



My year of ornamentation and crime started with thinking about images. It seemed prevalent, it was fall and I was alone in the house, this was where I worked now, and I started by studying the free advertising leaflets that were pushed through the mail slot in my front door building up on a relentless pile.

Images were in the air, that's how it felt to me. My friends who had a once had a photography practice started taking pictures again. Other people started to paint. The people who had always been drawing kept on drawing but now they showed their drawings more proudly.

Are things becoming flat again I wondered, thinking about the availability of free space on the page and the shrinking availability of other spaces, looking through the leaflets for images I liked. When I found one I cut it out and put it in a folder.

I decided to discard thinking about their meaning until I had so many of them I wouldn't have to understand them in their singularity. I hoped they would lead the way.

I felt a desire to draw too, but after years of working with objects it was scary. Objects brought themselves with them, while my drawings had never surpassed the stage of forms floating on a white page, no landscapes unfolded. Objects I liked to dress but drawing made me feel naked. It brought things too close to the surface.

I looked at other artists who I assumed had spoken a language of image I was interested in. I thought of my education and I prayed to Mike Kelley.

Eventually I started drawing stuffed animals with dicks, I started drawing dicks. My bulbous shapes and swirly lines embarrassed me. I used colored pencil that can be smudged to look fuzzy. I put the pencils away again. I wanted a daddy. I gained weight, my body was rebelling, but I kept on cutting out images and putting them into folders.

At a certain point I felt I had two options :

- (1) Analyze the images I had gathered for their material specificity, to somehow find what's special about them
- (2) Decide that there is in fact nothing special about them

Paul Thek said to Harald Szeemann that we guard our individuality and our inspirations as if they were our own inspirations and our own ideas, whereas they are really group ideas. They are given to us by god and they belong to everyone.

So I accepted that it was god who pushed these images through my mail slot every week, and that my responsibility was to make the choice between throwing them away or starting a relationship with them.

I thought about how repetition leads to habit and how obsession leads to repetition.

I looked at the pages of the leaflets and wondered who had designed them. I saw no human, but endlessly unfolding grids with little variation, filled like containers.

I thought about how you don't fall for lovers and friends by seeing them once, but again and again and again. Slowly the thought formed that somewhere in the ambivalence of repetition there must be a difference that sometimes kills things and sometimes makes them grow.

I wondered how.

I thought of the first tools to produce straight lines and how they must have just been something malleable put under stress. Like a strand of hair pulled very tightly. Like a sieve made from horse hair to separate bad from good.

Swirly lines seemed symbolically charged and I wondered why.

I spent time at the library and online looking at the history and manifestations of shared symbols like the heart, the cross, flowers, parts of bodies and the ways they have been overlaid and extended and turned into more rambling forms. I enjoyed reading a coffee table book called Twentieth-Century Ornament. An image of environmentalist anarchist PR got stuck in my head, a fat elf holding a big gun next to an acronym in hand drawn gothic font.

The more complicated it became, the more I was drawn towards platitudes, towards leaving the house and looking at the streets.

I thought maybe it has to do with activity and passivity, that the difference is in the hand producing the line. In the end I walked at the feet of high rises and felt tiny looking up, I thought of aspirational super structures and what it takes instead to come up with ones own structure.

I looked at images of Hilma af Klimt's paintings and drawings and marveled at her symmetry without precision.

I saw an actual show of paintings by Joseph Strau, he calls them prototypes. The press text says they're angels because that could be the first image a child sees, the guardian above its bed. He made the first, the baby painting, and then repeated it, seeing what would be demanded in the process of making the next one and the next and so forth. I liked the angels, they were beautiful and it seemed fateful to see them because I had just gotten my first tattoo, a winged mouse above the heart. Lying on the bench in the studio while it was being done, knowing that from now on I would live with this image on my chest was scary in a way that's difficult to describe.

I understood something fundamental about images :

(3) Some images make you feel more like yourself, and some images make you feel less like yourself

And I thought how Joseph had set out out to do something brave by invoking angels, and ended up making something tasteful. I wondered if something tasteful can ever be brave.

A week later I decided that my first baby painting would be a flower and that just like Joseph I would go on to repeat it and with each repetition see what would be demanded. And I did fall in love.

I think in order to think about objects I sometimes see them as fiction, as archetypes.

To me archetypes function as vehicles to a certain fantasy and in this function they're equally romanticising and romanticised. I thought how sometimes people use accents, not to comment on their identity or on someone else's but as tools in the confined space of a story told.

If fantasy isn't just a thin wish but a logic that names a value, then what does that mean for the things I've made? Because that's all I wish to say about them really, that they're about fantasy and that sometimes fantasy means to try and make something as real as possible.