas of human euphoria, awe and inspiration.

After years of producing that body of paintings I began to question my relationship with the surface, because it only did so much for me. I wanted to create objects. I have always made objects, but I wanted a shift in my studio practice. I started becoming interested in the relationship between an object and an image, image as an object, and dialogue between these two different ways of presenting ideas. At Gallery Hijinks (Ito's solo show "Point of Vision," 2011) there were a couple of pieces that I called "time diagrams" where I made sculptural objects that depicted night, day, and the moment of twilight which was represented by these bands of sunset colors. After making the object I would paint a portrait of the object and then show them

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together. I was making objects that depicted time, and then painted a portrait of those objects.

I did some self portraits too, which involved personal ephemera from my house. I wasn't painting images of myself. These self-portraits are where I began using the readymade in my work. I kept playing with the relationship of image and object in the studio. I used an assortment of photographs I had taken too that I had collected over the years, tropical themed apparel, textiles, and other objects from home. It was a juxtaposition of all of these different textures, images, and culturally charged objects that created pathways to more personal dialogues in the work. I was making work that was interesting to me and genuine and felt more open than my past painting practice.

**AR:** These installations, however, are reminiscent of painting in their composition and use of color. Would you say that painting has been a foundation for these works?

**GI:** Yes, the way that I make work is through the eyes of a painter. You know? Painting is the foundation of these works because I came from painting. Without all my previous years painting I wouldn't have shifted to the work I'm currently making.

**AR:** What is impact that you want?



**GI:** It's about access. In this piece here, *A Bed Time Tale*, there is the night stand with the glass of water on it. People would react to the piece differently if it existed as a painting. The conversation would get lost in the skill and execution of the object's rendering. I wanted to cut the conversation about rendering out and be able to juxtapose objects and images together. They exist as assemblages. During the opening, there was this girl who came up to me and said, 'wow this water looks really real, did you do that in resin? It looks so clear!' and I was like, 'it is water.' I didn't feel obligated to imitate the water. It is more charged when it is in its true form. I want people to connect with the collaboration of the elements within the piece and respond to it. In the *Moonstruck* exhibition I wanted people to have some sense of romantic longing, melancholy, and nostalgia.

**AR:** Seeing that glass of water there really made it a very relatable piece for me. It immediately created the feeling of security of having a glass of water on my nightstand before I fall asleep. So leading us into this body of work, how did you conceive of this current exhibition?

**GI:** During my time producing paintings I realized I was primarily making work for other people instead of myself. It came to a point where I wasn't getting satisfaction from making the paintings at that time, and I made the transition to my current work which is more personal and intimate to me. Spending all those hours making something that doesn't really matter to me anymore was exhausting. I felt like a machine making work that people requested but I was falling out of love with. I didn't feel like I was making any personal discoveries.

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My most recent work is what I want to produce from now onward. I have so much more freedom in the studio and the level of satisfaction is so much more. It increased exponentially. I am grateful to Eleanor (of Eleanor Harwood Gallery) for allowing me to show this work because this is the kind of work I have been thinking about for a long time but I have never had the opportunity to execute it in a space. Nothing was complete, they all lived on in sketches and in my head. You know? And now it happened. I'm very happy with the results.

**AR:** You just exhibited at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (YBCA) at the same time as this exhibition that was a very different body of work. Was that conceived before this show or were you thinking about it at the same time?

**GI:** The whole theme of the show was to do something participatory. The curator, Katya Min, enjoyed my show at Gallery Hijinks and wanted me to exhibit a participatory piece because the show had a lot to do with public interaction. I did a smaller but similar piece at her space called Ictus Gallery, which unfortunately is closing but possibly relocating to Oakland. I hadn't done participatory work much before.

I have always had these celestial themes in the work. I was really fascinated by the altars and funeral ceremonies of Asian cultures and these beautiful, circular flower arrangements that are commonly used. I went to China in February, 2011 and I saw these street displays for people that passed away. I was tripping on the cultural gap I witnessed between China and the States.

**AR:** Where did you go?

**GI:** Beijing and Shanghai. China was a trip. I saw a lot of beautiful things I wanted to recreate. So I wanted to bring that back and incorporate into the YBCA exhibition. I wanted to make a funerary altar for the Sun. I made a large circular painting reminiscent to a drum, circular silk flower arrangements, and a ceramic urn shaped like a casket, which were all shown on a large tiered platform that I covered in faux marble laminate. A conversation I wanted in the work is that people don't pay attention to the Sun and Moon these days, these major components to our lives and the moments of clarity at twilight. So I wanted to have something for people to interact with and create an intimate connection with these identities that are getting diluted in today's contemporary climate. I wanted it to be a conversation between Eastern and Western cultures because that's what I am. I am Japanese and I'm American.

**AR:** Are you first generation? Have you been to Japan?

**GI:** No, I am fourth generation. Haven't been to Japan, not yet. Anyway, back to the YBCA show. So I wanted people to interact with the altar and bring in offerings. I envisioned visitors coming in and looking at the altar for the recurring death of the Sun. I wanted to create an intimate spiritual space and offer something that they carried for a long time and repay to the Sun what it has offered us for thousands of years. Over three months, there were barely any offerings. I was going to burn them and do this whole procession ceremony but by the time the show was done I noticed that no one was participating, and some offerings that were previously there got stolen. I don't think it had the effect that I wanted it to have. There wasn't enough personal engagement, or maybe I was asking too much from the viewer. This is when I made some changes in the work which evolved into what was recently on view at Moonstruck.

**AR:** Moonstruck at Eleanor Harwood Gallery is intimate and peaceful, much like the classic bedtime story the exhibition features. This work has an intimacy unlike your previous work. What inspired you to take this direction in the work? What personal questions do you feel are answered through this exhibition?

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**GI:** This exhibition is titled Moonstruck. I was told that moonstruck is an old term given to insane people. When I think of the term moonstruck I think about a crazy drunk guy walking down the middle of the road, yelling at the Moon. That is the picture I had in my mind. I thought it was a really dramatic image, this lone wolf character, an out-cast from civilization obsessed with the Moon. Maybe it's me who is moonstruck. Who knows? My work always had recurring identities of the Sun and the Moon and I was in a place where I was really unsure about a lot of things with my practice and life in general. Personal doubts, I was in a doubtful state of mind with everything around me.

I was trying to figure out why I was so intrigued specifically with the Moon. So I thought back to my childhood and I realized that there was a book, Good Night Moon, that was a really big part of my childhood. There was this image in my mind from the cover when I thought about the book, so I sketched it out. When I went online to look at an image of the cover I realized it was almost exactly the same image. This image had burned a hole in my memory. From there I continued to deconstruct my personal history with the Moon.

I was thinking a lot about domestic space. The work relates to my past and the comforts of home and the comfort I also get from the Moon. The companionship with this identity in the sky that is so unobtainable. So I wanted to use materials and objects that you find in a bedroom or a household. The body of work became a romantic tale of an individual and his relationship to the Moon.

**AR:** You are using a book and images that many children grew up with as well as basic household furnishings. It is easy for the viewer to be placed in a recognizable domestic experience.

**GI:** Yes, there are culturally charged items that I am using in this work, the union suit, the night stand, the sink, glass of water, and so on. The fragility of sleep that we all share. We all have our bedtime ritual at night, and that is where the spiritual conversation shines through the work.

**AR:** The Moon traditionally has a relationship with the feminine and the female. The sense of an intimate relationship is apparent in this work. Is the Moon your metaphor for the female as well?

**GI:** Totally, I was thinking about my past relationships and the idea of companionship. All the great ones in the past. It was necessary for me to make this work. One of my favorite pieces in the show is the Companion piece because that was

spurred out a moment of sadness and rage put together. I came home one night, I remember it was a super long night, it was five or six in the morning and the Moon was huge in the sky. While walking home I looked at the Moon and I was reflecting on past relationships and the times when things felt balanced. I felt on edge at first but then felt better after gazing at the Moon, the same Moon that all of mankind have looked at throughout history and into eternity. It was a humbling experience.

I went home and I walked into my bathroom to see only one toothbrush in the cup on the sink. I thought that was the saddest sight ever. When you have a companion, there is more than one toothbrush. It was a signifier of what I no longer had. It was a fragile moment. So there is an austere dialogue with the title "Companion" with photo of the Moon, and the viewer with their personal experiences and history. There is no color in the whole piece with the exception of the pink and blue toothbrushes that are embracing each other. The sink acts as the platform for the moment when two toothbrushes touch.



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**AR:** Certainly.

**GI:** I got this moment of clarity where I realized I don't have to make a particular kind of work. This work was so fluid for me. To acquire objects that have their own conversations, which spoke to me. I hope that people aren't looking for a finite answer. In the end I'm seeking to make a romantic work. I guess I'm a romantic.

**AR:** I have noticed in your work a strong relationship to material and subject matter. Can you speak about how you translate your inspirations, such as the Moon and the Sun, into painting and the unexpected materials you use? Can you talk about how you acquired all of these pieces?

**GI:** So I sketch out all of these pieces before executing them, trying to figure out what are the most important objects to incorporate. I wanted the plainest, most basic objects I could find. I was really trying to find this generic quality. I was looking on Craigslist and on the street and everything had too much character and history. I asked myself, where do people acquire most things for their home? So I went to Home Depot. I think that the name Home Depot is just amazing in itself. That is where everyone goes to buy things for their personal space.



The first thing I bought was the sink piece and I wanted the most generic sink possible. I love the displays at Home Depot, I love watching people make decisions of what they want in their intimate spaces. It's interesting to witness this relationship between individuals and the consumer products they are thinking of buying.

**AR:** Your decision to go to Home Depot for your materials highlights how we as a culture turn to commercial retail stores to buy generic items for our intimate spaces. In this work, you too are using generic objects to express intimate subject matter in your art. The intersection between personal and general is very compelling.

**GI:** Yeah, so it's funny for me to see people choosing objects for their domestic space but while I am there, I am doing the same thing, but for my artwork. I'm not seeking objects that are more embellished or have a story behind them. I wanted objects with a generic quality that seemed fresh and brand new as if it was straight out of the factory. The objects have no weight on them. There was no life of the objects beforehand. I'm able to set it's function.

I went to Ikea for the nightstand. I love Ikea and these commodified mass produced objects. I went with a couple of my friends who were looking for furniture for their apartment and they didn't realize I was watching them. I love watching people identifying with objects, finding qualities that they relate to.

**AR:** Would you say this work is a more direct investigation of your experiences?

**GI:** Yes. I think I'm raising questions more than answering them. The work answers many questions that I ask myself, so yes it is an investigation of my own personal experiences, but that's not necessarily what is intended for the viewer to grasp. I don't want a tapered experience for the viewer, but rather an open one that stimulates a dialogue. This work is meant to be sincere and true.

**AR:** So you are looking to push and expand on what art is?

**GI:** God, isn't that what we all want to do as artists? Or at least contribute to art history in some way? I make work and look at work so I'm making decisions in my studio in relation to what I see, what has been made before me, and what is being made currently. There is so much I haven't seen but it is nice to know that I have always made art in hopes to understand my orientation of what else is being made. There are a lot of really great things going on everywhere. A lot of artists are taking steps to merge different

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practices and incorporate new materials into their work. It is becoming more accessible too with the incorporation of the internet and net art being made for the purpose of being re-blogged and connect with the masses rather than cater to a small group of rich art enthusiasts that are exclusive and closed off. People now look at things differently. That is why the whole conversation of image and object is being spoken of a lot more because people relate to an image of an object differently than an object itself and vice versa, also image as an object. I think that the qualities of what an artist is is being readdressed. Freedom in your practice is more permitted and encouraged. I enjoy that. People need to break out and make whatever the hell they want.

**AR:** So what's next?

**GI:** I have a month long residency program at Truesilver in San Francisco. I'm using personal ephemera from the gallerists' home to create arrangements that I find interesting and at moments funny. I will also be in a group show in Sacramento later this year, and a solo exhibition in Los Angeles at a new gallery called Prohibition. I'm excited to spend time in the studio after the show at Eleanor Harwood Gallery and hash out some new ideas. I am going to do studio visits with a bunch of artists I know and reached out to. Exchanging ideas and geeking out on new work they've seen and readings and stuff like that. When you have a consistent practice it can be overwhelming, it takes a lot of energy and time. An artist should be committed to looking at art too and reading about it, writing about it, and so on. Artists, we're filters of culture and the world around us and mediate it into our practice. We take in everything that we interact with and produce something as a response or as a product of those driving factors that initiate the creative process.

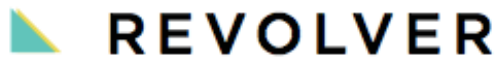
Andrew and I are continuing our efforts at Ever Gold Gallery (Andrew McClintock is the co-founder of the gallery and magazine). I love working with our artists and talking with them about their work. Ever Gold gives me the opportunity do that every month. When we work with artists, we usually give them a stipend for their exhibitions. I am a craftsman, I build a lot of things. One of my contributions to the gallery is helping artists execute the exhibition and fabricate things they need. Some artists don't know how to build certain things that they hope to make, but don't have the shop or skill, so outsourcing my help is always there if they need it. It is a good experience for me because I am involved in their creative act. It is nice to remove yourself from your own practice and be involved in another artist's practice. It helps you think about their work and how and why they produce the work that they do.

The magazine, SFAQ (San Francisco Arts Quarterly), forces me to be active in seeking out what else is going on locally and internationally. It is great to interview artists, curators, gallerists, and collectors because you get to talk about art from all of their perspectives. You get to meet a lot of inspiring people. I learn about a lot too because we have writers who pitch us stuff that I have never heard of. For Andrew and I to produce this free art publication, I am really proud of it. It is really time consuming but the satisfaction I get from working with Andrew is an amazing experience.

All the hats I am wearing, as an artist, editor, publisher, gallerist, art handler, curator and writer, I've learned it is important for artists to be involved with as much as they can. They should contribute more to the artistic community. We are all obligated to give back. We just released our 12th issue so I hope people read it which is in print and online.



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## A Young Dude on His Art Game Hustle- An Interview with Greg Ito

MAY 12, 2013

Greg Ito is a force. If you are looking to meet someone more committed to his practice than most well-heeled, seasoned artists, who has his hands in more pots than most professional multitaskers, who is an Art World Jack Of All Trades and Master of All, look no further. Along with his friend and business partner, Andrew McClintock, Ito edits and produces San Francisco Art Quarterly, an international arts and culture magazine, and operates Ever Gold Gallery in the Tenderloin, as well as devoting himself to his own works of art. I was stoked to have the opportunity to interview Greg about his work and visit his incredible live-work studio space. Read on to learn more about what Greg has been up to.



*First off, how do you have the time to do it all? Do you sleep? You've got a lot going on between producing your own artwork, running Ever Gold Gallery and editing SFAQ. You must be a master doubletasker, or else really good at scheduling your time.*

Well to start, my endeavors at the Ever Gold Gallery and SFAQ are shared with my business partner and good friend, Andrew McClintock, who is also the interim director at the Walter McBean Gallery at SFAI. I do find time to sleep, which always seems to be too short, but I manage to find time to spend in the studio outside of the current extensions of my art practice (the gallery and publication). Every year opportunities come up to exhibit, which is great, but I learned to not double up, or even triple up the work load. Poor scheduling leads to catastrophe and frustration. Biting off too much to chew is a common mistake. I used to say that I would juggle all of my endeavors, but you can't do that forever, one day things can fall apart. So now I like to say that I balance all the tasks that I have obligated myself to doing, allowing everything to coexist in my schedule, to flourish and continue to grow. But there is always room for improvement, so it's still a learning experience.



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*It seems as though your past work lived in abstraction (and pattern) as opposed to representation. Some of your pieces reminded me of mandalas or yantras. How did you arrive in this place? Do you privilege abstraction over representation? It is something I think about a lot regarding my own work. Somehow the dogma of Capital "A" Art School and being trained to look at art has made me feel that working representationally is somehow of less value than working abstractly, yet I can not work abstractly with confidence at all. Has this always been your method of working of arranging your world?*

My older works do exist as paintings. The way I would describe the work is geometric abstractions of the relationships observed between the Sun, Moon, Earth, and eternal through a lens rooted in human euphoria, the spiritual, and the distant relationship found between these monumental celestial identities and today's contemporary society. We just don't pay attention to our surrounds like the ancients did, and I found this disturbing. Again these paintings are older works, that I have chosen to discontinue, because they no longer have any resonance in my current mode of making, and the satisfaction of producing the work is no longer there. Visually I still find them beautiful and people ask me why I no longer make them, but this transition is a personal decision, for I recently regained an intimate relationship with my work through a new approach. Representational or figurative work has always been difficult for me to grasp. Acceptance of artists who do make representational/figurative work is present, but it's just not what I'm seeking as an act of creating an image or object. This is kind of funny, because currently I've been making new work which is investigating the relationship between image and object. This allowed growth in my practice to include sculptural elements and installation more effectively into the work, incorporating the readymade, distancing myself from being labeled purely as a painter. I still look at everything through the eyes of a painter, but this does not constrict my approach to making art. The same concepts that fueled my paintings are still present in my current works but the conversation has also expanded exponentially I feel, allowing more freedom in the decisions I make in the studio. The founding concepts in my work continue to be the driving force for my forward momentum into the giant realm of what art is, can be, and will become. My years at SFAI helped develop these ideas, and I am grateful to that school, which has an incredible history in San Francisco, and California in general. Amazing artists have taught there like Mark Rothko, Clyfford Still, Ansel Adams, Diego Rivera. Some of the more recent and current faculty include George Kuchar, Paul Kos, Tony Labat, Carlos Villa; the list just goes on.

*In the bios and artist statements I've read regarding you and your artwork attention is drawn to your interest in our understanding of and measurements of time, the celestial, spiritual and how these ideas connect to our humanity. What is particularly fascinating about these concepts or phenomena to you? How does it relate to you personally?*

The good ol' artist statement. Yes, time is important to me. My time on this Earth, what I'm doing with this time in the present, the time that was spent before me in history, where we are now from the times in history, and how we move forward into the times of the future. Spiritually moving through time, as well as culturally moving through time. Time in general is a strange subject. A moment in time that has been a very powerful influence on me is one that we experience everyday, twilight. Twilight is this ephemeral moment between day and night, the two halves to one whole, short lived yet epic. It is in these moments where I found clarity. I don't know really how to explain it, but it speaks to me, and it speaks to a lot of people. Watching the sunset is a shared experience between everyone on this Earth, now, before, and in the future. It just amazes me. I used to say, and I guess I still do, that twilight is the one moment where you can truly see time pass, with the gradients of color that effortlessly float through the sky then beyond the horizon along with the Sun and its immense presence. I think that our connection with time is one quality of being human, how we can address time, what it is, what it does for us, how we live through it, and knowing our time will end when we die.

*Who are your heroes? Who and what influences your work?*

Heros would include Orion, the one constellation I would see in the night sky while growing up in LA. The stars of Orion are said to be associated with Osiris, who is the the Sun god of rebirth and the afterlife of ancient Egypt. My influences would include all the artists I have met, seen, and read about in my life. My family is really important to my career as an artist. My grandfather was a carpenter, sign painter, and cartoonist. My grandmother was a seamstress. My aunty is an animator (hand drawn) and her husband works in special effects for big blockbuster movies. My other aunty was an old school designer when everything was done by hand before computers and now manages her husband, Peter Shire's art career. He is part of the Memphis School and owns Echo Park Pottery too. His brother Billy Shire owned a gallery in LA and it was one of the first stores on Melrose that began the madness around that strip. And my dad was the one who got me into drawing and

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building things. He bought me a tool set when I was young for woodworking, and encouraged me to paint and draw. I still have this "How to Draw" book he had when he was a kid. And my mom is one of the most encouraging human beings I know, who was a musician, and I remember my earliest years as a kid listening to her play the piano at the house. And lastly, my younger brother, who is graduating from Pratt in Brooklyn, New York with an emphasis in Sculpture, who will be doing some big things this year. He has already been showing his work and has a residency planned with Stillhouse.

*How did Ever Gold begin? What was your inspiration behind starting the gallery? What is the story behind the gallery's name?*

The Ever Gold began with a group of 5 artists who graduated from SFAI, including Andrew and myself. We were all friends who opened and funded the space collectively. When we opened the space we learned it was an old shop that bought stolen jewelry and made them into gold fronts (grillz). It was called Ever Gold originally, and we kept the name. We figured that having an art gallery in that crack infested area was a slice of heaven for the block. Soon after

opening the gallery some of the partners decided to go elsewhere and work on other endeavors, and then Andrew and I were the last two standing. It was at that point we realized we had to change it up somehow to keep the gallery open. We elevated our programming and did more solo shows and worked with more specific artists who we believed in. We also couldn't run the space on our own money and was on the brink of closing until the Kenneth Rainin Foundation decided to support us through a rolling grant which has been in effect through 2013 into next year. Also increasing our art sales helped immensely by doing fairs and getting our name out there. We truly appreciate the Kenneth Rainin Foundation's support, because without them the Ever Gold could have faded away long ago, but instead we are still here and exhibiting some amazing work by a range of artists based in the Bay Area, New York, and Los Angeles.

*If you didn't live and make work in SF, where would you be? Do you think you'd be making similar work in that other place?*

If I wasn't in SF I would be in Los Angeles. I moved to the Bay Area right after high school, and I've been here for 8



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years now. Going back home seems to make the most sense. The only things keeping me here is Ever Gold Gallery, SFAQ, and my amazing live-work space that I built out 3 years ago. It's a 2000 square foot warehouse I live in with my cat, Luna. I have a woodshop with a gallery-eque space in it where I shoot installations and the work I make, an office area for computer work, and a clean wall for paintings and drawings I work on. I also have an art storage area with flat files, loft, and a materials section where I keep a lot of objects and stuff I use in arrangements. Then in the back is a kitchen, half bath, and my bedroom with a walk in closet and I put a claw foot bathtub across the room from my bed. Pretty crazy space, and when I first moved in it was completely empty with the exception of a toilet. If I were to move to LA, I'm sure the work will change because of the cultural landscape there and the activities I will find myself doing in my spare time, like going to the beach or the hills of LA. Also the ability to access fabricators and materials is much easier, and the cost of living is so much cheaper. I'm trying to make it down there more often, which is great, and the past few trips has sparked some ideas for future exhibitions. In the end it's all Cali living, so as long as I'm on the West coast I'll be happy.

*What is inspiring you at this moment?*

Right now, it's work work work. I've been able to get into a pretty productive groove in the studio and with my other artistic endeavors here. I've been meeting a lot of people and scheduling more studio visits with artists to see their work and share mine. Also getting a lot of feedback from art consultants and collectors has been great for me just to get another perspective on the work. But as usual, sunsets, moon gazing, and staring at the sun are daily activities.



I have been visiting the mall a lot to look at displays and window shop which gives me a lot of ideas for my installations and arrangements. I go to IKEA, Home Depot, and Lowes too for materials and find myself just staring at people shopping. It is so fascinating to me to watch the consumer in their natural habitat. I'm a consumer, too, but I think I have a different way of looking at things, but all artists do. We get weird.

*What does the future hold for you, as an artist, curator and editor? You are young to have done so much professionally in the Art world. Where do you go from here?*

The future is so full of unexpected experiences I guess. I don't really know what will come out of it. I have been nominated and become a finalist for some awards here in the Bay Area but never got it in the end. No worries, next time I guess. I did a couple residencies and I'm just open to new opportunities. I'll just keep making work, and contribute to the art community through the exhibitions at Ever Gold and editorial through SFAQ. I'll just keep trekking and see what's going to happen as it comes. Fuck it, the world is just a crazy place and I'm living in it so I'll just keep my options open. More art and more art. Hopefully traveling, too, sometime when I find a window of free time.



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