

These paintings aren't portraits,
strictly speaking. I was being glib.
But, every time I attempt to address
the question of meaning, I find
myself halting before the vastness
and spiraling self-referentiality of the
question.

Maybe it's that everything is
also everything else now.
Everything has bad boundaries.
Everything has a thumb on
everything else's scale.

But these paintings aren't about
fitting things back into their proper
boundaries. There is no external
structure worth returning to. They're
not about figuring out what's inside
and what's outside and they're
certainly not about being discreet.

But, in a way that was the point. With
these paintings, I mean. The endless
revisability and multi-dimensionality
and sewing together of everything in
nets and webs that become dense and
reflective, like mirrors. Habits
become images. Then I make them
into paintings, and the paintings have
an infrastructure, the way a joke has a
rhythm and logic to it.

I'm terrible at telling jokes.

Aren't all paintings portraits, in a way? Of
the artist, at least? This was one of the first
questions I got asked.

I don't remember who asked, come to think
of it. It doesn't really matter. The question
itself suggested that this is all about trying to
look casual. Or maybe trying to fake casual
which I like better regardless. But it eschews
what's involved in truly getting to know
something by making a picture of it. Some
paintings look like language in order to alert
us precisely to their unreadability.

At the time I was reminded of this saying,
"...and so we repudiate everything with
indescribable composure."

Nolan Simon

Portraits

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