



**Third Object: Across your paintings, you use many different kinds of mark making techniques, and this leads to a broad variation in the images you produce. How do you determine what vocabulary to use in each canvas?**

Hannah Tarr: Well, I like to surprise myself. I never plan a painting completely. I'll have a vague idea of what I want to make, then I go for it. The weirder the better, whether it be weird due to color choice, mark making or texture. I know I can't make anything "new," but if I can make myself laugh by using nail polish on a painting, then I've succeeded.

**How does *Untitled (Butt)* fit within your larger practice?**

I made the Butt for a show here in Chicago with Kate Ruggeri at Roots & Culture. The show featured a series of abstracted portraits. Like I said earlier, I like to surprise myself. In one of the paintings (the largest in the show, which ended up being a sort of portrait of my cat) I used a magazine clipping of a face for the nose. This was the only collaged element in the whole show; it was awkward and, to me, hilarious. The Butt had this same function in the show as a whole: one surprising gesture, a Butt in a series of faces. The portraits are more labored, have more sophisticated line work (or at least I'd like to think so), but the Butt is cartoony, crudely rendered, monochrome. I like to think of it as punctuation mark.

**Your most recent body of work (shown at Roots & Culture, Chicago, Fall 2014) included several portrait paintings. We're curious about the role of specificity in your work, which is to say, are these portraits of existing people? Is *Untitled (Butt)* a portrait?**

In my previous work, I focused on iterations of landscape. Portraits were a natural progression for me. Landscapes and portraits are both iconic, historical genres of painting. I said earlier that I don't expect to make anything "new," so why not go old school and paint only landscapes and portraits? My portraits are not of existing people. I think most of them are paintings of existing portraits: the sad clown, the Van Gogh self-portrait. They exist as ideas of portraiture, rather than trying to depict an actual person.

And yes, the Butt is a sort of portrait. As a woman, I think about how weird it is to be identified by a certain body part. Ass, breasts, whatever. It's weird. For instance, I have a friend with an amazingly, abnormally, huge ass and she can neither hide nor stop hearing about it — from strangers, friends, randy co-workers, new and inebriated acquaintances. It's not just bizarre, it makes me frustrated and angry in a way I don't know how to express or deal with. We cannot help our bodies. We should not have to apologize for our bodies. We should not have to walk around feeling eyes, feeling like meat (to be devoured) or lethal weapons (damn girl, you're killin it). Now don't get me wrong, I love butts; however, I wanted to paint a weird, desexualized butt experience, kind of exposing the silliness of it all. I painted a shape, a cartoon.

***Untitled (Butt)* overtly creates a voyeuristic experience, but its cartoony rendering shifts the fantasy into a humorous experience. Would you say a bit about voyeurism (and humor) as it relates to *Untitled (Butt)* and your work in general? Is this something you're interested in exploring more in your work?**

Voyeurism implies a sort of secret intimacy. I guess the subject, the Butt, is inherently intimate, but I don't quite consider the painting itself a voyeuristic experience. And butts are everywhere: in movies, tv, pornography. We're used to seeing them. So I'm not even sure that seeing a butt implies intimacy. I wanted to touch on this with the paint handling, the cartoon-like rendering. It's a crudely executed butt icon.

Most Americans partake in voyeuristic experiences in the form of pornography. In most porn there is already a sort of cartooning going on in service of fantasy. There's even outright cartoon porn, or Japanese Hentai porn (tons of big, shiny boobs and butts), but the live action stuff is just as fake to me. I don't know if I find this humorous or not. I'm interested in voyeurism, but not sure how it will make its way into my practice again.

**How do the sculptural objects that you make relate to your paintings -- do they inform one another?**

Absolutely. A painting is an object we're all familiar with. We all know a painting when we see one, and mine are all very traditionally shaped (squares and rectangles) which gives them away immediately. I like having my weird, lumpy, little painted sculptures next to my paintings. Hopefully they throw people off a little.

**What's your favorite name for the gluteus maximus?**

While I do like "tush," I'm more of an ass girl.

This interview is printed on the occasion of TUSH, an exhibition of Hannah Tarr's *Untitled (Butt)* with butt buttons by Tegan Brace. The exhibition is a part of 2nd Floor Rear, a 36 hour art festival in Chicago's alternative art spaces.

**Hannah Tarr** is an artist living and working in Atlanta Georgia. She received her BA in painting from the Rhode Island School of Design in 2011 and has been living across the US in the years before settling in Georgia where she is a set painter for film and television. Her new her work consists of playful portraiture, sad clowns and images that echo the human spirit. Color, symbol, collage, and texture are all important elements in her work

**Third Object** is a curatorial collective based in Chicago.

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