

Q+A:

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AI You were torn between two titles when naming this series of paintings: *The Thief* versus *Kria*. I liked the title *Kria* a lot, because it explains the experience so much: whatever you set out to do, however fun it may be, when or if it becomes too repetitive it loses its joy. It becomes like a school assignment – the definition of *Kria* in old Swedish. But how does *The Thief* fit into it?

AE *The Thief* is the image.

AI What did the image steal then?

AE The painting, of course!

AI Ha! I didn't think about it that way...

But back to the process of repetition and its connection to the title. We were discussing the repetitiveness of it all. You felt that most of the title suggestions had pessimistic connotations. But I feel that repetition, in its essence, always has negativity attached to it.

Here are some examples that broadly interpret the word: a copy is never an original, a do-over never succeeds on the first go, a clone is never quite human, being depressed and listening to one song over and over again, torture is reoccurring violence and suffering, nagging... well I guess that's just an everyday form of torture... and so on.

It is also implied in the idiom 'practice makes perfect' that repeating something *leads* to accomplishment, but 'you're not quite there yet'. I don't see this as something bad, but rather I feel that these connotations give more depth. In what ways would a repetition be positive?

AE We're encouraged to make deliberate choices all the time because the possibilities are endless. But the real societal challenge is to reject. That will be the way for the earth to survive. And it's not like we are happier because of all the options available to us...

AI Too many choices passivates...

AE Yeah, or you get burnt-out. But, back to your previous question: repetition has no artistic self-worth. For me it's a way to analyse my own work: tweak and tweak until it feels good – much like a concert pianist who must practice and practice and then analyse. It was also helpful when I suffered from a ruptured disc. Because of the pain, I needed to feel more secure in my work than usual.

AI I realise that my way of looking at repetition goes hand in hand with my (non-existent) attention span. Beginner's luck has always been my friend. Often I get worse at something the longer I keep at it. And I do see what you're saying where 'repetition is a means to an end', but don't you ever just want to wing it – especially when in pain?

AE That's a lot how I used to work before, but now I really want to understand more than anything else. It's quite hard to face an empty canvas every day, even without a ruptured disc, and invent something from scratch. So it's been very nice to have a sketch to stick to. It also narrows down the endless choices.

AI The paintings in the *Kria* series are all based on one sketch. Isn't that a way for repetition to have artistic self-worth?

AE I mean, it's a process that involves trying to understand instead of doing works for show. But when I started the series it was merely an assignment I gave myself. It wasn't for an exhibition at that point, it was just for me.

AI Did you feel that the paintings made later are more accomplished than those made earlier?

AE The later paintings approach painting from the opposite side. But are they better? I'm not sure.

AI How do you mean "from the opposite side"?

AE The paintings made earlier are more about an action. They become as remains of that act where the brushstrokes always move from side to side or up and down. The later paintings have a more analytical approach. In the sense that they align shapes, colors and values with each other. So for me, they move inside out, or outside in. But also I often get tired of never understanding how a painting feels. I want to do a job and not just rely on luck.

AI That's beautifully articulated: "how a painting feels". Don't paintings feel whatever you are feeling? Or is that too romantic and an esoteric way of viewing it?

AE Your way of looking at this would be fun to apply to, for instance, food experiences: that all food tastes how you want it to taste; or maybe music: that it feels like *we feel*. Sure, it's very romantic and naive to think we

would not be preordained when it comes to visual experiences. In this day and age, that would be considered the usual way of perceiving it, but I find that the truth is rather the opposite.

We decide very little about how to experience our world. We are guided so much by our genetic heritage and 200,000 years of human development and undoubtedly by a lot of other things we don't know today.

AI The Swedish saying "smaken är som baken" comes to mind. Roughly translated to 'taste is like a butt' with the obvious implication that it's 'divided'. But I understand your point. What you're saying goes against the zeitgeist, in the sense that we live in the age of the 'individual'; where personal taste and experience is so celebrated and the tastemaker is put on a pedestal. But the flipside is, of course, that the rest of us are just followers.

AE Painting has nothing to do with taste. It's very disappointing that the creator, instead of the work, is our focus. I suppose it has to do with commercial-

isation too. I mean who today is really capable of merely looking at a painting by Picasso? The name completely stands in the way of the experience.

There is also so little trust in painting today and that's very interesting.

AI Well, that goes for trust in art as whole too. When curating a show or writing a text, I often feel there is a forced academia/theoretical hold on talking about art or even viewing it. I've never felt comfortable with it.

AE I struggle with this trust myself. I definitely feel ready for painting that does not question the image, but rather is in line with it. As a matter of fact, I've always been really drawn to the image but I've avoided it. Now I have more faith and can indulge in my interest.

AI Should I interpret that there is a boundary between painting and image? If so, where does it go?

AE It goes in the material.