

PUBLIC DISPLAY. ART FREE!

Volume 3, Issue 2
JUN-AUG 2024



Ilana Zweschi

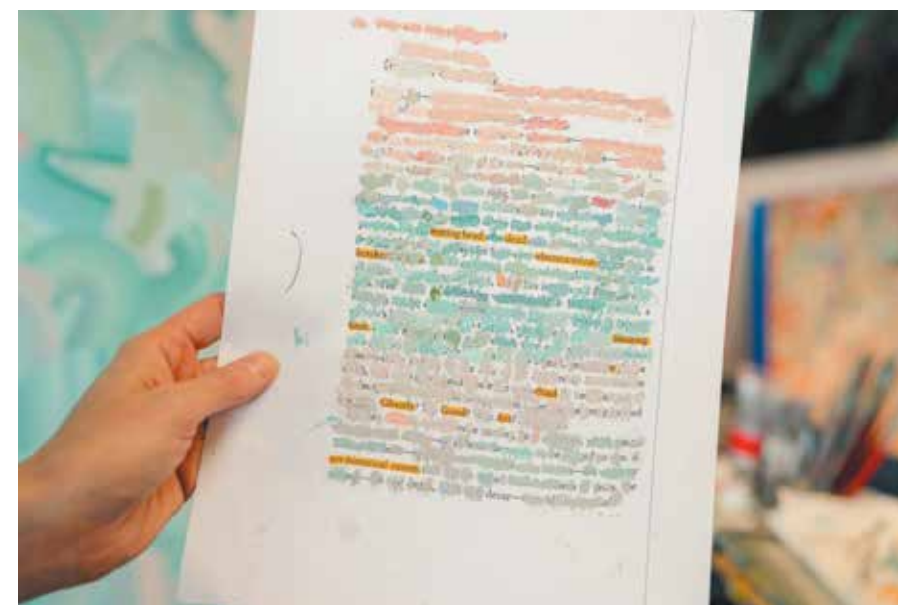
www.ilanazweschi.com
@ilanazweschi

My paintings involve math and philosophical reflection. Through hand-written algorithms, I transform text documents into colorful oil paintings. I target destructive texts, words that uphold a status quo of objectification within our society. The raw data of the text acts as the input for the algorithm, which is then run through a series of "if/then" rules I assign based on the structure and grammar of the written words and receives an output of painterly actions. While the outcome is very abstract, all works start with representational drawings underneath to give the algorithm something organic to react to. One small moment in the drawing can cause a ripple effect of painted marks echoing off and overlapping each other, sometimes depending on the designated zones in the painting. The process disarms the harmful ideas in the text and transforms the objectification.

I am a visiting associate professor at Cornish College of the Arts. I have exhibited my works nationally and have been featured in publications such as *New American Paintings* and the opening page of the Culture section of the *Seattle Met*. I am represented by Foster/White Gallery.



Photo by Ryan Warner



I have included an image of what I call an "algorithm byproduct," which is the text that gets covered with little dots of paint as I complete the steps of the algorithm. Each letter in the text translates to one brush stroke in the painting and gets marked off upon completion. These texts become paintings in themselves as the dots of paint gradually change color with some moments of high contrast, just as in the larger paintings. Keywords are left uncovered. They indicate important focal point moments for the algorithm to create within the painting. When left exposed in the text and removed from context, the keywords become a violent poem that brings the underlying harm of the text to the fore.

The texts function structurally in the same way as the paintings. The individual letters have little meaning by themselves. When arranged in a certain order, however, they become meaningful and even all-powerful. The painting is made of individual, unblended brush strokes, just like the individual letters in each word. No individual brushstroke holds meaning, but their arrangement and ability to affect each other create a larger sentiment.

The motivation for making my work is empowerment. I run across documents that reflect an established belief in the world that certain violent acts are legal and civil. These beliefs are rooted in objectification. The texts act as tangible representatives of harmful ideas, objects that can be manipulated. I can obscure, reorder, and highlight the words that make up the text. I can disarm and expose. Through the act of turning them into paintings, I make them beautiful.

This work is not necessarily activism, as I am not fighting for a particular cause. I invite the viewer to find moments of violence or objectification upheld in the status quo, to create their own rejection of it and, thereby, their own empowerment.

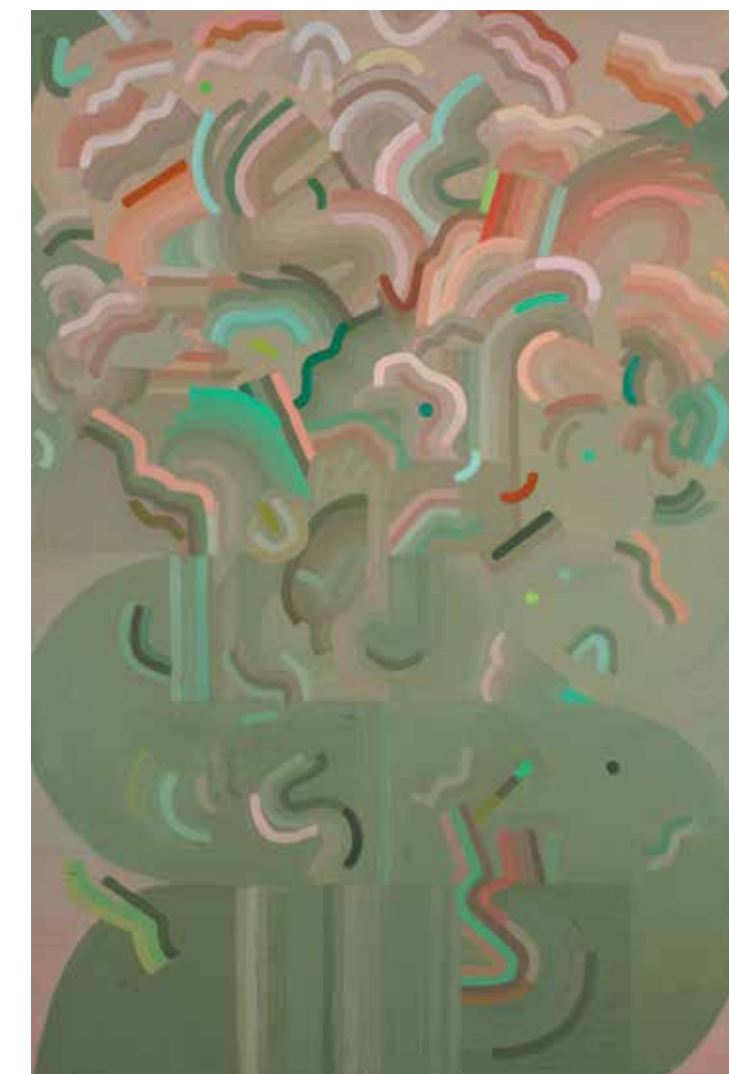
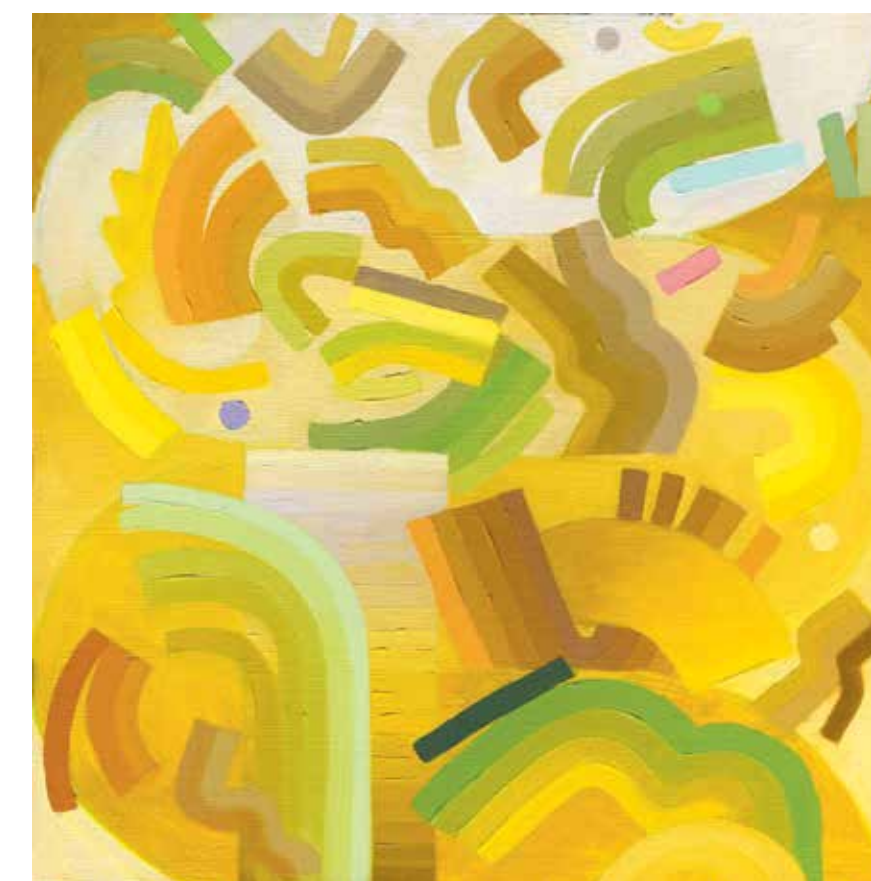


Photo by Bret Corrington



No other tool is as powerful as color. The physical manifestation of color is wavelengths of light separated by passing through an object. Our brains interpret those wavelengths visually. While light is a physical phenomenon, color is merely a neurological. This, plus the fact that our brains interpret colors in ratios rather than absolutes, makes color slippery and impossible to fully grasp. The physical and physiological realities are at odds. Color theory systems are illusions of control that I love watching slip from my grasp just when I think I have it mastered. Color feels alive and intelligent and never within reach. In my studio, it is like a unique life form. All I can do is invite it in and be in awe.



Beauty + Violence, Recent Oil Paintings. Foster/White Gallery, 220 Third Ave. South #100, August 1-31



Photo by Bret Corrington



Photo by Bret Corrington