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# Juxtapoz Magazine - Fever Pitch: An Interview with Wendell Gladstone

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If you're in the Los Angeles area in the next few days, it's well worth a trip to [Shulamit Nazarian](#) to see this one in person. Another marvelous installment in the midst of a run of superb programming, [Wendell Gladstone](#)'s first solo show at the gallery is a brilliant effort. His content is synthesized in a manner that lends itself more to a digital arrangement, yet these compilations are rendered in an acrylic world that is accentuated by subtle pigment accumulations that quietly render themselves as auxiliary reliefs, further complicating the viewer's command of depth perception. Dexterously blurring the lines between dimensions, vivid dreamscapes and his personal experiences in the real world, Fever Pitch is a real pseudo-psychedelic mind-bender of the first order.

***Gabe Scott:* Upon first seeing the body of work that comprises Fever Pitch, I was truly taken aback by the complexity and sophistication with which you so deftly weave elements that, under most circumstance, could not co-exist in the same picture plane. This is a challenge**

**you've tackled head-on in recent years, and have reached new heights with for this exhibit with Shulamit Nazarian. Talk to me a little about your fundamental philosophies when approaching a new body of work and how you are able to find harmony amongst visual aspects that seemingly could easily exist in conflict.**

**Wendell Gladstone:** The conflicting nature of my work stems from my process and the way I take in a lot of disparate imagery, sift through it, looking for form and ideas that jump out to me. The fragments that speak to me the most get sketched on paper where they become more personal. From all these drawings, I start to see relationships and narratives and go about a kind of self-collage process where I do more drawing, some messing around in Photoshop and eventually painting. With each step, the rifts that initially felt incompatible become more harmonious and new ideas and forms get created when bridging the gaps.

My approach to new bodies of work has evolved over time; it's more organic now. Themes just bubble up as I'm making the pieces. I don't consciously try to steer the work too much in one specific direction, or under one heading. It's not until a bunch of paintings are complete that I start to see patterns and relationships. I used to have more of an overall concept where I would work on multiple pieces all at once, building them in stages and ending up with a cohesive body of work. It started to feel a bit rote and mechanical. I became less interested in that closed circle, where my initial ideas remained mostly intact, and I started to enjoy the breakdowns and their unexpected

outcomes. Working on one piece at a time removed that burden. It allowed for more risk taking and for the subconscious to seep in. The opportunity for growth and evolution also sped up from piece to piece as opposed to after the completion of one big body of work.



**The manner in which you have evolved in terms of rendering form, texture and palette I find particularly**

**tantalizing; what prompted you to delve deeper into the relationship between the figurative and what could be viewed as an objective abstraction?**

I love the figure and it's always the starting point. I tend to cobble my bodies together leaving each limb, torso, hand, foot, and head somewhat divergent. I want the individual elements to be independent, shifting stylistically in color, texture, and form, while still preserving the overall figure. Recently, I've been interested in having the bodies of my figures remain close to the more formal language of my initial drawings. It's reductive and the emphasis on exaggeration, motion, and form pushes them toward abstraction. It's only in the extremities where the language shifts towards traditional modes of representation, and you see more specificity and expression in the hand and facial gestures.



**Throughout your work, and making an appearance again in Liminal Lady is the ever-changing straw hat. Can you share the significance of this item and how it continues to transpose itself?**

I like hats in general because they can tell a lot about a person. They're strong indicators of class, personality, occupation etc. The straw hat, in particular, revolves around themes of protection, poverty, and distress. In "Liminal Lady" a woman is adrift at sea and suffering from sunstroke. Her hat hastily made up of woven pieces.



**In terms of navigating the fluctuating dimensionality of your painting, how do you transfer visions from your mind to your canvas? How much of it all is dependent on your subconscious? Is it somewhat about taking slices of personal experience or the real world and creating an overlay with things that may exist or have origins in a dream state? How important is it you to strike a perfect balance between conscious and subconscious along with form and the exploration of limitless potential?**

It goes back-and-forth during the process; it is a fusion of personal experience and the subconscious. There's interplay between being present, making aesthetic and formal decisions, while simultaneously setting up situations and hurdles that force you to tap into the unexpected of the subconscious. It becomes a bit of a tightrope walk between structure and letting go. I like my work to sit at that intersection, appearing both familiar and resolved, but also slightly off and foreign.

***Fever Pitch closes this weekend, ending on Saturday, February 17.***