

ARTnews

The Diary of Mark Flood, Part Two: Home Alone

BY MARK FLOOD - May 20, 2016



Editor's Note: This is the second installment in a multipart series about Mark Flood's experience organizing his first museum survey. You can read the first part [here](#). The diary is slightly backdated because, as mentioned, he was busy organizing his first museum survey. "Mark Flood: Gratest Hits" opened April 29 at the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston and will run until August 7.

Sunday, April 17

1.

I've thought about hiring a fake crowd for my CAMH opening. I hear they get hired for political rallies, to make political candidates look more popular than they really are.

Maybe they should protest something. I've made protest signs before, and I like doing it. It's easier to have a reason to make a protest sign than it is to have a reason to make a painting.

I made protest signs to ridicule the KKK, and the media, back in the '80s, when the Klan used to march in Houston. And I made them to ridicule the candidates, and the media, in 1996, when the Republican National Convention was held in Houston.

PERES PROJECTS

I remember in 1996 the protest leader frowned at my protest sign, DESTROY THE ENVIRONMENT, CREATE NEW JOBS.

I swear he complained: I don't like this, it makes people think.

For CAMH, I have no clear vision of what the protest signs might say. One idea I had was that they should copy some of the negative comments people made online about my Supreme skateboard decks.

My decks were text paintings that said MOM DIED or DAD DIED. They got a lot of hate, really great, stupid teenage hate. Some cleverly commented that Mark Flood should die.

MARK FLOOD SHOULD DIE. That might make a good protest sign outside my exhibition.

But I'm already trying out so many things at CAMH, I'm not sure this is the time. Also, one of my assistants thinks some other artist has already done it. Ugh.



2.

I went over to my Wakefield studio. Two of my assistants, Barry and Edgar, are finishing up 5,000 LIKE paintings there.

The LIKE paintings are handmade. They spray black spray paint through stencils onto 12 x 16 white cotton canvases. By this time, the much-used stencils are encrusted by dark growths of accumulated paint.

This all got started when I made a painting about Facebook's tie to the CIA. I made the first eight LIKE paintings to go with it, and leaned them on the floor under the CIA painting.

At that opening, people picked up the LIKEs, and moved them. Daily Facebook activity had erased their

PERES PROJECTS

reservations about touching art! I thought that was something special.

I tried it again in Miami, during the Basel frenzy, leaving hundreds of LIKEs stacked at various fairs. And again, the LIKEs walked and I got dozens of pics of them in new locations.

So at CAMH we're going to have 5,000 LIKE paintings, and I assume the public will just pick them up, and put them wherever.

Some people will try to steal them. I told the guards to say No to the LIKE thieves, but not to actually shoot them.



3.

I give a LIKE painting to each person who visits my studio, and I always name the LIKE painting after them, Mona's LIKE or Truman's LIKE.

People may interpret this to mean I like them. But the work is actually about how much I'm disgusted by Facebook, and its creepy corporate colonization of all human reality.

When a LIKE painting comes up at auction, I'll know who's selling it...

4.

I dug through boxes of old paperwork from the ANR warehouse. I need to make a selection of '80s and '90s memorabilia, to install on CAMH's walls.

Visitors, if they wish, will be able to go down the rabbit-hole of my complicated past by browsing my memorabilia. Flyers, receipts, photographs, reviews...

I get lost in the rabbit-hole myself. Even an old utility bill can make me start staring into space.

Get it together, Flood! Just make sure nothing is too embarrassing to yourself, or anybody else, and throw it in the box!

PERES PROJECTS

My favorites are the pages of my old press kits, where I've crossed out my old name and written my new name in the margin.

I like to say I've had seven names but the truth is, I've lost count of how many names I've had.

Digging in these boxes, I've several times come up with puzzling clippings of articles by strangers. Then I slowly realize....that's me...I wrote this!

5.

My personal assistant's assistant called about the cage that I want for my opening, where I could put the two surrogates I've hired to pose as me and my brother. The assistant said that they looked for a cage for me to use, like a go-go dancer or some BDSM dungeon, but they couldn't find one in Houston. They had to go to L.A. or New York. They weren't sure they could get here in time.

I told them to look for animal cages... maybe shark cages?