

Todd Bourret
Slide List

1. *1969*, 2004, acrylic on canvas, 90" x 114"

The source for this painting is a photograph of the interior of a library destroyed by a hurricane in 1969. I was drawn to it for several reasons. The image of an institution or a body of knowledge being leveled, scattered & rearranged functions as a metaphor for the social and artistic upheavals/crises occurring at the time. While the image works metaphorically, there is also a direct visual connection between the library and images of the aftermaths of political/social violence and certain strains of art developing in 1969 (Robert Morris' scatter pieces, Dennis Oppenheim's *Removal Transplant – New York Stock Exchange*, etc.). From here, it is not too hard to start finding correspondences between historical and contemporary crises.

My use of materials (flat interior house paints), color schemes (subdued, "tasteful", middle class), paint application (taped off and rolled sections, drips, skeins, stains), and formal decisions ("off" perspective/sense of space) relates to the source material and its associations directly and metaphorically.

2. *Computer Mountain*, 2004, acrylic on canvas, 38" x 36"

The pile, along with the scatter, recurs often in my work. Like the paintings themselves, piles sit somewhere between abstraction and representation. They are either signifiers of waste & destruction or Smithsonian "ruins in reverse" – inert material yet to be put to use, full of potential. Also, I like that the problem of illusionism is sidestepped, as a representation of a pile is itself a pile (of marks, brushstrokes, etc.)

This painting functions as a sort of allegory. The source is a photograph of poor workers in Asia recycling usable parts and metal from thousands of discarded computers from the west, thereby releasing the toxic materials contained within. The myth of a technological utopia constantly touted in Western advertising is exposed and the cost of progress and accelerated obsolescence is revealed.

The painting can also be seen as a metaphor or argument for itself. Through the use of a living, historical medium, the obfuscating qualities of eternal newness are thwarted.

3. *After Chris Wool (Void I)*, 2004, acrylic and orange peel splatter on canvas, 23 ½" x 24"

4. *After Chris Wool (Void II)*, 2004, acrylic and orange peel splatter on canvas, 25 ¼" x 23 ½"

These paintings are based on photos that Christopher Wool shot of his studio after it caught fire, which were used for insurance purposes and later turned into an artwork. These paintings combine the historical practice of learning through making works "after" an older artist with my interests in traumatized architectural sites and abstraction.

That a hole in the ceiling or "void" is the central image of each painting hints at a metaphysical or romantic content. This is emphasized by the dark, colorful washes that make up each void.

5. *Einsturzende Partmentstore*, 2004, acrylic on canvas, 65" x 80"

The title is a play on the name *Einsturzende Neubauten*, a German post-punk band whose name translates into "collapsing new buildings". Pictured is a hard-edge grid in the process of coming undone. It retains its "buildingness" just barely, while also being consumed by a formless cloud of smoke.

“On June 30, 1995, the worst civil engineering disaster in South Korean history struck when the Sampoong department store collapsed killing 501 people and injuring 900. This tragedy was one in a disturbing series of engineering disasters that gripped South Korea during a time of great economic growth. The circumstance behind the store's collapse contained a gross amount of unethical decisions on the part of almost all involved. The Sampoong department store disaster is an excellent example of what can occur when ethical practices are abandoned in favor of greed and corruption. Hundreds died needlessly as a result of the unethical decisions of the owner, the engineers and city officials. This tragedy calls to mind the importance of ethics and the public's dependence upon the ethical practices of professionals in society” – cems.alfred.edu/students/hanrajhe

6. *Dischord House*, 2003, acrylic on canvas, 96" x 72"

7. *Dischord Office*, 2003, acrylic on canvas, 25 ½" x 25 ½"

8. *Dischord Office* (detail)

These paintings depict the exterior and interior of *Dischord House*, the birthplace and cultural center of Washington DC hardcore punk in the early 80's. Bands practiced there. A record label was run out of a bedroom. Touring bands and wayward punks stayed there.

I found it interesting how a nondescript suburban middle class home became re-functioned as a center (and later symbol) for a community that managed to successfully and responsibly thrive outside of a corporate system. The size and verticality of the painting *Dischord House* refers to the site's monumental status. The bright blue ground and floating leaves are celebratory. As is the scatter in *Dischord Office*. The scatter is an index to the activities inside the building. It marks the house as a site stripped of its original function: to contain and reinforce social norms.