



Leslie O. Peterson  
*Homage to the Original Dialogue*



Lane Twitchell  
*Bushwick Birds (Blown Away)*  
oil, polymers, wax, and sidewalk detritus on cut material  
mounted to panel  
48" x 48"  
2016



Lane Twitchell  
*Century's End*  
oil, polymers, and wax on cut material mounted to panel  
60" x 60"  
2016





Lane Twitchell  
*Cross of Smog*  
(glut mandala #2)  
oil, polymers, and wax on cut material mounted to panel  
36" x 36"  
2016



Lane Twitchell  
*Milk in the Honey Cave*  
oil, polymers, and wax on cut material mounted to panel  
60" x 60"  
2016





Lane Twitchell  
*Buddhascreen*  
oil, polymers, and wax on cut material mounted to panel  
48" x 48"  
2016

## THOUGHTS ON LANE TWITCHELL

Brad Kramer

*“I don’t know how you were diverted  
You were perverted too  
I don’t know how you were inverted  
No one alerted you”  
—George Harrison*

*“If being an egomaniac means I believe in what I do and in my art or  
music, then in that respect you can call me that. . . . I believe in what I  
do, and I’ll say it.”  
— John Lennon*

The German painter Gerhard Richter once wrote: “I like everything that has no style: dictionaries, photographs, nature, myself, and my paintings. (Because style is violent, and I am not violent).” Lane Twitchell is an artist whose particular skillset produces immense works that are both furiously energized and so stylistically distinctive that one could recognize one of his paintings even if obscured by the most impervious haze the Wasatch Front is capable of generating. By contrast, Lane also sometimes makes pictures that self-consciously eschew “style” with a commitment very likely borne of his first direct encounter with Richter’s work, visiting a Virginia gallery a missionary for his natal religious tradition in the mid 1980s. So Lane works in two very different but not unrelated modes, each tied in its own way to his distinctive creative tools. Lane’s work is ferociously intelligent, frenzied, brimming with ideas, occasionally political, and above all a sheer pleasure to look at.

For the purposes of this show let's say that "inversion" carries *three* separate, but not unrelated, connotations. As an obsolete sexological term, *inversion* curses the homosexual with the mark and stigma of mental illness. Sexual inversion was a kind of inborn reversal of gender traits and behaviors that included "same sex attraction." Many of the smaller works on paper (and there are many) in the show are autobiographical—not just in the sense that they depict bits of Lane's personal story but in the sense that the pictures themselves date to formative periods of his life. Whatever psychosexual dynamics might be present in these images I leave to the viewer to judiciously decode. Or not. I will, however, return briefly to a Freudian vocabulary below in discussing the larger, more abstract, and more stylistically distinctive paintings displayed in the main gallery.

"Inversion" also connotes dualistic variation, the photo-negative, a reverse symmetry, a thing as an inverted version of another thing. This pattern features somewhat obviously and explicitly in several of the works of the show. It also informs how the show is organized on several levels. First the above mentioned modes, the distinct bodies of work stitched together. Small works on paper, largely representational, often text based, which signify the artist's history in multiple senses. And massive abstract paintings, nearly three-dimensional in their textured concentration. Both, in their own way, are self-psychoanalytic. Both move us into the artist's head. But they also bring us into contact with someone else's head: Joseph Smith Jr's. We see Lane's brain not just on visual display but engaged in a kind of dynamic and confrontational tension with Smith's brain (literally and figuratively). Yet far from a mere foil, Smith is an ineffaceable presence here more than anything else as an artist, the creative force depicted so iconically in Harold Bloom's *American Religion* (books and texts versus pictures and images is another inverted parallel central to the exhibition).

Finally, "inversion" is a phenomenon that is simultaneously natural and anthropogenic, distinctively present in the valleys of the Wasatch



Front, and inevitably political. Maybe the unfortunate meteorological byproduct of an otherwise ineffably beautiful natural landscape, maybe the fault of an “industrious” people uncomfortably comfortable participating in the workings and sharing the spoils of late capitalism, inversion is an inescapable toxicity emanating from the headquarters of the Mormon kingdom. It obscures natural beauty, refracts our landscape. It is also a political and even cultural flashpoint, an entry point into a fraught and often angry conversation about economy and ecology, Man and Nature, stewardship and public health, regulation and management. It is the dark side of the Mormon Kingdom in the American West, the stuff of Holy Wars and Great Divides.

These themes too make their way explicitly into a number of works in the show. If landscape is the signature art form of the American West, middle-class consumer culture is its lifeblood. In Lane’s expert hands the American Landscape is transformed into something that reflects back the impulses behind and beneath American consumerism. Combined with oil paint and assorted polymers, immaculately folded and cut paper and polyester films project landscapes coated over with visual traces of suburban life, from houses to churches to gas stations. The result presses an iconic emblem of bourgeois life—the hand-crafted, quilt-like, expansively self-reproductive forms of papercutting—into a recursive and re-iterative exposition of the concurrent projects of American and American Religious Expansionism and their confluence in the trappings of consumer capitalism.

Still, a mere exposition of the ideas found in Lane’s show do a tremendous disservice to the work itself. More than anything else these are objects of almost limitless visual gravity. Kaleidoscopic, richly patterned, explosively textured “landscapes” that hit the brain with the force of electrodes (too soon?). Forget color theory and unusual technique: these are paintings you want to rub your face against, images you’ll never feel capable of completely taking in. For all of Freud’s now notorious focus on psychosexuality, it is a less well-known Freudian insight—this into the

nature of religion—that strikes me as most relevant to the show: he saw the obsessive and repetitive attention to micro-detail common to both formal ritual and private “compulsive” behaviors as not just analogous but cognitively isomorphic. As literally processed along identical neural pathways. If Lane’s own journey from Christianity to Buddhism (from, in now-Jungian framing, the angular, rectilinear, hard-logical form of “western” thought to the circularity and transcendent self-referentiality of “eastern” metaphysics) is unmistakably depicted in this show’s most substantial works (a round Buddha figure literally floating above an inverted crucifix in “A Cross of Smog”), it is almost certainly true that the detail-obsessed, perfectionist, jot-and-tittle protestant ethic of his native religion has been spiritually translated (is anything more Mormon?) and is now expressed in the almost ritually intense, fervent, neurotic, fanatically pulverized granularity of these staggeringly beautiful paintings.

Which is to say, for a gay ex-Mormon, Lane Twitchell has produced some of the most vividly religious objects I have ever encountered.

—*Provo, Utah*  
*January, 2017*