

Q&A: RYAN WALLACE.



[Ryan Wallace](#) and I sat down via email and instant message and chatted. We talk about everything from his recent show [\(\(\(Ω.\)\)\) \(Omega Point\)](#) to his inspiration and process behind it, to the beauty of math and more. Enjoy!

Tell us about the name of your show [\(\(\(Ω.\)\)\) \(Omega Point\)](#) which recently closed at [Guerrero Gallery](#).

The show's title, [\(\(\(Ω.\)\)\) \(Omega Point\)](#) acts as a representation in text of a term coined by French philosopher, Jesuit priest, paleontologist and geologist [Pierre Teilhard de Chardin](#) in his book [The Phenomenon of Man](#). Chardin's theoretical "Omega Point" describes evolution as a process that leads to increasing complexity, culminating in the unification of consciousness. While I find these types of theories beautiful I am wary of lofty singular ideas and predictions: the end of the world, a raison d'être for evolution, one supernatural being, universe, politic, etc.

The works [in the show] become individual interpretations on a theme rather than depictions in support or against an overarching pedagogical idea. I'm not making arguments or statements. I am much more interested in tone and questions. I don't look to depict or render an event. I'm trying to articulate an abstraction after having come in contact with an idea.

And your inspiration behind the name for your show?

I began to see that these works have a language of their own beyond that of painting. They each incorporate pattern in a way that could be perceived of as a kind code. There is an experimental band called [Sunn O\)\)\)](#). This is pronounced "Sun". They make these droning, ambient soundscapes. I like this idea of slow building to a visceral crescendo. My paintings are visual manifestations of this type of building and layering but with mark instead of note. So between Chardin, computers and doom metal I decided to call the show [\(\(\(Ω.\)\)\)](#) instead of **Omega Point**.

Are you interested in language and code outside of art?

I'm interested in elegance and beauty in all things. I can't think of anything more artful than the language of mathematics or a super collider.

Can you tell me what that means "language of mathematics or a super collider."?

Math is as artful as a painting. So is a super collider, which is a big machine that fires particles and examines explosions...like a giant scientific sculpture I guess also that I see a lot of things as art. Things other than say paintings or drawings, etc. So, while the language of math and engineering is outside of what we typically call art, I think that the elegance of them is actually just as artful as traditional art approaches.

[\(\(\(Ω.\)\)\)](#) is an impressive body of work. What I love about each painting is the intensity & depth once you step close to each piece. How long had you been working on the show?

On and off for around two years. That is not to say that it took so long to complete. I work on multiple bodies and types of work simultaneously. They feed off of one and other conceptually and keep my practice fresh. I work on what feels appropriate at the time. I started the [\(\(\(Ω.\)\)\)](#) paintings in the summer of 2009. I developed them to a certain point then I photographed them and put them away for a year or so.

Then, I bitmapped and tweaked the pictures in Photoshop and made lithography plates from those images. These plates became the basis for the works in the large square grid in the show. As I began those works on paper, I switched from newsprint to a finer, whiter drawing paper and Mylar to catch the run off from the plates in the printmaking process. Those pieces of paper and Mylar make up the cut pieces in *Mist (Timeline) 3* the horizontal piece that you see at the entrance. Then I looked at everything and went back to finish the paintings that I had first started. From there I felt that the gestures in the work could be played with in a different way and maintain a similar tone and the Tablet paintings are the result of that exploration.

You live and work in Brooklyn and you have a wife and a toddler. How do you find the time to balance family, art and New York?

We communicate well. I love working in my studio and I love spending time with my family so I'm selfishly motivated to do both. My wife and I both have flexible schedules and the nature of our work is that there are more demanding times and deadlines at some times than at others. I think that this would be the case regardless of where we lived. Our son would just attend less openings.

When we spoke at the gallery the night of your show, you had mentioned that you had really hit your stride with this latest show. Are you still feeling it? What are some of your practices when you are feeling 'stuck'. Would you mind sharing them with us?

Oh, I didn't mean with this body of work so specifically. I'm always looking to see where things go. Currently things just seem to make sense in the studio. I make what feels like the next logical move. Hopefully these moves are surprising. There is always something that needs to be done, so if I don't feel like actually working there is usually some busywork. If there is nothing that needs cleaning or stretching or priming or cutting then I don't stay in the studio. Printmaking is a wonderful way to find new directions quickly. Even video artists can benefit from making prints. It's great for any studio practice.

I'm very happy with the show. Andres' did a wonderful job with the space. It feels like the appropriate venue for this body of work. I came to visit in September to see the gallery in person. Though all of the ideas we talked about with your first question inform me in my approach, this is really a show about painting and about light as a phenomenon and metaphor. After I saw the space in person I knew that this was the direction that I wanted to take in finishing the show. I saw it as a place where I could create an atmosphere allowing the audience to feel taken care of in a way that they could approach the work on their own terms.

If you could give your 18 year old self one piece of advice about surviving in the art world, what would it be?

N'allez pas trop vite [Don't go too fast].

Who are your greatest inspirations (living & dead, artist/non-artist)?

Right now, next to my computer, I'm looking at recently acquired books on the Hubble telescope, Gerhard Richter and Jung's Liber Novus. That's a good sampling outside of friends and family.