

Ryan Wallace Interview



Been a fan of this RISD graduate and now NYC resident for some time. He was in SF last week and we got to ask him a couple questions.

*An intelligent balance between chaos and calm. From looking at Ryan's work you can see his illustration background from **R.I.S.D.** and from there has gone onto painting and recently into sculpture. His work has graced the pages of *Hot and Cold* and shown through San Francisco but calls NYC and **Envoy Gallery** home. We touch on his work in this interview but saved the meat and potatoes for our podcast with **Andrew Schoultz** (up in a couple days).*



The basics first. Age? Location? Website?

30. Brooklyn, New York. www.ryanmwallace.com

Describe your process of creating a new piece.

I work on multiple pieces at once in a variety of media. It is all one process to me. Each type of work speaks autonomously as a part of what I'm thinking about as a whole. I always have oil paintings going. While those dry I'll work on something on paper or a panel. I've been using tape lately in the beginning of parts of my paintings and as it is painted on in the masking process it becomes a valuable element that I use along with cut papers in other work. When that material runs out, the paintings are usually dry enough, so I'll go back to those. It keeps me interested in making work and allows me to make different types of things depending on mood or availability. Making things simultaneously without being totally focused on a group of "paintings" or "drawings" helps me understand what will make a painting or a drawing work for me in an interesting way.

What materials do you normally work in?

I make oil and alkyd paintings on canvas and mixed media works on panel; drawings and prints on paper. I've been working on three dimensional work as well lately, which I'm really excited about.



If you had to explain your work to a stranger, how would you do it?

Peppered with "ums", "likes" and "but not reallys" something to the effect of my work being abstract but rooted in landscape. It looks like things, place and events but there is nothing naturalistic or representational. I use geometry but it exists in space rather than as pure abstraction. I've been using cold colors lately. Just look at my website or come by studio, I'm embarrassed.

Don't be embarrassed... But why do you think you gravitate towards them?

I think it makes sense for what I'm trying to speak to and influenced by. In part I'm drawing inspiration from trends in science and technology so cooler colors feel appropriate. Same reason for the use of geometry. I'm hoping those elements help guide viewers into the right direction on first glance.



When did you leave Providence, Rhode Island?

Coming up on nine years of living in the same apartment here in New York. I came out to be amongst friends and to see if I really wanted to be an artist.

How has it panned out? Have you benefited from working there in NYC?

I guess it's working out. I have a lot of time to make things and right now it really feels right. I'm lucky in that I'm surrounded by a lot of great artists who are also great friends as well as great people who aren't in the art world. I like that balance. I'm grateful to be a part of the community that I am. New York has always felt like home and gives me a good, "well you're here, you should probably not just sit around listening to records or watching Law & Order." It's a good motivator. Navigating motivation and having a life can get tricky but it's really important for me, as well as for what happens in studio. Sometimes watching television and going into mind neutral is just what I need. I'm off in a good tailspin frequently.



What do love most about living in the Big Apple?

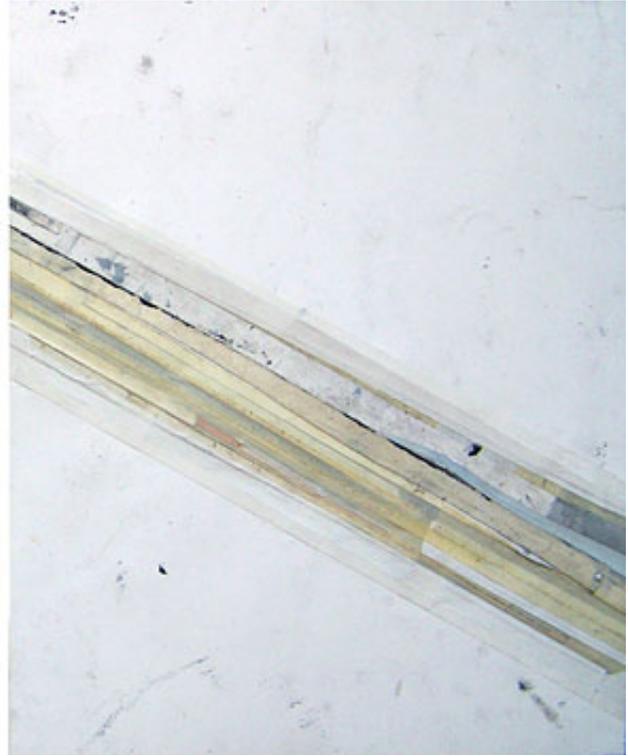
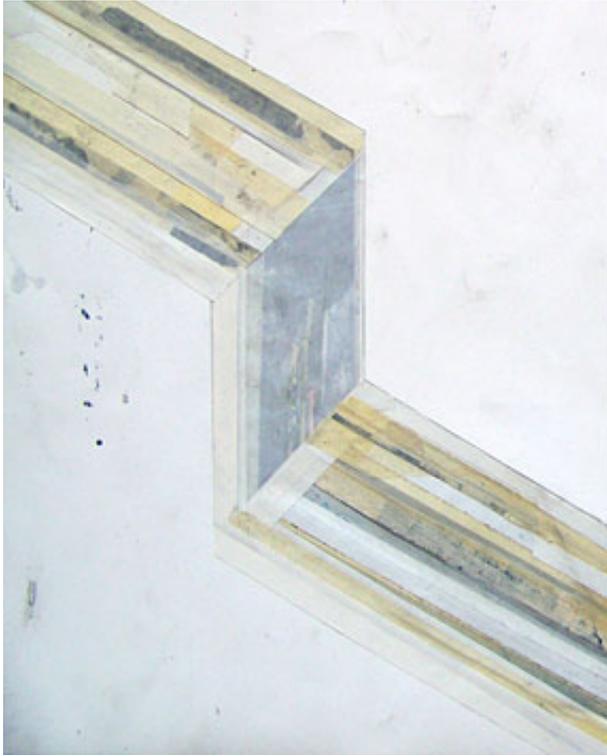
Leaving and going surfing in Montauk. Throw in a horse ride.

Surfing? Horse back rides?... What sorts of city living things are you into these days?

When I'm in the city I spend time in studio, go to others, see friends, try to skate, mess around with music, look at art, go see music, go to parks, eat out every single day. I guess eating out everyday is kind of New York. I'm cheese and crackers when I'm on my own. I only like cooking with my girlfriend. She usually takes over. She's an outstanding chef.

If I came out for a visit what would we do/ where would you take me?

I'd take you to my apartment to see other peoples artwork. I'd take you to my studio to see mine, and if **Joseph Hart** was around, hopefully he'd show you his. If you'd never been to New York before I would like go to the top of the Empire State Building, on a Staten Island Ferry ride passed the Statue of Liberty to Snug Harbor, and Fort Wadsworth, then onto the Tram to Roosevelt Island to see some ruins, amputees and architecture from Rotterdam. Then to Central Park, the Cloisters and Prospect Park. I hope you remembered the Frisbee. If you like skateboarding we'd go. If you like making music, we'd jam. Then we'd go to the Museum of Natural History and the Met and all the other midtown Museums before the New York Public Library. Make our way to Chelsea, Downtown to **Envoy**. Per Se for dinner before the Morrissey show at Hammerstein. We'd probably just be at Yummy Taco after studio so you could taste New York Asian burritos. I'm kind of tired.



What's the deal with Morrissey? He's such a "thing".

I guess a lot of people just really want to get what they want this time and hate it when their friends become successful.

What are you really excited about right now?

2 weddings.

Sweet. I myself tied the knot a couple weeks ago... Whose weddings? You getting married?

No, not me... Close friends. I am very happy for them.



When are you the most productive?

Any time I'm not in a slump.

Speaking of slumps, what helps you get out of 'em?

Trying not to force it. Time and patience. Doing something else and not beating myself up. It's part of the job. I work consistently when things are going well so I haven't had to worry about a deadline for a little bit. It's pick and choose. If one is approaching and I'm in good shape, I'll try something that I've been waiting to try. If it fails it's no whoop.

Things happen best for me when I'm not thinking "oh, this would be good for that."

Favorite trip taken?

They're all the best on ever when I get home. China was notable.



Music?

I have an ipod at studio with a broken screen so I have to listen to the artists in alphabetical order. Today it played Belle & Sebastian into Burzum. That's a pretty accurate description.

What were you like in high school?

I skateboarded in the 90's. I also went to Limelight and all the others more than once.

Upcoming projects and/ or upcoming shows, etc...?

I'm doing another solo show with Envoy sometime next year. I'm in John Freeborn's Big Kids/Little kids which is traveling. I just found out about a group show at American University coming up. A few other solos are in the works but I don't want to talk about them yet. "N'allez pas trop vite."







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