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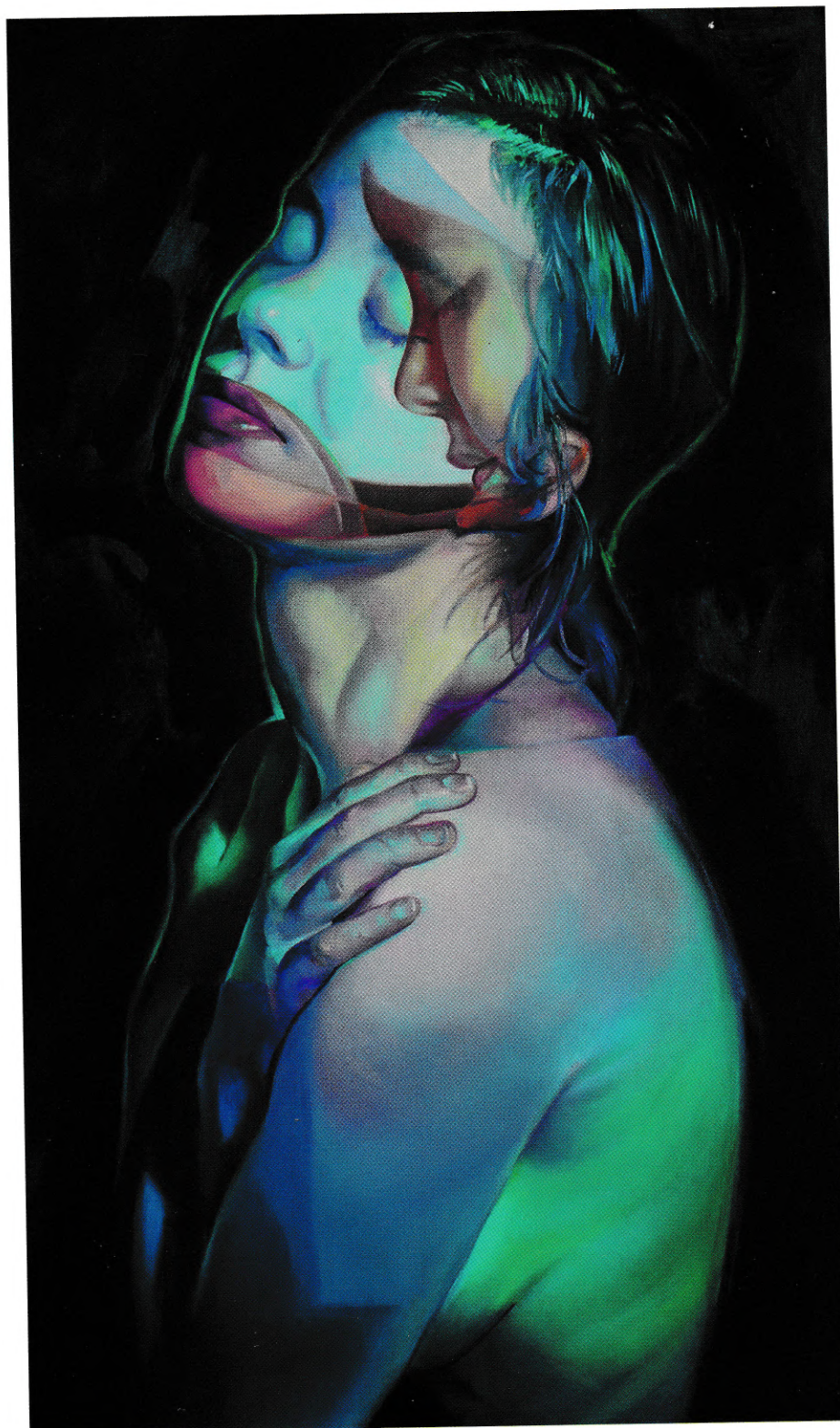




"IDENTITY IN FLUX"

INTERVIEW WITH SCOTT HUTCHISONS

BY EKATERINA POPOVA





Scott Hutchison's paintings and drawings are comprised of overlapping figures stitched together in one composition. They are multifaceted, abstracted, and meant to evoke the idea that our identity is in flux. Though we are singular beings, our psyche is not. We are molded in part by time and our life experiences.

The subjects in Scott's work personify the strength and frailty of consciousness and the depths to which we experience the human condition. The figures are displaced, out of sync and stitched together from a multitude of people, like ghosts or layered memories, both timeless and self-aware.

All of Scott's work can be seen as a journal entry, the manifestation of a deep concern for place and purpose in this world. He reassigns faces and body parts through a mixture of trial and error, coupled with random chance and the need to create something from nothing. During this process, Scott is seeking answers to a larger question: Who or what defines us as an individual? Are we here by accident, or is there a greater purpose, or are we just a product of our culture and our experiences? Scott's art is meant to tug at the viewer and suggest that there may be more to this material world. Each piece is intentionally shrouded in mystery, letting the viewer interpret its multitude of meanings.

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WHEN DID YOU KNOW YOU WANTED TO BECOME AN ARTIST?

I didn't think about art that much when I was younger. I dated a girl in high school that was active in my school's art club and up until that point I never thought I was good, or took art seriously. She went off to college, the relationship ended, but I carried a torch and fell in love with art. Afterwards, I became the art club president of my high school and the rest is history.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE MOST CHALLENGING PART OF YOUR CREATIVE JOURNEY SO FAR?

The challenges I face creatively are small compared to the fight I wage for balance between creative studio time, the art business, teaching, my family, and personal health. Like a lot of artists, I find myself burning the candle at both ends to fit it all in. I often have so much on my plate and so many paintings yet to paint that I become frustrated when I can't get into the studio, or the work is going slower than I would like. It's important to continue to remind myself that paintings take time and this is a life-long journey, a marathon, not a sprint.

TELL ME ABOUT YOUR PROCESS. HOW DO YOU DESIGN EACH PAINTING? DO YOU PLAN EACH WORK, OR IS THE PROCESS MORE INTUITIVE?

All of my work begins from a photo session with a model. It's important not to plan or guide the model too much so that the poses and expressions are more natural and honest. After the session is over I digitally collage and experiment by juxtaposing the poses on the computer in a similar manner one would collage with cut paper. I sometimes work on the collages for days; moving various body parts around the screen, combining multiple poses, modifying skin tones, and inserting different models or photo sessions together with the goal of creating something new. The process of collaging on the computer is very experimental and random. However, the painting process is less so. Apart from the usual edits, accidents and discoveries one might have when painting most subjects from life.

WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO COMMUNICATE TO THE VIEWER THROUGH YOUR WORK?

I often describe my work as self-portraits. The subject is not me, per se, but I see them as journal entries, representing a long-standing interest in time, movement, memory, and our understanding of the self. I do this through the use of multiple time frames and views of the same person, displaced body parts as well as energetic and rhythmic color passages. I'm not interested in painting a traditionally pretty picture. I am more interested in capturing the underlying message that we are more than a singular experience or moment in time. The figures are meant to be in flux, fading in and out of this world or dimension.

YOUR PALETTE IS OFTEN DREAMY AND OTHERWORLDLY. WHAT DRIVES THE COLOR CHOICES IN YOUR WORK?

I'm glad you see it that way. My color choices are primarily inspired by the composition and mood of the work as well as the perceived emotions I see in the model's pose. Color can be a tricky thing. I've been pushing a more saturated palette lately and I am always concerned that if I go too far the color will dominate the subject or cheapen it by making it too pretty or loud. A dreamy and otherworldly palette suggests introspection and quiet. I'm happy to be in that color space for now.

DESCRIBE A TYPICAL DAY IN YOUR STUDIO.

I confess there's no real organization to my typical day. It's always been important for me to have a variety of things to do: paint, draw, promote, or prep. I never go into my studio knowing exactly which of the three to four current pieces I might work on, or if I need to promote or prep for the fifth. I have found that this keeps me interested and busy while in my studio. Let's face it: sometimes painting isn't in the cards that day. Then perhaps it becomes a planning day, or a prep day, or one of research or reading about art. In the long run, the important thing is to show up and be in my studio. Art happens most of the time, but it's good to have options.

WHAT ARE YOU CURRENTLY INSPIRED BY?

I have been an artist for over twenty years now. My son is only 10, but for some reason I feel like I have always been doing it for him. He's my real inspiration.

