

Marshall, Em 'Anne Vieux', Mask, (5 March 2017)

<http://www.maskmagazine.com/the-material-issue/life/anne-vieux>

# mask



Visual artist Anne Vieux's abstract paintings emerge out of real objects captured through a digital process manipulated by hand.

## Anne Vieux

### FREE ARTICLE

Anne Vieux and I first met as children in central Oklahoma. In high school we became good friends. She used to give me rides in the morning. We shared classes and read the same books together with a few other friends. Once, when I was trapped by my family at the Texas border, she drove three hours to pick me up. That's six hours round trip. I remember our friendship fondly.

We each went on to attend art school at Oklahoma University. After only a few semesters, though, I dropped out and went off with some anarchist friends into the fringe prefiguration of anti-art. Anne continued. She took her passion for painting to the Kansas City Art institute and from there to the Cranbrook Academy of Art. In only a few years, she graduated and moved from the position of student to teacher.

Today we both live in Brooklyn, but before this meeting at her studio in Jersey City, it'd been several years since the last time we saw each other. I was happy to catch up with my old friend, but more than that I wanted to ask about her work. I was excited to learn about her unique digital process, this radical aesthetic of virtual humanity.



**It's been too long. How did you get here?**

Well, I always had a creative impulse, but when I went to art school I felt like I had to catch up, like everyone there already had an art education. I was still very raw, making these horrible emo paintings you probably remember. My mom still has them.

**I still do too.**

Haha, but yeah, challenging myself and just learning, that's been the foundation for my adult life, to challenge my presuppositions and try to learn as much as I can by looking deep into the past to understand the present. I started making work that uses digital processes around 2010. I was making handmade sculpture and paintings before, but I found more unknowns in the virtual world. Now I ask 'what is humanity's impulse to create – and what is art now in the capitalist era and the Anthropocene?' Challenging what art is keeps me going.

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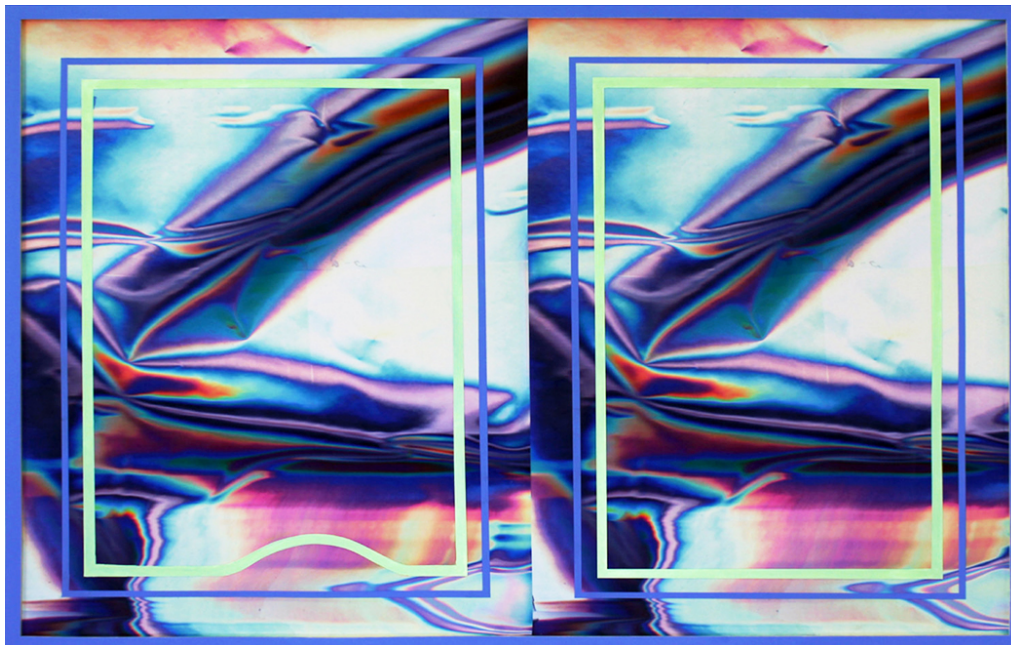
**What is your workflow like?**

Well, I work here at Mana, in Jersey City. I have a residency. My work flow has been growing here because I have the space to challenge myself.

I make work that is in scale to my body. I don't make anything wider than my arm width – which is about this idea, that the work is immersive when you stand in front of it in proportion to my body. I hang my work lower than the traditional hanging height because it is made in relation to me. It's all subjective and immersive. You're probably too tall for my experience.

I begin my process by capturing or directing light, bending and copying reflective papers over a scanner. Those images then go through a digital process. The images are printed on a microfiber fabric, stretched over a panel and manipulated by my hand and paint. Peaks and valleys are created in the scanning process, but in the end the imagery reads as a painting. I like keeping the rigid qualities of the photographic image, while also transforming it to read as abstract painting. It has this kind of affected painting quality.





**Tell me about your meaning making?**

Meaning is subjective to me. I use a lush materiality in contrast with digital forms that push/pull visually, but also with the desire of the viewer. I think about what radical aesthetics look like, what the status quo is visually, and hope I push the boundaries. I think about the constructivists in Russia, or The Blue Rider group in Germany – all these different groups who have used aesthetics in combination with their political messages and how very simple aesthetics can be radical if they are paired with community. Communities, with poets, dancers, visualizers, create meaning and culture together.

**How do you like to show your work?**

I've worked with both commercial and artist-run spaces. I also like showing work online. Real substance and engagement between the artist and the gallery is important though. It's good. Something special happens when everyone is really engaged.

**You mentioned participating in women only art shows?**

Yes, I have, it's casual and loose, but good conversations can happen in women only spaces. All the people who have helped me have been outsiders themselves, I wonder where the line is that will push people to stand up against the status quo.

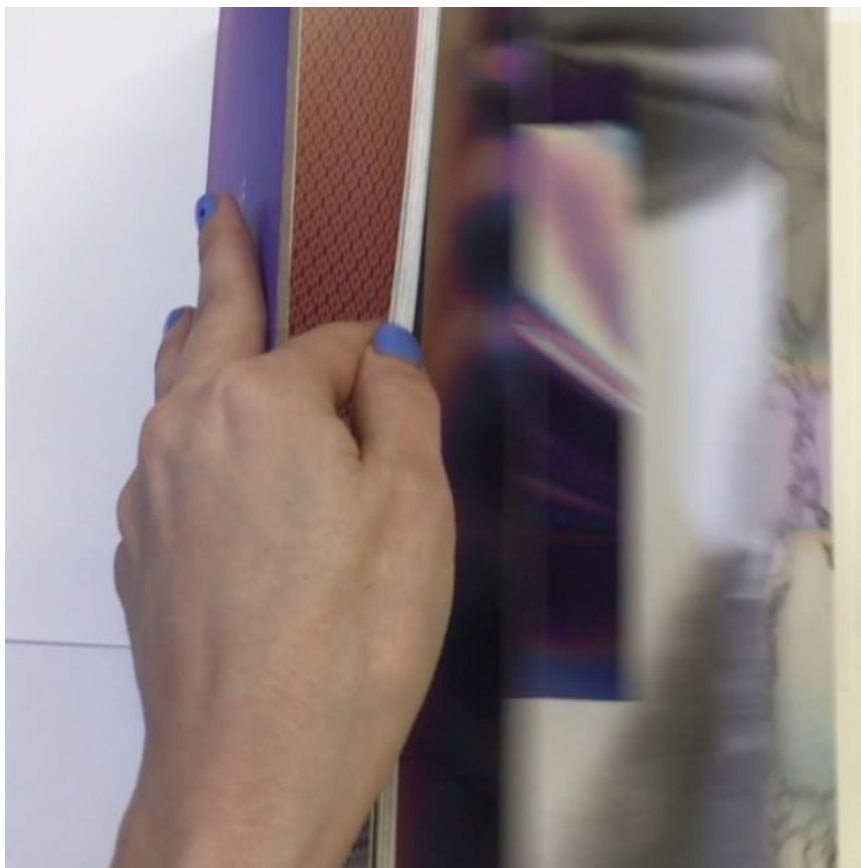


**What are some of your inspirations?**

Artificial versus natural. The way we have classified colors as cosmetic or unintellectual, or narcotic. Philosophy of perception and color, and all its associations are interesting to me. Screensavers, video games, illusion, the repetition of electronic music.

**What advice would you give new artists?**

Experiment with materials, develop a varied skill-set, create your own criteria / challenge yourself. See as much art as you can. Let yourself create, just make stuff, even if it's horrible. Surround yourself with a community of thinkers and creatives. Learn to acknowledge that criticism is essential to growth.



**What do you like to do when you're not working?**

I like to go to other artists shows. I go on studio visits and to museums. I enjoy learning about recent science/ technological discoveries. I like to cook very simple food, roasted vegetables and rice. I never cook meat, but I'll try it from time to time. If someone makes it for me, I'll eat a bite. Most of my time though is caught up in the condition of living in New York. And at times it can feel one-dimensional, like it's just about my work and anything I do has to be related to that. I wonder if I lived somewhere else if I'd have more time to have other interests or hobbies.

I'd like to travel more. I'd love to go Japan. When I was in school, I took a Japanese literature class and it was so amazing. I fell in love with learning about the culture and traditional Japanese aesthetics. It's all very minimal in contrast to what's happening now. I'd like to travel, but also I miss having a learning guide like school. One goal of mine is to join a rigorous reading club. Sometimes I feel like I'm swimming in an ocean and I don't know where to go. I'd like an island again, just to be on for a little bit. But, I think that's one of my crutches too. School and academia gives that illusion of what reality is, and then just being outside of it is important to find the truth for yourself.

**Have social changes effected your work?**

I see a lot of experimentation right now. I love the tension between high fluidity and rigid structure. I've seen some work that focuses on the body and the application of technology via the body. I think about the social effects of technology and color. I once worked at a textile company where they look at Pantone colors that

are selected for that year. Every year Pantone colors are selected. Whatever those colors are all the stores will have clothes in that color. This year the color is greenery, it's just a specific shade of green. It feels so arbitrary, with all the color in the world, but I want to consider how color applies to culturally prescribed associations of taste.

**There's certainly bold uses of color in your pieces.**

Yeah, right now I have this lavender with pink and a little black in it. It's like pink foam insulation, I'm obsessed with it. Behr paint calls it "cyber grape." Color has deep resonance universally but also with an individual's experience. I try to make the work as impactful as possible, but occasionally I make subtle pieces. When I was in undergrad during a critique a student said "all I see is make up," pertaining to the colors in my work. They completely dismissed me as artist because of how I dressed. I didn't understand why I wasn't taken seriously because of color. It became my thing to use highly saturated intense colors from then on out.



**What do you want to see more of?**

Collaboration, infrastructure, independent unrestricted grants, more freedom and awareness. Video experimentation and support for collaborative projects, and marginalized groups supported directly. I am excited about experimental fashion, artists working with restricted parameters exploring the condition of the body in our world.

**You have a show coming up?**

Yes, I am super excited about my show "Mesh" in April at Annka Kultys gallery in London.