

FrameWork 4/24

Ella Spitzer-Stephan on Plural

The definition of a mixture is;

a product of mixing: *Combination*: such as

A: a portion of matter consisting of two or more components in varying proportions that retain their own properties.

B: a fabric woven of variously colored threads.

What defines a uniform vs non uniform composition, a heterogenous vs. homogeneous mixture, a solute vs. a solvent? This need for differentiation, born from science becomes obscured in the genesis of a painting. A combination requires more than one, and constitutes an act of coming together, this differentiation is obscured through individual observation.

Four meditations on the amalgamation of a painting –

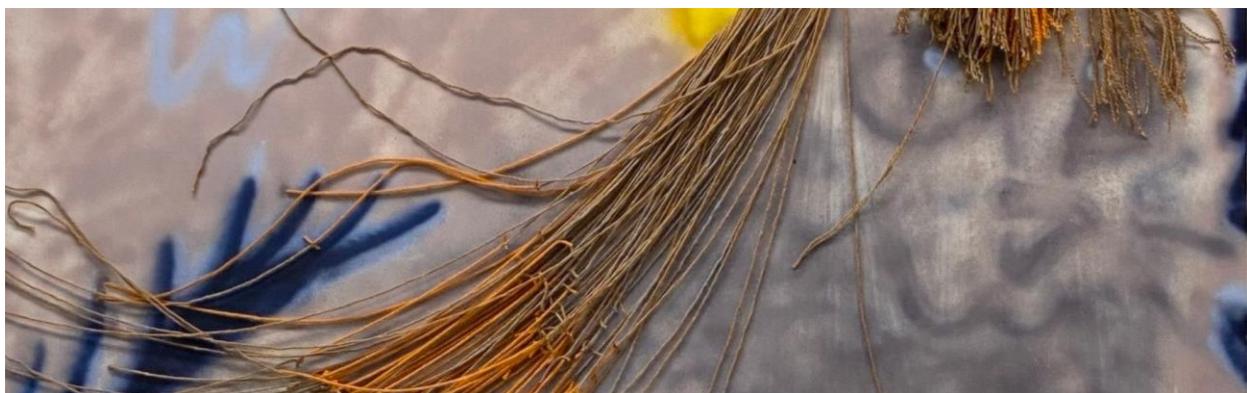
The verb *to paint* is not limited to the marrying of solute to solvent, a heterogeneous composition emerges from the additive process of material accumulation. *To paint* is a physical assemblage of things, reliant on a greater foundation, the necessity of a paintbrush becomes obsolete in lieu of the use of materials with solid particle compositions. These materials are aware of their chemical dispositions, their inherent qualities decide whom they can become one and with and whom they remain visibly disconnected from, in this way a parallel of the decision process of the artist. Scagliola offers an opportunity to mimic the layering of marble, while also adapting a modular form of accumulation, the Italian word *scaglia* translates to “chips”, something reliant on its plurality, and transformable through its combination with pigments and glue.



A painting acts as a carrier bag, a gathering place for many identities, a site of fragmentation and cross-pollination. On the micro and macro level this act of coming together exists, the only divide being the shortcomings of the human eye. In the same manner a still life is a communal dwelling of various objects, its fragmentation on canvas is their existence in an alternative form. In the coalescence of distemper, pigment is given its “body” by creating a bond with whitening. To dwell within a canvas is to rely on a mutualistic relationship of elements, both witnessed and not, as the conventional equation of “solute plus solvent equals paint” becomes undone.



These acts of combination are not limited to typical understandings of physicality; they can speak towards a collaborative process between digital and non-digital colour mixing. The hand-mixed can only imitate what is born from the additive nature of the RGB colour system, however digital coloration came significantly after human manipulation of pigments. The "authentic" relies on its copy for its value, creating an illusionary hierarchy through their difference. Homogeneity is afforded by the workings of pressurized air, the differentiation in solvent and solute is not “visible” yet becomes evident in the generative act of layering nearly invisible layers of paint. A reverse excavation occurs in its seamless application, due to the artists high agency over the release of pigment the transformation of one colour to the next seems born out of its own transformative qualities.



Gun powder, a residue of a once destructive medium is transformed into a generative solvent. Combined with chromium oxide (an inorganic compound, created to mimic its organic counterpart due to its natural disparity) is mixed with a binding which forms their solution. Through this act two alternative histories collide, resolved in their pictorial constellation. A relation is formed between the pigments and the empty canvas, a conversation between the application of negative space and the leaving out of positive space results. The foundation of the painting becomes highlighted as its own means of production, various depictions of U.S bank notes bring the notion of the “American dream” into question.

