

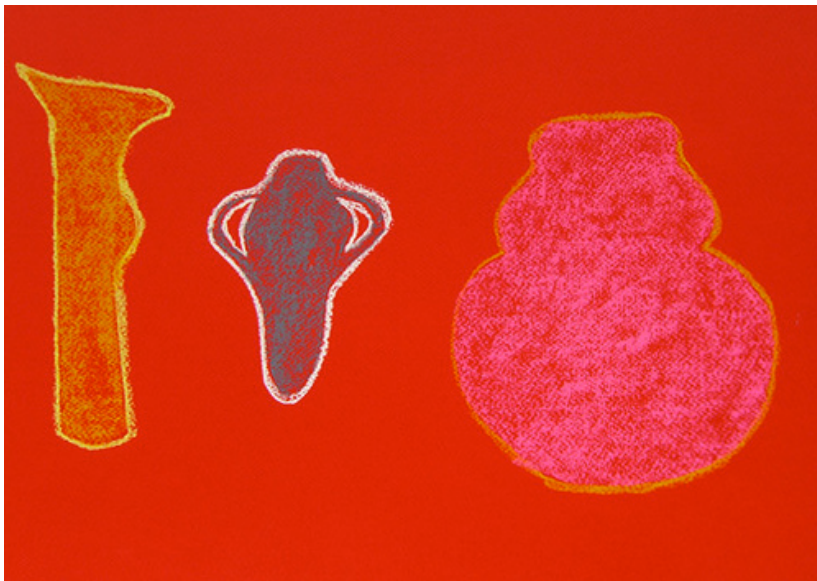
LVL3

Artist of the Week: Ryan Fenchel

Ryan Fenchel lives and works in Chicago, Illinois. He is currently showing at Gallery Yasashii Yokan in Tokyo and his work is up at **Roots and Culture** through February 5th.

Tell us a little bit about yourself and what you do. My name's Ryan Fenchel, I've been living in Chicago for 5 years, I've been a diabetic since I was 14, and I've been married for the last 3 years. I went to the Kansas City Art Inst. from 1999 to 2003 and Northwestern University from 2005 to 2007. When I'm not in the studio I build the highest quality crates for artworks in the Midwest.

What are some recent, upcoming or current projects you are working on? I will have work in the Volta fair in NYC with Imperfect Articles, and I'm really excited to be part of the Kabinet Series at Dan Devening Projects this March.



When and where did your interest in art begin? I've thought of this before and kinda struggled to pin down one thing, but my parents were definitely part of it. When I was way little they gave me a large chalkboard and I would draw elaborate scenes of dinosaurs and planets on it. My parents also commissioned these two artists to paint

various geometric shapes on the walls and ceiling of the kitchen of the house I grew up in. The same artists designed a bar and coffee table in the house; so I was surrounded by a variety of art stuffs in my everyday life as a kid. My dad would also paint acrylic copies of ab-ex paintings that my mom would cut out of magazines and these would decorate our house. Art was always encouraged and not something to be scared of.

What kinds of things are influencing your work right now? Some of my influences are less visually obvious than others, but I'm way into Curren\$, Kai Althoff, RadioLab, the play between free will and universal truths, interior design, some buddies of mine, Tokyo street fashion, and this cassette tape of a lecture about Plato's Symposium. I also work in a cumulative way, so previous projects always influence decisions I make.

What materials do you use in your work and what is your process like? I grew up making mixtapes for myself and friends; I've been making a lot more recently and thinking about how similar it is to my studio practice: I accumulate stuff (ideas, materials) and they get arranged in various ways and the larger sum of the actions create a rich experience for the viewer. I also work on many projects simultaneously and I chief heavy.

What artists are you interested in right now? Curren\$ and CJ Matherne, seriously, dudes kill it. I also like the Center for Cosmic Wonder, Carson Fisk-Vittori, and Aline Cautis.

How has your work developed within the past year? I've been painting and it's become more of a training exercise...kinda in a similar way that in a kung fu movie it's actually the cook who the student learns the most from... I'm not trying to make paintings as much as I'm trying to understand color, sculpture, patients and other elements of my practice through painting.

What's your favorite thing about Chicago? Chicago apartment galleries are straight slammin!

What do you want a viewer to walk away with after seeing your work? The specific ideas I want a person to pick up are constantly changing, but I usually want to confuse a viewer. By this I mean give them something that they feel comfortable with at first, but as they investigate the work, or larger sum of many works, the viewer is asking his or herself more/different questions than they might have been att their first glance. Look with your mind, not your eyes.



What's your absolute favorite place in the world to be? I haven't traveled to a wide variety of places, but I have spent quite a bit of time in Japan. Off the coast of Okayama, there is a series of 7 very small islands that are dotted with art museums and art installations. It's a beautiful experience walking down a tiny residential street full of old wooden homes and — SURPRISE — you walk up on a James Turrell installation or a Tadao Ando designed museum.

Favorite music? Jamaican!

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