

Al Dente with John Walter; 2019

Full transcription:

In conversation with John Walter, at my studio, Chisenhale. early 2019.

John Walter 0:00

How's it going in here?

Diana Taylor 0:02

Well it has become a real struggle; quite overwhelming and it's just a complex project; so anyway I've been collecting these unfinished tapestries from eBay

John Walter 0:32

that's highly 'al dente'...unfinished tapestries

Diana Taylor 0:37

The idea came from my mum's unfinished tapestries.

John Walter 0:43

Okay, so you're adding to her collection

Diana Taylor 0:47

kind of ..it was more of an idea that was sparked off by looking at her own unfinished tapestries that were just sitting there.

John Walter 1:00

So you're scanning them.

Diana Taylor 1:01

Yes, so I've scanned them in, photographed them and you can see the unfinished patches. But some of them are more finished than others.

John Walter 1:15

it's such a clever illusion because it's a semi flat thing. So the illusions really shallow so it's really convincing, which it works really well as a print. And then to put the grid over the top. Yeah. Which is just it's really mind boggling. Totally like, drags you in, doesn't it?

Diana Taylor 1:37

But that's great, because that's what I'm really playing with at the moment. Is this idea of zooming in and out; that's really what it's all become about zooming in and out of it of the cloth

John Walter 1:49

Yes okay.

Diana Taylor 1:49

So there's like, depictions of drapery in parts.

John Walter 1:55

and various grids, all these types of grids.

Diana Taylor 1:58

Exactly; the weave, the warp and the weft, the pattern that's on the fabric,

John Walter 2:05

the bloom of the fabric showing up with a dry brush.

Diana Taylor 2:11

The print of the fabric of tapestry fabric,

John Walter 2:16

These are totally strange because the colour palettes are really enmeshed. Whereas they still jar. Yeah. So are you like, are you trying to bridge the gap between these realms?

Diana Taylor 2:39

with these ones? I mean, I've got to say that some of the stuff isn't complete

John Walter 2:45

sure, of course,

Diana Taylor 2:47

especially in that corner.

John Walter 2:49

Is that where you hide it all?

Diana Taylor 2:51

Actually, it just became this place for everything. Yeah, it's like, oh, it's just, you know, they can be a collage going on. Like, you know, there's so much going on that it's been hard to kind of to work what the methods are.

John Walter 3:08

to make sense of it. Yeah.

Diana Taylor 3:12

So I can talk you through those techniques,

John Walter 3:15

Maybe we should list the types of activities. Yeah, that would be quite interesting.

Diana Taylor 3:23

Absolutely. Because it's very focused on process and well, it's very much about this kind of multiplicity of processes, which entirely reflects Morris.

John Walter 3:40

Yes. Okay. So what I should say for the recording is that we had started a conversation about 'al dente' a long time ago, in regard to the unfinished and in terms of your PhD being linked to William Morris and arts and crafts and pattern making, and also your historic interest in pattern and fabric and sewing and which has a really weird uncanny overlap of what I'm

doing and then what Ed is doing. And so, how should we list the types of activities?

Diana Taylor 4:20

Yeah, I mean, the idea of also that obviously relates to the notion of time as being unfinished. And, and the images and everything is fragmented and I can't I don't wish for anything to feel ...whenever a painting feels, like it's working as finished, it's then where I start painting parts out.

John Walter 4:45

Okay. Because they're mashups of things. Yeah. things that you've done with things that you've found or made specifically to cut up. But also when I was chatting to Ed about the al dente and what it meant, we started talking about what it meant for pasta. So it's this idea of firm to the bite. So it's just, it is cooked, but it's just under cooked, it's not raw, but it's not too boiled. But it's a value system of knowing culturally that it's just right. Like asserting your 'Italian-ness', so I wonder also whether that's a value system that you're that's something to consider as we go along in the conversation is like, is there also a set of hierarchies that you're unpacking, in art history, in painting, in sewing, culture and making new registers for those things?

Diana Taylor 5:50

Well, the idea of hierarchy is really important because that's what I want to break down- any hierarchy between arts and crafts and that's why I really love to use as you do as well, these throw away things. Well, it's kind of full of contradictions the work of high and low, old and new, arts and crafts...

John Walter 6:16

yeah, the old and new. Yeah, because the high and low we all use. And that's a starting point, isn't it? But the old and new the sort of anachronistic the nicky-nacky-noo, the sort of lacey, antimacassar, nonna aesthetic. Yeah, it's something that you seem to have brought in a lot more.

Diana Taylor 6:41

Yeah, yeah, definitely. Because I suppose I was always referring to it in painting, but the painting was never you know, it's now that I'm stitching into the work or using the actual fabrics that the reference becomes more explicit.

John Walter 7:04

yeah, somehow they stayed on the pop side of the equation before a bit more partly because of the colour. And also the and the references to (Sigmar) Polke, which don't seem to be as strong in this new phase. I mean, in these two that we're talking about, is that a more sort of bricolage with fabric? Yeah. And samplers is a thing isn't it.

Diana Taylor 7:31

Exactly. Absolutely. And actually, what I realised is this is all very much about what the whole research question really boils down to this transference of knowledge and the inheritance of processes, which comes from my mum. It's funny because I've been writing this morning, and I always used to think what did she teach me? when I when I was angry with her, when she was around, you know? And I realised that this silent stitching of women's work, it is really silent.

John Walter 8:15

And it's gendered for sure. Yeah.

Diana Taylor 8:20

It is.

John Walter 8:21

Is that was what you grew up with? Because that was something I grew up with. My aunt is a craft person. You know, she makes felt, she embroiders, cross stitch. Also her aunt embroidered tablecloths. So there was no high art. Like, not the people for ...like there wasn't a culture of going to art galleries. I mean, they weren't averse to but like I got interested. So then they got into it. Yeah, this idea that like you might make cakes and all this woman's craft stuff is totally the thing.

Diana Taylor 8:57

Well, I had both sides actually. So my mum's side it's that craft...all the tapestries and embroideries surrounded the house there was lots of you know, curlicues tassels, you know, all of that the gold Laura Ashley and Morris.

John Walter 9:14

I mean, Laura Ashley totally. Oh my God.

Diana Taylor 9:16

yeah, a hundred percent. And on the other side of family, I've got my dad and his mother who was a painter, painting landscapes in Salisbury, you know, so there was that high art. Okay. And, and dad's side of the family were, it was her (his mother's) father was an architect and he made these tight, beautiful drawings of the Thames and places around England. So there's that real mishmash of my own genealogy, my background.

John Walter 9:56

and synthesising them.

Diana Taylor 9:58

Yeah.

John Walter 9:59

So let's go back to the initial part when I came in and you said, you know, there's loads going on and you're sort of overwhelmed by. So can you describe the types of things?

Diana Taylor 10:11

Yeah. So what I'm focused on, I mean, is obviously, you know, my painting is always what I've been doing. But what I'm using now are repetitive, traditional processes and their digital equivalents. So that's printing and has been screen printing for ages, and I'm going back to trying out block printing, to try out some sort of ideas for perhaps doing some patterns wallpaper kind of things, I'm not sure. There's also that printing on a different level which is scanning these cloths that my mum had, and all her wools and tassels, I've 3d scanned them and turned those images back into flat, point clouds of tassels.

John Walter 11:07

That's amazing.

Diana Taylor 11:09

So there's a traditional mechanical and digital thing

John Walter 11:14

That's mad to do a point cloud of a tassel.

Diana Taylor 11:17

Yeah, isn't it, I know.

John Walter 11:18

And then to take it back to a flat thing

Diana Taylor 11:22

Yeah, exactly. So pushing it back into material realm. These are tassels, you can perhaps make out those sort of shiny, crimson tassels. That's the texture reading. This is the point cloud reading so kind of it's structural form, and that's obviously a digital print. This is a screen print. And then working back into it with stitching.

John Walter 11:55

so when you when you take on that process of scanning for the point cloud, and all these things, what do they do for you?

Diana Taylor 12:03

It's well, that's the zooming in. But it's also this digital thing does for me that also is interesting in relation to Morris. And the reason to use any mechanical or digital process is to do something that the hand cannot actually do...that's not something. I mean, Koon's assistance could paint something like that.

John Walter 12:28

It's not something that I could do. So it's not something that I can read until I can explain it. Yeah. It's a very fascinating pattern. But it could be a lunar landscape, you know, or Mars or some sort of molecular level thing. It's ambiguous, but it's definitely digital. And it's got a kind of scrambled quality and a peculiar colour realm, hasn't it?

Diana Taylor 12:56

Yeah. Yeah, this one's even more fragmented. And this is a literally a pile of one up just grabbed, scanned, and then you can start to see the little paper bit that holds the threads together.

John Walter 13:16

Have you experimented with different suppliers of digital print... is there someone that you've settled on that you like?

Diana Taylor 13:26

well, this is done at Sheffield Hallam and that's because they've got a digital printer and it's pretty cheap.

John Walter 13:33

Can you choose your fabric?

Diana Taylor 13:35
Yeah

John Walter 13:35
That's amazing because this pink textured piece is extraordinary.

Diana Taylor 13:40
That was in the scrap bin of the fashion department where I can go and scavenge.

John Walter 13:46
So you have exponentially increased the number of variables available to you and you are continuing to

Diana Taylor 13:56
Yeah, this again, is a combination of the several pieces, now several types of cloth merged and digitally printed with the screen print on top of its point cloud and then stitched into again that's potentially going on the tablecloth.

John Walter 14:18
it's got weirder hasn't it. That's the overall thing is there that much, they feel like yours more. Yeah, because I think you can't tell the references. Yeah and you've scrambled the old a lot more so you're mashing up such different, they're just 10 evolutions on.

Diana Taylor 14:42
Oh really?

John Walter 14:43
Yeah, I think they are because there's recognisable, I mean what I'm trying to work out is what the grammar is because it's always about this slim depth of painting. It talks about painting Yes. And it talks about painting by talking about weaving or about stitching or things that are equivalent depth. Yeah. But you, you, you seem to bring in grids as a way of gathering or negotiating things together. And I wonder how that works for you?

Diana Taylor 15:18
Well, I think the repeated grid, that allows me to then work in the flat patterns that come from tapestries. And again, of course, the grid is always a non-hierarchical structure, but I know that having a grid there, okay, then I can work into it with the old with the old patterns.

John Walter 15:43
Yeah. And also that grid can change size, and it does seem to change. It's not the standard size. You've got mini grid, medium grids, big grids, I suppose where you plot objects on. It's a sort of hanging device within the pictorial field isn't it?

Diana Taylor 16:03
Yeah. And, you know, so it does of course relate conceptually, to the grid of the weave- the warp and the weft. Yeah. And that's one of the other things going on is weaving. So this is something I've been doing for the last year, which is weaving on the handloom.

John Walter 16:21

Good god almighty! They're amazing! How long have they taken?

Diana Taylor 16:28

I mean, quite a while... months? I'm just going once a week and you know,

John Walter 16:35

is that one piece?

Diana Taylor 16:37

No, that's loads of different samples. It is one hanging but I just kind of keep changing ideas and going, okay, I'm gonna try that method or so that you know, when you look at other people's work, which is always neat, I've just been sort of anti-'trying to make a runner' kind of thing, or making a scarf, of course. And I'm interested in sampling.

John Walter 17:04

I mean, it immediately takes me back to the digital, but it also makes me think about the Jacquard loom which I'm looking at because of Paisley. So they bring that in. And then you punch cards which correspond to colours, which cause the pattern to happen. And that's a pre-computer technology. So you're exhausting the research into the origins of digital ideas.

Diana Taylor 17:31

Totally. That's where the past here lies, so my conceptual link between the past and the present the digital, the analogue is in the weave. It's in the warp and the weft and it's in the coding of the Jacquard loom. So I'm doing handloom weaving and I'm also doing weaving on a digital, which is a digital Jacquard loom. I haven't done very much and haven't gotten my sample here to show you..

John Walter 18:05

Amazing! your brain just must be hurting!

Diana Taylor 18:09

Fucking mash up

John Walter 18:11

Because this point cloud thing has come up because in microscopy, or even more X ray crystallography, they'll fire atoms at a protein to find its shape and then you get that data as a point cloud and the computer reads, do you never actually see, not yet, there's a new technique called cryo-em, which is where you can freeze a protein and look at it in a microscope probably. But this is a new technique. The most things that are at a molecular level have been solved through this, this way of firing atoms that we were thinking and then so there's a program called Pymol, which is where you can look at the thing but we thought we might make a point cloud for a Paisley and take that into Pymol, because Pymol can see anything. So I wonder whether your point clouds, what are you looking at them in?

Diana Taylor 19:16

I'm trying to remember the name of the program.

John Walter 19:18

Again, like is it an Autodesk like Maya or something like that? Or

Diana Taylor 19:23

It's not Maya. I'm trying to remember what it's called. Because I need it.

John Walter 19:29

I wonder whether they'd work in Pymol? Because that's what's interesting is at that scale it can be anything, couldn't it? It's just so weird.

Diana Taylor 19:39

It's so weird. It's like another...It's like a topological landscape.

John Walter 19:44

Yes. And they are triangulated grids...that's what's different about them. They're different. They're like the sinews or the neural networks between the types aren't they, because you know, when you build something in a computer program, it all has to triangulate for you to be able to expand it or it has to work. And like, that's kind of changing your idea about a grid somehow.

Diana Taylor 20:19

And also, I see this as being very reflective of the actual research structure itself, which is a real network a rhizome like, yeah, rooted thing, which is really hard to tame right now. In fact my supervisor yesterday was like, you do need to rein it in a bit. I was like, Yeah, but it's really complex. It's really complex, because ...it just is,

John Walter 20:48

it because you're using it as a feedback loop? Is it because a finished thing can also become a resource for the next thing, because you can scan this and then you can work over it or,

Diana Taylor 21:01

well, this is actually what I'm trying to figure out. And I do know that I need to like, I feel like I do want a method, a more sort of structured way to get to the work. But I know that it does include all of these things. And it is going to look really, very complex. And it is, yeah, it's whether I use an algorithm to formulate all of this information. But it is really very much about this...it's the zooming in and out. And that is also zooming in and out of time and back and forth. And zooming in from flatness into a different sort of depth with these topological images.

John Walter 21:53

well, it also seems to be like zooming in on your own gesture or your own thought process. Where you've started a thing with one intention and left it and then returned to it in a different mindset. And allowed yourself to interpret it differently which I can relate to because I will start paintings and shelve them deliberately so I can forget why I've started them. Because then I can approach them very fresh,

Diana Taylor 22:22

With a fresh way of looking.

John Walter 22:23

And I think that's quite an 'al dente', methodology. Yeah. And also I wonder about the provisionality of everything. You know, if these hierarchies are all being disrupted and everything can be reactivated, you know, does anything and in here at the moment, if two

things ever come to a close at the moment?

Diana Taylor 22:48

Well that's kind of the interesting thing of these samples- none of them are really finished and they are sketches for larger works. But there's something that I really like about them that's coming together as a series of unfinished ideas that all start talking about the same thing and that is the cloth, you know, the history of, of the cloth and the time and well it's more than that...it's the images that go on the cloth it's the tea-towel and it's the souvenir like Englishness of that it's all the stuff that we can all relate to in these you know, that is personal and it's not...it's shared.

John Walter 23:52

Of course, it's all language. Yeah, he also I think something there's something about craft and about design and particularly like applied art, which is the zone that we don't really have at the moment in this. I don't know what it's like you go to Habitat and buy forks that were designed by Damien Hirst, well actually, maybe you can at his shop. But you do you know what I mean like, why are artists not designing chairs? Or, because I think that there's a zone where you're that you're interested in the tapestry, and is a bit like my interest in the Paisley or Ed's interest in the Gothic Revival, that they're sort of slightly outside the... It's not even about hierarchies. So much is like, the sort of not observed. Nobody's looking at them. So they're like, available for use or you can be naughty with them or I didn't know that you seem to have found a way of exploiting a zone or niche or something or niches I don't know.

Diana Taylor 25:02

That's funny that you say that because I kind of think that. Yes and also no, I think that there's a huge revival in craft.

John Walter 25:18

clay,

Diana Taylor 25:19

clay, but the amount of textiles and I mean, maybe I'm just focused on it at the moment but Frieze of last year, there was a lot of textile work. There was a lot of, you know. There's a lot of artists doing digital weaving.

John Walter 25:41

Yeah.

Diana Taylor 25:42

And there is an embracing of traditional craft processes, but they are often brought into, back into a digital realm. So digital weave kind of thing.

John Walter 25:57

what is the digital loom, how does that work?

Diana Taylor 26:01

that is based on Jacquard loom, and it is really complex for me to try and describe.

John Walter 26:08

Do you programme the image?

Diana Taylor 26:09

You do, you do. So you program the image and then you still actually feed the shuttle through and you still do that manually. And you do part of it with a pedal like on a table loom you know, but it's but it's obviously working a lot faster.

John Walter 26:29

Right. And can you exploit that manual bit to do something else? Is there a way of fucking with it?

Diana Taylor 26:39

Yeah, possibly. I haven't. To be honest. I don't know it intimately enough to do that right now. I'm literally at the beginning.

John Walter 26:46

I didn't even know it existed.

Diana Taylor 26:47

Yeah. Yeah. Well, if you think about for example, Grayson Perry's Yeah, they're all done on a digital loom.

John Walter 27:00

Yeah, right.

Diana Taylor 27:04

I don't know exactly which one

John Walter 27:06

yeah, I just assumed that you didn't have to then manually feed it.

Diana Taylor 27:10

Yes, you do. Yeah. (*This is incorrect which I didn't know at the time of this conversation...there are entirely digital looms; those would've been used by the makers of Perry's tapestries.)

John Walter 27:13

So there's no getting away from that. That's interesting.

Diana Taylor 27:16

Yeah. So that's something that I want to further explore.

John Walter 27:21

Huh. Yeah.

Diana Taylor 27:23

Sorry, there's many puns in this research project. So many, you know, interwoven threads just, you know,

John Walter 27:34

with the bigger works, I mean, there on two sides of the room...when you're composing, how

are you making the spatial choices?

Diana Taylor 27:46

Yeah. Well, until now, that's been entirely well, I'd say it's all been entirely instinctual. I guess what's going on is there's some framing; that's going on in these. And I'm thinking a lot about, when I think about Morris, I don't just think about his patterns quite often looking at his print works, like the Kelmscott Press and what he did with the Kelmscott Chaucer, I don't know if you know it? I've got it here, and it was his last project before he died. And he's really concerned with the decline of print with the Kelmscott Press. So this is a combination of an Edward Byrne Jones. And I remember looking at these pictures as a kid just being blown away by the complexity.

John Walter 28:41

I didn't know this existed! Wow!

Diana Taylor 28:42

Yeah. So I guess with these always thinking very much about the framing that's going on. So Morris has done these borders. Yeah. And Edward Burne Jones does the illustration and all the illuminations and Morris and then somebody else has actually carved and printed them.

John Walter 29:01

This is insane, Oh my god.

Diana Taylor 29:06

And this is what I love about Morris not just the patterns that we all know but this complexity of image and drapery and pattern and framing and text and this kind of intertwining

John Walter 29:20

Of world building, isn't it? Because it's trying to make a complete system, isn't it? Which is where I can sort of relate to it as maximalist. Because it's, no stone is left unturned. And also, this is, I mean, this is an epic work a) because Chaucer is an epic work, but b) to render it in this way. And even one of these pages is I mean, totally fascinating.

Diana Taylor 29:47

I mean, there are repeats sure, but still, the illustration.

John Walter 29:51

You don't notice them actually, because it's so overwhelming.

Diana Taylor 29:54

Yeah. There's that density and that complexity, but still a flatness and a boldness that I love.

John Walter 30:02

So is that is that an aim of yours now to achieve that?

Diana Taylor 30:07

I think I've always been interested in that and I suppose I've made that link, you know, what is it about him? It's not just, it's not to do with the nature or the floral, you know? There's a flatness to Morris.

John Walter 30:23
Oh, absolutely, yeah.

Diana Taylor 30:25
Yes. And it's stylized,

John Walter 30:27
and all and all overness, you know, because it's pattern. Yeah. You know, it's pre-all over painting. Yeah. But I'm trying to work out what's shifted through all this research, in terms of the way you organize. Yeah. Or what is shifting. Yeah. So is it because, is it something to do with finding a bigger repertoire of ways of tricking yourself out of homogenously organizing the surface because they feel like there's more counter or that contrapuntal moments going on like with this one the smaller one. There's more types of thing in there, more voices or more categories. And they're playing off each other a bit more awkwardly. In a good way.

Diana Taylor 31:23
Yeah. Good.

John Walter 31:24
So I wonder if that's a result of some of this research?

Diana Taylor 31:29
Yeah, I think so. I think it is that idea, that it is bringing in a different language with these ones anyway, it is a bit of digital rendering of those scans.

John Walter 31:45
Yeah, I mean, that was actually we had a conversation long time ago about ugliness. Can you bring in the sort of fly in the ointment thing? Yeah, and these things are.. they look like sharks or something. I mean, this is biomorphic very densely pitted 3d scans. But they're a new addition to your vocabulary. we've not seen that before.

Diana Taylor 32:13
No, that's entirely new. And it really needs more exploration. I'm really excited about where that's gonna go. But I do still want to bring them off the screen and on back onto the cloth. So this kind of cyclical thing goes on with the process. So there's 3D scanned from the cloth, from someone's hand from this unknown woman. So there's obviously this thing about authorship going on as well. Like subverting ideas or indeed devaluing stuff... am I devaluing what's going on, or is it being revalued by actually taking it re configuring it?

John Walter 32:58
I mean, I just view it as, because these are multiple voices they're polyvocal. So, you know, and then once you bring that analogy in, it's a choir. So then it's about what kind of harmonies or dissonances or what tonality are you aiming at because in something like this one where it's all in a grey/ green neutral realm, you're using certain colour realms or certain colour ways in certain ones, and then the others you're actively jarring things. And I wonder is that the way of testing them as sets, or is that just a thing that's bubbling under the surface.

Diana Taylor 33:47
It's something that I'm thinking about and I've actually just been playing today with these

digital collages, I will show you the printout but others have sort of been analysed; they're better on the screen, to be honest but layers that are just, they're just dragged from my bank of source materials. I don't decide or where they go they just get dragged into the Photoshop file and one thing is dragged on to another and at each stage layers of opacity are changed and the idea is that the hierarchy is not that it's basically going from the weave the grid, the warp and the weft as being probably the first layer that just is this sort of zooming out from that microscopic macro kind of zooming out on each layer until I get to the drapery of the sculptural figure, for example. And what this is doing in the digital collages is this kind of, well, the layers of transparency that everything gets pushed back a bit,

John Walter 35:18
It gets compressed

Diana Taylor 35:19
It gets compressed.

John Walter 35:21
It's that merge visible function, which are, you know, I've been interested in for a long time, and you've been interested for a long time emulating that, that Photoshop approach in a painting. Yeah, that's what the work in Rome I was doing was 10 years ago. You know, they were called merge visible. And they were like that, that was using translucency. That was watercolour, acrylic as watercolour. But you're doing it by scanning and print, you know, you're using things that we didn't have 10 years ago, or that they were really expensive, but also that I wonder what the consequence of this orders magnitude thing is, so like, if the thing is like pinging between macro, micro, zoom in, zoom out, in focus, out of focus, like what is the, what is the overall effect of that? Is it a kind of, is it to dazzle and like a Stendhal syndrome kind of collapse? What do you think? Because you're making these for you to begin with? What do you think they do for you emotionally or like,

Diana Taylor 36:32
what I want to do with them is to create this sense of anachronism. And that's what hopefully the layers do, because I'm not just going into one piece of cloth and sort of analysing that but I'm also going between different times within that cloth, so something you know, an ancient piece or sorry, an antique piece of cloth, but also an ancient piece of sculpture, that's kind of, that sort of sits on the top. And then on the top that it might be one of these kind of motifs from China that would again be something used for fabric. And it's that kind of... it's not just a sort of mindless taking from the cultural landscape, grabbing whatever, it is very much I think about, about this sort of zooming in of fabrics and textiles and what we use and materiality.

John Walter 37:36
I understand this pun of sampling and sampler and not being a total... There's also some, so this fabric was sort of mute, like chrome green, washed out upholstery fabric. That seems to be a clue because that seems to have a sort of suburban, living room quality to it doesn't have a place in.... Yeah, you know, it's the thing that says, so is that part of the project is to like, identify those things that slip in between categories.

Diana Taylor 38:12
Yeah. Well, I'm interested in that. And the domestic's always come into my work it's part of my background. This, you know, growing up in a very, well in a house that was full of these

textures and fabrics and the piles of my mum's background with her own interest in craft, but she also was making dresses for a while and so there was just fabrics always around. So the domestic is definitely a major part of it.

John Walter 38:57

There's that thing with the pattern like a wallpaper say, why it's so trance like that you don't notice it's a pattern because you just keep reading it. Yeah. And I wonder whether there's an element of kind of hypnotism or like mesmerization that you're trying to achieve with a repeat. But that uses the all over, because these things aren't evenly distributed. Now there's hexagons, yeah, there's gray lines that are stitched. There's this black fat line that occurs occasionally. There's also an overlap frame to border. Yeah, it gives a thing but also then you, you go over that. Yeah. And then there's different scales of drawing of image or paths and so like, that is not an overall image and there's not that I wouldn't think it's homogenous is it. It's not it's a minestrone. Yeah. If it's, you know, yeah, if it was a soup it's got floaters in it.

Diana Taylor 40:08

Yeah. I like that word floating. Actually, I do think things float. And they're like sort of remnants. I feel like these are just like, the scraps of things, the debris and I kind of think of these, the white lines or wherever they're the stitch lines, trying to sort of contain it all in a way it's trying to tie it together.

John Walter 40:37

The white lines emerged much later on in your viewing. And as do the white gesso, acrylic clouds that have been drawn into the pencil. They don't see them first of all, and that is I wonder whether that's part of the thing is like, well which is another cooking analogy. Like us sort of flavour releases or flavour profile, which is a thing that we both think are interested in painting which operates different from a timescale for that movie, it can release most of it under that because they're not painting where you did. But that is a common thing in the al dente project is like being ...you're a painting reader. You and I both look at painting and think about painting and pictorial space. And I think that's a different way of looking at the world, as in the sculptural way. Yeah, yeah. Just because you're really like, you're constantly going in and out.. and the rip and tear and the pinking shear and all of these line qualities, which are edge qualities, yeah, seems to become, like crucial, for like, sensitizing us to the variety or something.

Diana Taylor 41:56

Yeah, I do. It's funny. You should call it a minestrone and I was thinking about them as like being like salads. Full salad

John Walter 42:07

with fries!

Diana Taylor 42:11

exactly. I loved always delighted in seeing that in other people's work it's why you and I love David Salle. It's why I love Rauscheberg, a bringing together of languages and histories and materials and you know, that poly-ness of the polyvocal, I think is the only way, you know, in the times that we live in, which are saturated with imagery, for me, it's the only way to reflect what's really going on. One singular image doesn't, for me, seem to reflect that time of anachronism in which we live of the internet.

John Walter 43:03

So that's and that's a good way to take it. So I've got this idea of of maximalism being too complex adaptive systems, which is really this branch of science that says, the whole is more than the sum of its parts, which in in your work seems to fit to, which is that you are, you're breeding these things in a way where there's you're hybridizing them but then you're hybridizing the hybrid, and you're then taking the baby of the hybrid and bringing back the grandparent of the child. And so that herding and like complexity, and you because these things are epic, there's all the like, I keep using different analogies, but like they're not Haiku that there's loads going on in most of them isn't there?

Diana Taylor 43:59

Yeah,

John Walter 44:01

Simultaneously, and that build up. So what am I trying to say? Is that a useful way of seeing them like, Are there building blocks? And then are there.. are these things decomposable; can you break them apart box? Which I suppose we can, because you are doing that by analysing them but like, is that a way for the people to decipher them to think, like this one, we can sort of break it into digitally printed scan of tapestry sewing into printed grid painting to grid, painted patches of sculpture with mark making. Yeah, that's the sort of...that's six types of thing. Okay, yeah.

Diana Taylor 44:57

And can they go even further? I'm not sure this is even finished.

John Walter 45:00

Well, yeah, exactly.

Diana Taylor 45:03

And yet, going back to the idea of the unfinished is that it's difficult. But yeah, there's got to be something ruinous about it

John Walter 45:22

the unfinished and the al dente different I think. So I think the al dente is just leaving the thing underdone

Diana Taylor 45:30

Yeah. Okay.

John Walter 45:31

I wonder whether that's a question in relation to how you work because you are making them over a long period of time with pauses as a strategy. You know, do you have to sit just stop yourself from pushing them in? Or is it or are they not al dente? Sorry, is it really important that they get boiled in that way of like, knowing that you've exhausted the question?

Diana Taylor 46:07

Yeah. That's an interesting question.

John Walter 46:10

Because you know, this one for example, it's much more grid like

Diana Taylor 46:14
Yeah, yeah.

John Walter 46:15
has gone to another level than another. Yeah, the salad, minestrone one and this black line; this feels much more mental in a way

Diana Taylor 46:33
I don't think I even like this one at all. I don't know. I mean, I've put so many hours in it. Yeah. You can see this and I, I put it away for ages actually.

John Walter 46:58
Did you make these?

Diana Taylor 47:00
That's a tablecloth, that's a tea-towel that I bought in Portugal, one euro tea towel

John Walter 47:08
Bonkers...that you sewed into

Diana Taylor 47:10
I sewed into it yeah, so that's an embroidery that I just decided to use. And then I wanted to just to mess it up so I just started doing my own kind of embroidery into it. So there's always that sort of building up and breaking down of things; stitching un-stitching painting un-painting.

John Walter 47:37
This is the big question, isn't it? Like, how do you turn around one you don't like? Do you get rid of it? Or do you scan this whole thing and print it onto cotton and then work into that which is possible now within your vocabulary. Even if you had to cut it into sections to do it.

Diana Taylor 48:02
Well, one thing I started to do and then just kind of turn it over. I think the problem with this piece is it's just too all over. If I was to actually cut some of these bits

John Walter 48:24
Or that front got you to the back, yeah, that was a way of tricking yourself to make a back. Yeah. Which is a really strange drawing.

Diana Taylor 48:36
Yeah. But that's also very easy as the reverse of something does look good.

John Walter 48:39
Sure, Of course. So this is another question, which is we're talking about patterns, literally, as repeat patterns, but we're also talking on another level about patterns of behaviour. Yeah. So if you know that that's a pattern of behaviour that you wouldn't do because it would be too easy, how you tricking yourself out those options? You know, do you just deprive yourself or does chopping it up and using the back do something different than just using the whole of

the back?

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John Walter 49:47

al dente, it's between two zones Yeah, it's so if it's too cooked it's too easy to digest, if it's too raw is going to stick in a gut, yeah. But if it's like that, on the cusp, there's like an excitement. Or like you're having to work enough that it's worth it. Yeah. I think that's what that's what we're talking about isn't it.

Diana Taylor 50:10

Absolutely, I mean just thinking about painting, going back to painting, this is this painting was working perfectly well at one point and I find keep going with it and because of its awkwardness now and I feel it is quite awkward, that's way more exciting.

John Walter 50:36

Yes. And now that seems to be the big shift in your work is to let it be more awkward. Yeah. To let it be al dente. Yeah. You know, that big passage of fabric or shadow in the middle? Is that that is the protagonist in the painting. So yeah. Yeah. And so that so this is relevant. I think that is this idea of pentimenti, which you don't get in sewing or digital things, which is a thing that you use as a risk factor for yourself in testing whether the painting can survive or not. Yeah, because if the thing shows through, you've either got to use it to your advantage, or it's got to look great...Or it goes in the bin. Yeah, doesn't it? Yeah, that's a unique problem to painting.

Diana Taylor 51:36

Absolutely. Only painting can be layered in this way. And I think that's why it's really interesting to do that with painting. To push it to that point of letting things come through letting different layers come through. But pentimenti doesn't exactly mean that, because it does also, pentimenti is supposed to be... when you're trying to fix a mistake and somebody just moved a hand slightly because it was too big or something. This isn't trying to fix something was going wrong. I'm deliberately making the mistake

John Walter 52:25

deliberately making the mistake that's really on the Shonky cusp isn't it...deliberately making a mistake. Yeah.

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