

# A text for Tino's thesis show

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I'm Tom, an artist and a friend of Tino's. I have five things I'd like to say toward creating ways in to seeing his work, for this, the occasion of his graduate thesis show.

1.

To start, Tino's work sits on top of an unshakeable foundation in drawing. I find his line unmistakable: intuitive but intentional, highly confident, automatic but skillful, weirdly literate, "live and direct." He's not a poet or a conceptualist who happens to prefer making retinal work as a way to interpret or stage language-based ideas. Rather, as a drawer at the core, he's a conductor, in the electrical sense: The work flows through him, straight from the hand. Guiding this current are his collaborators.

2.

For his thesis show, I understand that Tino's recreating all of the works from a significant mid-century group show at Dwan Gallery as sculptures in paper of his own making. Situating his studio with reference to an event in mainline American art history makes strategic sense in context here, and redoing the sculptures is a fun and funny idea, but it's also a credible one given how he's always worked. When Tino sees things and they resonate, that resonance operates as a current, which he then conducts.

Here, the work isn't "an homage" to the Dwan show, or "a response" to it. Rather, the show is resonant material for a process best viewed as a form of collaboration. I think this is the key to viewing Tino's work broadly. He selects partners to collaborate with, and works to draw new things both *out of* them and *onto* them - whether they're built or natural environments, readings, visual influences, other artists who might be present in the room, moments from art history like this, or materials themselves. Often and significantly for Tino, it has been with the supports for his marks.

3.

For most of us, painting process begins with material assumptions that form constraints. Simple ones include "it will be on canvas" or "it will be rectangular." More complex common ones include "the derivation of the pigments is unimportant" or "the support is not itself a decision that is an inherent part of the work." Much of Tino's past work has begun by rejecting these and

related assumptions. He's been exploring possibilities for collaborating with atypical supports for at least the last decade, with high levels of openness and playfulness, low concern for "archival" results, and a clear interest in trying to elevate whatever he's marking - it hasn't ever been about merely exerting the marks themselves. Rather, for rocks, brick walls, trees, crosscut logs, sheet metal, plywood, or any 2d or 2d/3d support you can think of, it's been about *both* the supports shaping the marks *and* the marks activating the supports. Through developing this "supports meeting marks as equals" approach to making artwork, Tino arrived at making paper.

#### 4.

I visited Tino's studio in July 2019, and his homemade paper press immediately struck me as a Eureka-level development. He recently told me, "I think the paper looks like I made it," and I totally agree; now, his supports *are also* his marks. Making paper ties everything together: It acts as a "home field" for his relentless drawing hand, sustainably resolves his search for worthy material collaborators, and functions as an amazingly organic, intuitive way to extend his collaborative impulse into the world. Anyone working with Tino's paper will be working in collaboration with Tino; anything done on his paper will literally be made with his support.

#### 5.

Finally, in parallel to making artwork, it's relevant to note that Tino has maintained a commitment to organizing and running art spaces. These spaces are an important facet and expression of his collaborative methodology too, both in a direct way - for example with his longtime partner Allison Klion, with whom he currently runs the gallery *ex ovo* in Dallas - but also more broadly, in that they demonstrate the importance of building and supporting communities to his overall practice.

Mileage regarding the subjective experience of being an artist will vary, but one thing I personally feel quite sure of is that cities are only ever as good for artists as the artists who live in them make them for each other. I feel that this extends abstractly out to the world, and relates to the strange, difficult to measure service that artists provide to the people around them, and to culture at large.

These are an artist's two jobs: To make art, and to support artists. This thesis show demonstrates the flexibility and possibility inherent in Tino's work on these two fronts, by showing what it looks like when he turns his studio toward collaboration with source material as formidable and formally difficult to render as this Dwan show. Just as papermaking itself consolidates his support and his mark, it's exciting to think about how his future paper shop will consolidate his artwork with his work running art spaces, to do the work of both.