

Studio Visit: Steven Charles- Paintings Mahariji

By BILL



Steven Charles has a show of new work up now at Stux Gallery in Chelsea. Although he was friendly meeting Steven for the first time was a little unsettling. It felt a little like I imagine spiritual seekers felt like when they met the Mahariji in the 1960s', like meeting some strange saint. I met him through Aaron Johnson who told me Steven was one of his favorite painters.

During the studio visit Steven and I talked about how he was working as a janitor, but just a couple of years ago he was selling paintings for six-figure sums. He was another victim of 2008, but he didn't seem bummed out. In fact, he was just going along, and to use another Maharajji idea, he seemed very present. His painting method involves creating something to react to: a painting could start by splashing paint on a surface or by gluing a kid's sock to a board. Click read more to see his work in progress.



See the sock?



This painting has intense texture.



He seemed to be in the world, but not precisely of this world. Very interesting dude, Steven Charles, he was born in the UK, grew up in Texas, and spent the last decade in NYC. He told me when he first got to NYC he did spoken word performances where he sprayed out verse about Burger King and Titties. He said it was to get it out of his system. Charles is a very open and interesting man.



This is a painting by his alter-ego, which he shows at a local coffee shop.