

Harrison Fraley



Tell us about where you are from and how you ended up here in the Desert

I was born in Los Angeles and grew up in the San Fernando Valley.

At 14, I was sent to military school in rural Virginia, and then went to study art in Savannah and Atlanta. After kicking around Georgia for a spell, I left for New York for five years, working jobs to buy paint. Ended up back in downtown LA. After a couple good years the neighborhood was blowing up and I was continually thrown out of studio spaces, relocating on repeat.

Around that time my mother quit LA after forty years. I was helping her move to the Palm Springs area, looked at a map and decided on Joshua Tree. I drove up and noticed scattered warehouses, and enough resources to set up shop.

What was is like to transition into the desert?

The first year was more of an experiment- working jobs in LA every few days and trying to force my new quiet home into focus. Only a year later, the studio was on it's way to being completed, and that's when I began to feel like I was really here. Driving trails and breaking bread with people made the transition real.

What are some of the most impactful experiences you have had here in the desert? Has this changed or effected the art work?

Thats going to be hindsight at some point. The desert really hasn't changed my process or materials, just the material itself because it behaves differently in the heat and testing projects outside the studio.

How do you think the landscape here plays in to your body of work? Physically

Last year I began burying containers full of dye components and letting them rot for a few weeks in an attempt to draw with pressure and heat. Same idea with the sun drawings, setting up heavily painted surfaces out in the desert to melt and get whipped with sand. At one point I found myself digging holes and moving rocks to produce paintings and using the sun to manipulate surfaces. More primitive than anything else.

You have an amazing space here, you mentioned having exhibitions or other events, tell us about your plans for the space.

Yeah, so I share the space with my good friend Aaron Wood. His area is dedicated to choppers, various projects and a wood shop. Once or twice a month, all equipment and is rolled aside and we open "Hell" to touring bands and local musicians for all ages shows. So far, its been great. We're booking up a variety of shows from folk acts to black metal.

Can you tell us about your influences, your conceptual framework, and the context in which your work fits in to a larger sculpture dialogue today?

I'm drawn to the historical theater of painting and all of its death and appropriation. For me, its about the "act of painting" with its freedom and limitations, formally addressing painting as a instinctual practice. Simply, closing down the object.

Understanding the work of Robert Ryman and Cady Noland gave me a foundation to have a formal relationship with making work.

What do you have coming up for projects or shows?

Nothing more than some group shows at the moment. Its a good time to make the work.

Any final thoughts on painting, the desert or community?

"Im still concerned with "art about art", but I am also aware "art about art" still reflects the time in which it was made. Content is not denied... content is not obvious...content is sustained in the air or the vibe of the work."

-Steven Parrino

