

### Your first memory of painting...

Winning a painting competition when I was 8 years old. I appeared on a TV game show in the UK called 'The Golden Shot'. The painting was recreated on a large scale, and used as a target for contestants to shoot at with crossbows. Whatever happens in the future it will probably be the biggest audience I'll ever get.

### How did you decide to become a painter?

It crept up on me. I now accept that things don't work out if I stop.

### Did an artist particularly inspire you?

I found my way into the Mark Rothko room at the Tate gallery when I was 16 years old. I knew nothing about him or modern art. The fact that art could have such a powerful and direct effect was a complete revelation.

Also Peter Halley at the Saatchi Gallery in the mid 80s. It planted a seed. The potential painting has to be relevant, new, exciting and unexpected.

### Do you need to understand to love a painting?

It is strange but you don't. If the artist matches their intention to an appropriate form then the work convinces. Often the art I have gone on to love has initially challenged me the most.

### Is there a work for which you said to yourself "This is exactly what I wanted to do"?

No. Although there are aspects of many artists' works that I wish I could emulate, I like to think that no one shares my particular intentions.

### The famous work that you don't like...

Salvator Mundi.

### What is essential for your creation?

Black coffee, exercise and an early start.

### What is your relationship to recognition?

If the ideas you are in touch with also spread into the larger culture, a multiplier effect can come into play. I think you might then have a chance of producing something that resonates with a public.

### If tomorrow you could no longer be a painter, what would you do?

I have zero aptitude for it but my fantasy alternative career would be scientist.

### Your artistic dream...

To shed some light on the evolutionary forces which shape our visual experiences.

Thank you Francois.