

Hi Peter,

I must admit that now that you have given your consent, I have many questions about the immigration of a British citizen to Brazil.

Is it possible to hesitate between a Cachaca and a cup of tea?

A cup of tea will always be top for me, but I've grown very fond of a cachaca with an ice cold larger on a hot day here.

Do you often regret the weather in your home country?

I miss English weather believe it or not, especially the autumn cold and sunny London days..but when the sun shines here it makes things easy.

Would you rather sell a painting to Bolsonaro or to the late Margaret Thatcher?

Definitely Margaret Thatcher because, although I didn't agree with a lot of her policies I respected her as a communicator. We are far too divided today, much more so than in Thatchers time, although people in the north of England may not agree with me on that.

Do you prefer to drive through the Amazon with Paul Gascoigne or Ronaldo?

If Paul Gascoigne was sober it would be great to hear his stories but I would be too sad if he wasn't well. They were both great players though, two of my favourites. Both probably didn't live up to what they were capable of either, more so Gascoigne. Both had a way of exploding past players that was incredible to watch. I guess I could also practice my Portuguese on Ronaldo!!

Your first memory of painting?

My first memory of painting comes from my Gramps who was a brilliant artist. I learnt from him and was lucky to be able to go with him and sketch and then turn sketches into paintings. I remember the smell of oil paints at his house and I was hooked ever since then. He taught me to always be grateful that I enjoyed and had some sort of talent for drawing and painting and I try to never forget that. His paintings are etched on my memory, them being the first I remember staring at as a boy.

How did you decide to become a painter?

I always painted and sketched in my spare time from a very young age but I didn't decide I wanted to go full time until I was in my mid 30s. It was a series of things, various visits to exhibitions and museums, day jobs that didn't fulfill me and a very supportive wife that persuaded me I had to go back to school and study. I actually got into collage first, that was like a door opening up. I remember going to a Hannah Hoch exhibition in Whitechapel gallery and it changed everything for me - I started making collages straight away after that. Then painting happened slowly over time after that. Everything is linked, especially in a creative life so it's interesting to look back and see how things have happened sometimes.

Did an artist particularly inspire you?

As I've said my Gramps was the first and largest influence. Then lots of others, too many to list all but Hannah Hock, Van Gogh, Ryan Gander, Christian Patterson. Also lots of my peers at Uni and artists I've met since. François Bonnel for example!! I'm inspired by artists that do their thing and are obviously enjoying it, not listening to outside influence. Richie Culver's work is great too and starts lots of discussions. I could go on forever..Larry Sultans books are a huge influence too.

Do you need to understand to love a painting?

No, definitely not. Sometimes understanding can increase your appreciation but that instant feeling you get doesn't need any form of understanding, that's why art and painting in particular are so important. It's like music, who needs to understand how to write a song or what the song is about to love it? But when you find out a bit more about it it just makes you love it even more.

What do you say to people who ask you if you are trying to get a message across?

No. I've never been interested in getting any sort of message out into the world, if the viewer can take something from my work then great but if not that's fine too. I don't like to push the narrative, Art isn't about that for me. That's why I'm not into Banksey or artists where you see the work and its almost decided what you should be thinking. It's one dimensional. I like hearing what ideas people come up with about my work, I've heard some that I would never have thought of alone. To me that's where art becomes what it is, when it opens up and can create thoughts that might not have been there in the mind of the artist or the viewer. Obviously there is work where the message is important and central to the work but I like this to be open to interpretation.

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

There's a lot, but when I first saw the decollages of MIMO Rotella I knew I had to make abstract work. There's a lot but one called 'With a Smile' I remember seeing and it was like a switch going off inside, I knew I wanted to be making abstract stuff. There was so much room for interpretation and it looked so cool, that was it from then on.

The famous work that you don't like?

That Banksy one that got shredded at auction, I thought that was a bit boring. There's nothing in it to think about or ponder, just a cheap gimmick for me. There's no value in it other than the monetary value in it, which increased after it was shredded so it sort of turned into a caricature of itself.

What is essential for your creation?

Time to be and think and feel.

What bothers you the most, on a daily basis, in your work?

The boring logistical side of things, having to save images at a certain size, put title details etc. It's mind numbing. Applying for grants and competitions or Residencies it drives me crazy when they ask you to resize and resave things. But rather is the job if you ask me, the rest is all enjoyable.

...And your greatest satisfaction?

Knowing when a work is finished, which can be quite tricky to feel. It is a feeling too, you can't decide that it's done. The painting tells you when it's finished.

What is your relationship to recognition?

I was actually talking about this with my wife the other day, and it's really important for me. To be recognized for what I do, especially by my peers, is really important for me. It's not a case of needing recognition or even craving it, but when you are recognized for your work it's a feeling of satisfaction that is good. I used to think this was a negative thing but I've realized it helps me now, now that I don't crave it but can accept it for what it is when it comes.

If tomorrow you could no longer paint, what would you do?

Write songs, which really is what comes most naturally to me, more so than painting but I can't live without either.

Your artistic dream?

To be able to create for the rest of my time here. If I can do that I'll be happy.

