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Secret Thirteen Interview – Adam Fowler

March 7, 2013

An unpredictable universe of deliberate complexity and abyssal emotion – Adam Fowler, influential visual artist



Adam Fowler (b. 1979) is a visual artist who lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. Fowler studied at Maryland Institute College of Art and Bachelor of Fine Arts, Baltimore, MD. After his first solo exhibition in 2005, Fowler has been very active in the world of art for over the decade. Fowler's drawings have been featured in Horror Vacui at McKenzie Fine Art and The New Collage at Pavel Zoubok Gallery; as well as at Weatherspoon Art Museum in Greensboro, NC; and Vincent Price Art Museum in Los Angeles, CA.

Working with paper, **Fowler** produces complex geometry, intently constructed sculptural compositions that transform into three dimensional rigid constructions. Fowler uses an X-Acto knife to cut precisely all the negative space from each piece, creating a refined paper lace of graphite lines. By looping these lines he transforms them into organic drawings. Fowler's works could be described as "sculptural drawing" that shows subtle intricacy and graceful depth.

In this exclusive interview Adam Fowler shares his insights about art and its management, reveals some of his influences and talks about his future plans.

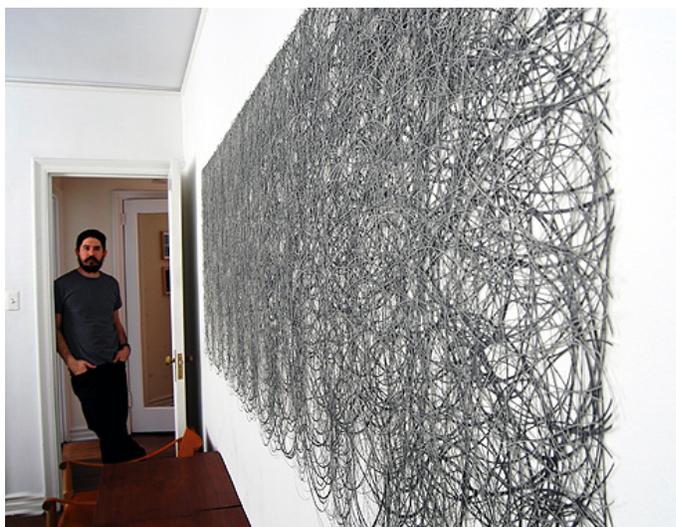
Please tell us something interesting about how you became the kind of artist you are today. What were the biggest challenges?

First let me thank you for taking the time to interview me. I've always felt that being an artist is a slow evolution, that we constantly refine our thinking and processes. I had always been interested in drawing as it is one of the most direct and immediate forms of expression. I started drawing with gestural lines while I was in college and have been refining my process while keeping to the original idea of gesture. I was making these drawings with line after line, they were getting denser and darker and over time I got to the point where I couldn't go any further. Around the time I started to feel frustration in my work I came across an artist's work that was cut paper and brought that process to my work. Making the layers of gestural lines more delineated gave me a tremendous amount of freedom and the work has been developing ever since. My work is a culmination of very fast gestural or automatic line drawings in graphite, the removal of the negative space in the line drawings and then layering. The work ranges anywhere from two layers to as many as eighty-eight layers.

One of the biggest challenges in my work is keeping it fresh, while I think it's extremely important to focus deeply on something over a long period of time it can also be challenging to keep it interesting and relevant.

Your work seems to occupy some space between drawing and sculpture. How would you describe them to the individual who sees your work for the first time?

I'm very interested in the idea that my drawings can be seen as sculpture and vice-versa. It's human to want to categorize ourselves but often to the detriment of artwork, so I feel like I'm succeeding somehow when my work doesn't exactly fit in one place.



At first sight, we strongly feel chaotic feelings in your work. Are these organic lines formed accurately or accidentally? Does chaos somehow influence your work?

I usually think of my work as gestural and what I think you are referring to as chaotic I see completely differently. What I have been thinking about lately is the idea of duality in my work, particularly duality of process, which can at times feel overwhelming, but I think in person they lean toward meditative.

How important is the collaboration between artist and gallery?

The relationship that artists have with their galleries is incredibly important. There needs to be support from both artist and gallery and an open dialogue. When they have an honest respect and trust for each other, both do well. I think that collaboration may be the wrong word because the artist should have complete conceptual and aesthetic control of their work but at the same time we as artists need to understand that galleries need to sell work to stay open.

What are the past or contemporary painters who influence or excite you?

I'm interested in Abstract Expressionism and Minimalism although they are theoretically at odds with each other, but what is more important to me is what's happening now in the art world. If I had to narrow it down to three individual artists it would be Donald Judd, Brice Marden and Jackson Pollock but partly because I can look at an entire career's worth of work.

How are you and your works related to music? What importance has music in your life? Do you have your favorite musicians or specific musical genre you are constantly listening to?

I love music but I don't listen to one specific genre. I recently had the opportunity to get to know Richard Chartier through a project and have been introduced to a whole new world of music and I am very grateful for that.