

MODERN PAINTERS

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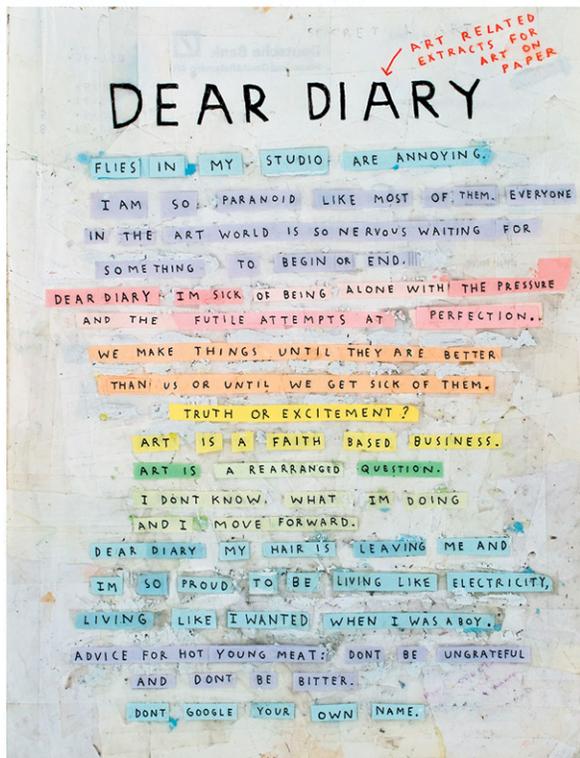
MEETING OF MINDS

Simon Evans puts five questions to Sean Landers



FROM TOP: Sean Landers, *Quick Draw McGraw*, 2007. Oil on linen, 57 x 43½ in.

Simon Evans, *Dear Diary*, 2008. Pen, paper, Scotch tape, and Wite-Out, 9¾ x 7¾ in.



Somehow, asking Sean Landers questions seems a little redundant. I am a fan, and everything I want to know is already there in his work. But some advice from this well-equipped artist would be nice. What first attracted me to his work was the way he used honest statements to make paintings. He makes human art with brains. I admire his fearlessness. I'm always afraid that I'm going to fail in a picture/decision, but he has built failure into his process. Jokes do bomb. —Simon Evans

Do you think that there is a pure place in art? I don't know why but when I read this question I just thought of my perineum—I thought it might be nice to start these questions off with a little free association. Looking for truth or purity in oneself through making art is like peeling an infinite onion. Each layer alternates between irony and sincerity. I feel more comfortable being ironic and the audience seems to dig my sincerity. So I give them what they want—I tell them about my perineum.

Do you have much faith? I have faith that I am the best artist who has ever lived. I know that for 99.999 percent of you that is utterly laughable, but I believe in myself that much anyway. If you meant faith in god then you should be ashamed of yourself. What do I look like, some fool who believes in the impossible?

Has your life suffered because of art? Not a bit. But it's much funnier perhaps to propagate the conceit of the tortured artist. Thus: "The artist's life is a very hard life. Nobody appreciates me. I'm the most undervalued artist of my generation. Everybody rips me off and I get no credit for it. My true audience has yet to be born. I'm so depressed, woe is me." Had enough? I've got a lot more where that came from.

Have you ever been afraid that everything will go away? If by everything you are referring to Internet porn, yes I am very afraid that it will go away. If by everything you mean people who buy my art, I'm not afraid, because I have proved myself worthy for two decades now—during the course of which it seemed that I had lost everything a couple of times, but good art survives, that's how you know it's good art. I'm still standing, so there, you can all suck on that! Sorry.

Can you recommend any good books? Yes, I can. [*Sic*] by Sean Landers is a great work of literature, and the good news is it's going to be rereleased by Tarsiz books in May. I would also like to give an honorable mention to James Joyce for *Ulysses*. (Caution: do not attempt to read it, unless you are smart. Listen to it on tape instead.) Other pioneers of the interior-of-the-head style (for which I am the standard of our time, no shit, really!) worth reading are Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* and Knut Hamsun's *Hunger*. ♦

SIMON EVANS'S WORK IS ON VIEW THIS MONTH AT JAMES COHAN GALLERY, NEW YORK. SEAN LANDERS HAS SOLO SHOWS OPENING AT TAKA ISHII IN TOKYO NEXT MONTH AND AT GREENGRASS, LONDON, IN MAY.