

Phaan Howng Today and the 20th Century Fauves

To what extent does Phaan Howng's use of pattern in her artworks resemble the art of the early 20th century Fauvists?

Visual Arts

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Introduction

Through the analysis of the artwork, installations and paintings of Phaang Howng, the development of pattern becomes an apparent signature. The stylistic motifs, particularly, in Howng's patterns bear intriguing similarities with the art of the Fauvists of the twentieth century. Therefore this exploration will examine **to what extent does Phaang Howng's use of pattern in her artworks resemble the art of the early 20th century Fauvists?** Pronounced similarities upon viewing the Fauves' art and Howng's artworks, both installations and paintings, led me to consider commonalities. To investigate, certain elements of art will be addressed. For instance, Howng's dynamic use of color coupled with her liberal treatment of space and perspective allude to those of the Fauves. Even her brushwork is reminiscent of the Fauves' melodrama. Specifically the patterns, created as a result, that Howng includes in her pieces are integral to the artwork and share a resemblance to the work of the Fauves. While Howng's patterns throughout her artworks bear many stylistic similarities to the paintings of the Fauves, the process of her development of said patterns varies distinctly from what we know of the Fauves, indicating a more nuanced difference among the two.

Of course, when comparing with and examining the Fauves, one also must address how, exactly, Howng's use of art and design elements and art overall embodies the nature of a 'wild beast' and what implications this attribution bears. This investigation includes not only the stylistic attributes for which these two are similar but also their own relationships to the art they create and that art's reception at the time of development, based upon critical examinations of artworks as well as formal and stylistic analyses of works. The comparative exploration of these two subjects, a past movement and group to a modern individual artist, provides a more introspective analysis of each as individuals and understanding of art in society as a whole. Their

comparison demonstrates insight into the analysis and reception of art relative to the society by which it is received.

Howng's Development and Use of Pattern



Figure 1. Phaen Howng, *You're In Good Hands (desk detail)*, 2019, Installation.

For patterns to be created, repetition, in this case in the form of color and shape, must take place. Phaen Howng utilizes color and its repetition for pattern but also with personal perspective. She explains that she has in mind a reason for why she chooses each of her colors and color palettes.¹ For example, in her 2019 installation, *You're In Good Hands* (Fig. 1), every surface is plastered with lines of neon color. These surfaces include a reception desk, and even the decorative plants sculptures.

Good Hands is an energetically colored installation piece. Luminous acrylic and gouache is painted on the walls and objects. Reused boards from another installation of Howng's, *The Succession of Nature* are present.² "E.N.D.O., Eternal Navigators of Doom Organization," is engraved onto the receptionist desk. For Howng, the significance of the colors chosen, hot pink to lime green, represent South Florida and, for her

¹ Phaen Howng, *Researching Your Work* (2020).

² Phaen Howng, *Installations: You're in Good Hands*.

personally, her time living there during the 2008 Housing Crisis.³ The use of neon, reminiscent of southern Florida, transport viewers into an alternate reality; the floor and ceiling are one, and color diminishes space. The colors within each pattern is critical to Howng's pieces. The impassioned meaning of Howng's color scheme separates her from the Fauves, as their colors proved shocking. However, the Fauves' use of color, and other motifs were disjointed and animated,⁴ rather than consistently symbolic. Color is a significantly personal aspect in comparison to the Fauves, though color is a dominant feature of boths' pieces. Therefore, the Fauves' relationship with and overall use of color differed, despite technical visual similarities.

Furthermore, one cannot discuss Howng's artistic style without considering her choice of creating installation pieces, which prominently include patterning. It would be remiss to claim that there is not an inherent meaning behind her variety in artistic medium. Notably, pattern is key to her installations and has an intense effect on viewers. Howng's workspace, along with her personal interests and environmental perspectives guide her choice of painting on paper or within installations.⁵ Howng creates installation pieces that her paintings often complement and are included in on the walls of, such as with *You're in Good Hands* (Fig. 1). She develops exhibitions that physically surround viewers. Her use of pattern completely dominates a viewer's perspective. Howng's installations are not only all-encompassing but also embody the word "camouflage."⁶ Phaan Howng's installation *If It Bleeds We Can Kill It* (Fig. 2) from 2016 applies. This installation is a fully patterned piece. Brilliant, vivid colors spiral about each other creating a dizzying motif of whirls. The name contains a direct allusion to a line said by the ever-

³ Howng, *Researching Your Work*.

⁴ Jean Leymarie, *Fauvism: Biographical and Critical Study* (1959), 15.

⁵ Phaan Howng, *Researching Your Work*.

⁶ *Ibid.*



Figure 2. Phaen Howng, *BIOLOGICAL CONTROLS: If It Bleeds We Can Kill It (seating detail)*, 2016, Installation.

hero, Arnold Schwarzenegger, in 1987's sci-fi action film "Predator" referring to alien 'predators'.⁷ According to reviewer Bret McCabe, Howng questions the nature of a predator to the point

where humans are the hunted and technology is the predator.⁸ By reversing the positions of what one might expect and establishing how humans are, in fact prey, Howng invites viewers to think more deeply regarding what color can do for us. This conclusion speaks specifically to Howng's intentions for her patterns and their intentionality.

Comparative Analysis

Color

Indeed one can't discuss the Fauves without an examination of color. Aspects of Howng's patterns bear a resemblance to the Fauves' use of pattern with color. The Fauves experimented with color in the sense that they seemingly pushed the boundaries of where and how color exists in the world within their paintings. Simply because something exists as one color, did not mean that color would be used in a Fauve interpretation. Their use of color tended toward the use of

⁷ Bret McCabe, *Review of On separating hunter from prey in Phaen Howng's wryly subversive installation wonders* (2016).

⁸ Ibid.



Figure 3. André Derain, *The Turning Road, L'Estaque*, 1906, Oil on canvas, 129.5 × 194.9 cm, The Audrey Jones Beck Building.

color schemes, repeating colors throughout a painting. In *The Turning Road* by André Derain (Fig. 3), the scenic French landscape is practically an examination of primary colors. The bold colors are applied liberally in the creation of the titled *Turning Road*, to the extent that all the canvas space is occupied by one of the bright hues. The

shadows are shades of red and orange, and trees transition between burnt oranges and royal blues. The Fauves “avoided all the conventional chromatic daubing of predetermined shapes.”⁹

This progression of color is obviously interpretive, embodying the Fauve mindset centered on color. By veering from convention, Derain elects to create a harmony of, although nonrealistic, coordinating colors. Fauves chose to paint subjects

containing an explosion of color, exaggerating life and, to an extent, art. Similarly, Howng’s *Catastrophe Will Befall Us* (Fig. 4), contains a number of warm tones depicting, on a darker note, ‘catastrophe.’

Howng’s creation of a light color motif detracts from the underlying devastating message of evil ravaging

the trees. It also demonstrates a more patterned approach to a landscape, one that mimics that of Derain’s technique in *The Turning Road*, in fact. Both *Turning Road* and *Catastrophe* display a



Figure 4. Phaen Howng, *Catastrophe Will Befall Us*, 2015, Acrylic, acrylic gouache, spray paint on Fabriano Artistic Paper, 72 × 120 in.

⁹ Jean Louis Ferrier, *The Fauves: the Reign of Colour* (1995), 23.

choice of using colors to breach abstraction while forming pattern, largely a result of a warm-toned color scheme.

Perspective

Then again, some of Howng's patterns culminate in a popular aspect of Fauve works, which is reduction of perspective. Both Phaen Howng and the Fauvists' pieces show a manipulated perspective. In fact, one evident measure in the change of perspective is the seeming elimination the dimension of depth within a painting, transforming a piece from three-dimensional to two-dimensional.

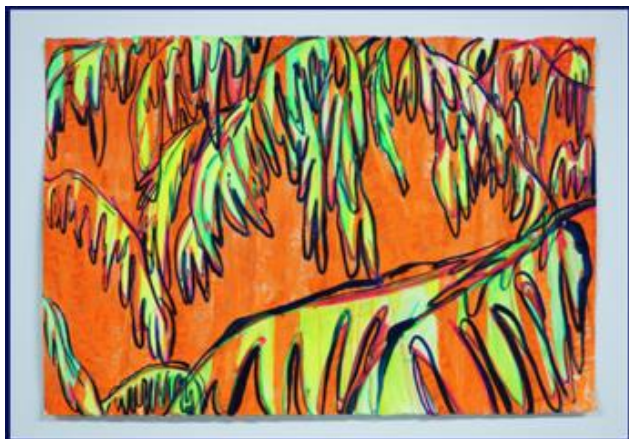


Figure 5. Phaen Howng, *Palm-flage*, 2016, Acrylic and gouache on paper, 14 × 20 in.

Howng employs pattern using textures and figures, in addition to colors, throughout her works which diminishes the illusion of distance in a two-dimensional space. For example, in the painting, *Palm-flage* (Fig. 5), a series of palms hang against a tangerine orange background. Numerous

palms lay over one another, overlapping abstractly, creating a pattern-like effect. They indicate a distance between palms yet shading and brush strokes suggest that each palm is the same distance from the foreground. Minimization of depth is accomplished as a result.

Likewise, in *The Open Window, Collioure* by popular Fauve Henri Matisse (Fig. 6), perspective is altered so that the window appears two-dimensional as the background port seems as close to viewers as the window. According to Ferrier’s analysis of the Fauves, with Matisse in particular, “light and space”¹⁰ play

a role in engineering the perception of viewers. *Open*

Window is a one-point perspective

but “the sailboats at the marina

seem to enter the room.”¹¹ The

reduction in perspective is a

structural concept naturally

followed by Fauves. By

eliminating the separation of

background and challenging the

concept of space using the same

colors in the foreground as the

background, dimension is visually

reduced. Hence, similar outcomes



Figure 6. Henri Matisse, *The Open Window, Collioure*, 1905, Oil on canvas, 55.3 × 46 cm, National Gallery of Art.

to the Fauves’ treatment of perspective occur as a result of Howng’s patterns.

¹⁰ Jean Louis Ferrier, *The Fauves: the Reign of Colour*, 38.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

Moreover, another aspect of the Fauves, and one of the key factors in the pattern-like nature of many Fauve paintings, is the distortion of shape and form, which manipulates space into a single texture. The distorted and at times unrealistic and simplified nature of Fauve art can be attributed to the experimental use of space and interpretation of shape. In *Houses at Chatou* (Fig. 7), “[Vlaminck] painted the world from a moving vantage point [with] fluid patterns of distortion.”¹² *Houses at Chatou* contains houses in the background as trees and a landscape sprawl across the foreground. The curvature of the trees and landscape,



Figure 7. Maurice de Vlaminck, *Houses at Chatou*, 1906, Oil on canvas, 81.3 × 101.6 cm, Art Institute Chicago.



Figure 8. Phaen Howng, *What? Earth*. 2014, Acryl gouache and acrylic on paper, 98 × 55 in.

as well as the color, completely contort

the scene; the colored, warped landscape appears pattern-like, making a clear connection to Howng’s work.

In a similar fashion, in Howng’s *What? Earth* (Fig. 8) from 2014, the landscape encompasses a distorted sky. This sky portrayed in paint presents similarly to melted candle wax. The intentions for the sky can be interpreted as a stylistic perspective but knowledge of Howng’s objectives with patterns indicates otherwise. Her references to patterns as camouflage imply the motif of disguise, concealment, and

mystery. Additionally, Howng’s use of pattern to create distortion could also indicate disaster. In fact, as Howng has referenced, the postapocalypse¹³ can be seen as the inspiration for the pattern

¹² Jean Louis Ferrier, *The Fauves: the Reign of Colour*, 100.

¹³ Michael Saleman, *Phaen Howng and the Postapocalyptic Landscape* (2018), 39.

of disfiguration in her paintings. The differentiation of distortion provides distinction in terms of drawing meaning from Howng and the Fauves. In comparing *What? Earth.* to *Houses at Chatou*, Howng's warping of subjects seems to specifically reference the diminishing of the scenery; the contortion is a purposeful angle on how the Earth can exist. On the other hand, *Houses at Chatou*'s misshapes can be attributed to an artistic challenge and showing of movement in art.

Dramatic Brushstrokes



Figure 9. André Derain, *Charring Cross Bridge, London*, 1906, Oil on canvas, 80.3 × 100.3 cm, National Gallery of Art, Washington.

Adding to Howng's resume of techniques, which emulate the patterns of the Fauves, she employs wide, defined brushstrokes, establishing a pattern in texture.

This texture can be seen in André Derain's 1906 *Charring Cross Bridge, London* (Fig. 9). The Fauvist painting depicts, as the title suggests, the bridge in

London, but what stands out is how light's reflection on

the river is painted. Thick strokes of royal blue jump out against the dark boat's reflection against a blood-orange water. These "wider brushstrokes...and colored impasto"¹⁴ are key to the Fauve aesthetic, inciting a pattern visually and technically among Fauvists. This examination and experimentation of not only color but also texture is a theme that holds true to the Fauve nature of individualism and each artist's expression of art.¹⁵ Additionally the pattern as a result of the

¹⁴ Jean Louis Ferrier, *The Fauves: the Reign of Colour*, 67.

¹⁵ Jean-Paul Crespelle, *The Fauves* (1962), 29.

multiple imitations of the brushstroke in various colors bears similarities to Howng's pattern. Phaen Howng's work compares: her brushwork is bold and extreme. In 2014's *Megatopia//MegaIncineration* (Fig. 10), broad brushstrokes not only amplify forms of trees but also the heat of incineration. Rather than depict a lifelike charred environment, the destruction is bold, brightly colored pink and orange right for the viewers to notice. There's no doubt the thick markings call out for attention. This stylistic choice is not simply a nod towards abstraction or a call to view but a challenge of the limitations of true representation.



Figure 10. Phaen Howng, *Megatopia//MegaIncineration*, 2014, Acrylic and acryl gouache on paper, 111 × 55 in.

Fauvism as a Movement and Howng

Another constituent of analysis of the Fauves is their essence as a group and addressing how this heightens the analysis of their art. There is some dispute as to the exact context and reasoning for which critic Louis Vauxcelles unintentionally coined the name *les fauves*.¹⁶ One accepted narrative was that he commented on a statue in the same exhibition as the artwork that would eventually be “fauve”. Apparently, Vauxcelles observed a statue at the 1905 Salon d’Autume and later wrote that the statue was “a Donatello among wild beasts,” *les fauves* in French, contrasting it with the fierier and more colorful, “fauve” works.¹⁷ Vauxcelles’s impressions and nickname of the “Fauves”, from this first exposition, the Salon d’Autume, was embraced in following reviews. While actual criticism varied, the name for ‘wild beast’ stuck.

¹⁶ Jean-Paul Crespelle, *The Fauves*, 12.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

Said artists, including Henri Matisse, André Derain, and Maurice de Vlaminck, did not refer to themselves as Fauves, however.¹⁸ Therefore, Fauvists were referred to by outside viewers as “fauve.” This poses the question as to what is the true nature of a “wild beast” in the world of art. As they were extrinsically named and referred to as Fauve, these artists were seen by others as wild beasts because of their color and style. Therefore, the artists we consider Fauvists today did not prescribe to a certain manifesto, making more difficult the question of comparison. The assignment of the name may be written off as a joke or simple nickname, but the term “wild beast” conjures visions of extreme, harsh, and unorthodox art of for which *les fauves* became known and eventually renowned.

Moreover, considering the Fauves as a group and Howng as an individual, the group versus individual mindsets are apparent. This differentiation is vital to the understanding of both the Fauves and Howng individually but also their relationship. It distinguishes their art in terms of purpose and intention. The reason for which the Fauves collectively began to paint as they did differed greatly from Howng’s experience. With the guidance of Gustave Moreau at École des Beaux-Arts, the Fauves were exploratory in the field of painting. Moreau’s affinity for each artist separately and to not imprint academic standards but instead flourish each student’s personal artistic urges and technique encouraged the notion of freedom from traditional standards.¹⁹ Matisse, in particular, was social as a human and artist; through traveling from London to the Mediterranean and eventually joining l’Académie Carrière where he became colleagues with other future Fauves.²⁰ The fortuitous nature and organization of the Fauves as a group implies not only a varying range of perspectives and opinions but also artistic progressions. Howng, an

¹⁸ Russell T Clement, *Les Fauves: a Sourcebook* (1994), xii.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, xiv.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, xiv-xv.

individual not identifying with a specific movement, evolved her early love of art as a child²¹ into a channel for transforming her artistic skill into commercial and personal success. She shares her mind and experiences with the world. This context explains how one can extract personal motivations behind Phaan Howng's works but must view the exploratory art of the Fauves as a spectrum.

Garnered Reactions

In juxtaposing Howng's patterns with Fauvist pieces, the differing receptions at their respective moments in time contextualize the artworks. The Fauves broke away from not only a realistic or reality-imitating style of art but also expectation from critics of the time period, that being the westernized school of thought, early-1900's Europe. Additionally, they departed from critics' interpretation of what art should be, using color and a wildly different technique than the norm. Howng's art, as that of an



Figure 11. Henri Matisse, *La Japonaise: Woman beside the Water*, 1905. Oil and pencil on canvas, 35.2 × 28.2 cm, Museum of Modern Art.

individual, is shocking in medium, scale, and style, largely in part by patterns. The reaction to the Fauves is exemplified by that for Henri Matisse's *La Japonaise* (Fig. 11), exhibited at the Salon d'Autume.²² It shows a portrait of a woman that is overcome by thick strokes of colors, an incredible number of tones. The extremely generous range of colors was not out of the ordinary

²¹ Ibid., xxx.

²² Jean-Paul Crespelle, *The Fauves*, 19.

for Matisse. Unrealistic selections of color, such as yellow for a neck and green for a face, departed from what Crespelle refers to as the “conventional artistic tastes of the public,”²³ for the time. The wide brushstrokes and varying yet tonally coordinating set of colors, from orange to green, indicate a shift from the traditional sense of form and suggest a realistic yet more simplified and playful approach to portraiture. These choices notably surprised the public as a result of style, breaking away from expectation in a childlike, textured sense.

In the same vein, Howng’s pattern, and art as a whole, is impactful not only visually but mentally. In the current landscape her art shocks in an insightful way due to the explicit message in her artworks. For an artist, it’s not shocking that art tends to facilitate more than just one aim; the Fauves individually sought to create art that was new and different, exciting to them, yet they could also likely predict the reaction that they would receive would shock the world of art.

Howng’s work is visually stimulating, if not sensational, but the patterns are also alarming.

Phaan Howng’s work operates as an alert of sorts to the dangers of the end of life as we know it

because of human influence

on earth. In reference to *If It*

Bleeds We Can Kill It (Fig.

12) specifically, McCabe

states that Howng’s painted

patterns are phantasmic and

transport viewers,

figuratively, into a different

world, and, literally,



Figure 12. Phaan Howng, *If It Bleeds We Can Kill It* (room detail), 2016, Installation.

²³ Jean-Paul Crespelle, *The Fauves*, 15.

changes viewers perspective.²⁴ This description actively embodies Howng's patterned work and its influence on viewers.

Unlike the impressions Matisse and the Fauves made in the early twentieth century, Howng creates a cautionary effect with her *Succession of Nature* (Fig. 13). According to Howng, *Succession* refers to "objects related to the despoliation of the environment."²⁵ This installation room is purposefully placed, spanning the entire room, as Howng's patterns plaster the walls and floor, as with *If It Bleeds* and *You're in Good Hands*. Another element is a skeleton of structure for protection. The use of pattern and color is a clear choice by Howng; the orange, green, and



Figure 13. Phaen Howng, *The Succession of Nature (structure detail)*, 2018, Installation.

purple swirls stretch beyond the second dimension, from the walls to the ground, physically enclosing the viewers in the piece. This camouflage patterned view of life on earth, where life as we know it is untamed and based upon fundamental survival, surely strikes viewers upon sight.

Moreover, Howng creates a cultural moment by resonating with viewers of her art. By immersing them in her own space, she projects a vision to each viewer and connects to their emotions. This dual immersion heightens the effect of her art. This loosely mimics the experience of witnessing an exhibition of the Fauves, a moment of shock, confusion, then lasting fascination.

²⁴ Bret McCabe, *Review of On separating hunter from prey in Phaen Howng's wryly subversive installation wonder*.

²⁵ Michael Saleman, *Phaen Howng and the Postapocalyptic Landscape*, 40.

Place in Art

Thus, in the same way one analyzes others' perception of artwork, the artist's relation to their work and art at the



Figure 14. Phaen Howng, *Destruction for Reconstruction I*, 2014, Acrylic and acryl gouache on paper, 72 × 105 in.

time is relevant. As briefly mentioned, Howng's views on environmentalism and advocacy fuel her work. Her titles imply a fundamentally different, more consciously-minded, mentality than those of the Fauves. She describes her own art as both her career and as a vehicle to promote activism for our climate and environments.²⁶ In another instance from 2014, Howng's *Destruction for Reconstruction I* (Fig. 14), there is something to be said for the pieces of wood that shoot through the air in a vibrantly colored, literal, pattern of explosion. There is an eruption of orange and yellow pattern against which the wood is set. The jagged lines of the broken wood are highly suggestive of pain and sharpness, even without the title in mind. In tandem with the title viewers can sense Howng's idea of whether destroying the environment for our own reasons is worth the costs. The beauty of the natural yellow-orange landscape pattern is destroyed by the

²⁶ Phaen Howng, *Researching Your Work*.

sharp wood piece blown up by humans. Hence, the destruction of trees for the so-called benefit of “reconstruction.” This seemingly emulates the astonishing effect of a “wild beast” on not only the art scene but each viewer as well. Equally obvious as the motif of pattern is Howng’s message to viewers.

Again, the clear sense of pattern in Howng’s work is a sort of camouflage based on what she describes as color, or colors, creating a disguise. Howng’s undeniably bright, fluorescent scenes highlight the cautionary message that would “protect... from future colonizers in a post-human world.”²⁷ Admittedly, this varies greatly from the Fauves’ creation of art, which evolved in a diverse manner as they were a mixed group²⁸ with no set principles as an art movement. Whereas Howng’s patterns are camouflage, Fauve art tended toward personal interpretations with a set of vibrant colors and visible brushwork contributing to a series of marks that often varied from artist to artist.

As a result of certain similarities among the works of Phaan Howng and the twentieth century Fauves, many analyses can be made. Both Howng and the Fauvists push certain limits in their art worlds, making their own declarations in each of their respective times. While the Fauvists sought to change the manner in which they created to art (and naturally shock the public), each using their individual art techniques, Howng uses art to make the world notice environmental destruction, and possible consequences. These boundary-pushing instincts apply to not only the Fauves unique painting methodology and interpretation of the world but also Howng’s intentional art. When comparing Howng’s patterns, one must consider how her progression is a natural yet purposeful; each pattern intends to disguise, the colors indicative of a

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Jean-Paul Crespelle, *The Fauves*, 29.

place and experience. Her patterns arise out of purpose, the Fauves art arises from following instinct.

Value of Comparison

On one hand the comparison between Howng and the Fauves may seem superficial in nature, but the exploration has not only furthered my understanding of both Howng as an artist in the current day and the Fauves in a time and place where “art” meant something different. Howng recalls one fascinating aspect of many artists, not limited to her or the Fauves, which is that “the expression is created from... challenging the norm”.²⁹ Fauvism was not inherently revolutionary, but the artists’ had a desire to create art that has not been done or predicted. This attitude is what embodies the Fauve spirit that continues today. Even more than the Fauves’ “forceful expression”³⁰ that can be seen in motifs such as in Howng’s work, the intentionality of the Fauves continues into the twentieth century as well. These visual themes and convictions can be seen in artists such as Howng even as she intends for her art to speak to the public a different message. For the Fauves, memorability and intentions consisted of challenging the art world by using color and abstraction in a way that was completely unexpected and frankly brash. Howng’s work largely consists of installation pieces, which, because of their caging, interactive nature are common in the sector of art that addresses “political and social issues”³¹ directly, and she uses this to communicate her points. These perspectives are key to understanding and appreciating art as well as gaining insight into art in context with the time and place of its creation.

²⁹ Phaang Howng, *Researching Your Work*.

³⁰ Jean Louis Ferrier, *The Fauves: the Reign of Colour*, 203.

³¹ Michael Salzman, *Phaang Howng and the Postapocalyptic Landscape*, 34.

Conclusion

In total, by comparison of Phaen Howng and her use of pattern to the group of early twentieth century Fauvists' art, it can be stated that while yes, the patterns of Howng's work tend to share qualities with the artwork of the Fauves, the distinctions between Howng as an artist and her place in the artistic landscape contrasts more subtly with those of the Fauves. While the Fauves broke away from a traditional school of thought in the art world, by attempting new art styles and approaches, Phaen Howng uses her art as an avenue to get people to pay attention to the planet which we inhabit. These inherent elements of their art differentiate the two as distinct artists and in style. In consideration of how Howng's patterns embody the spirit a "wild beast," the answer is subjective. While the Fauves shocked the art world, they were a relatively short-lived art movement in its prime.³² But perhaps that is the nature of a wild beast, they come as a shock and fade quickly. Howng's work, conversely, and especially the message it states, will be relevant until the looming postapocalypse.³³ But, in a fast-changing world, how can the warnings Howng presents be communicated to all? In a fast-changing world where the Fauves were a startling group of avant-garde painters one minute and diverging individual artists the next, its challenging to identify the true, lasting *wild beast* of the art world.

³² Jean-Paul Crespelle, *The Fauves*, 297.

³³ Michael Saleman, *Phaen Howng and the Postapocalyptic Landscape*, 37.

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List of Illustrations

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- Figure 7: Maurice de Vlaminck, *Houses at Chatou*, 1906. De Vlaminck, Maurice. "Houses at Chatou." *Art Institute of Chicago*, 1905, Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois, www.artic.edu/artworks/74699/houses-at-chatou.
- Figure 8: Phaen Howng, *What? Earth*. 2014. Howng, Phaen. "What? Earth." *Phaen Howng*, 2014, <https://www.phaan.com/paintings/1/16>.
- Figure 9: Andre Derain, *Charring Cross Bridge, London*, 1906. Derain, André. "Charing Cross Bridge, London." *WikiArt: Visual Art Encyclopedia*, 2011, www.wikiart.org/en/andre-derain/charing-cross-bridge-1906.
- Figure 10: Phaen Howng, *Megatopia//MegaIncineration*, 2014. Howng, Phaen. "Megatopia//MegaIncineration." *Phaen Howng*, 2014, <https://www.phaan.com/paintings/1/17>.
- Figure 11: Henri Matisse, *La Japonaise: Woman beside the Water*, 1905. Matisse, Henri. "La Japonaise: Woman beside the Water." *Museum of Modern Art*, 1905, www.moma.org/collection/works/80294.
- Figure 12: Phaen Howng *If It Bleeds We Can Kill It (room detail)*, 2016. Howng, Phaen. "If It Bleeds We Can Kill It (room detail)." *Phaen Howng*, 2016, <https://www.phaan.com/biological-controls-if-it-bleeds-we-can-kill-it/1>.

Figure 13: Phaen Howng, *The Succession of Nature (structure detail)*, 2018. Howng, Phaen. “The Succession of Nature (structure detail).” *Phaen Howng*, 2018, <https://www.phaan.com/phaan-howng-the-succession-of-nature/1>.

Figure 14: Phaen Howng, *Destruction for Reconstruction I*, 2014. Howng, Phaen. “Destruction for Reconstruction I.” *Phaen Howng*, 2014, www.phaan.com/paintings/1/14.

Appendix

- How would you describe your artwork stylistically?
- The early 20th century Fauves were known for their use of vibrant colors; how do you think your work compares?
- How would you describe your use of pattern and what purpose does it serve?

Thank you.

Thank you so much for your email.

Here are the answers to your questions:

- How would you describe your artwork stylistically?
 - **Idk, I guess abstract yet representational landscape painting? Never really thought about it...I just let everyone else tell me what it is 😊**
- The early 20th century Fauves were known for their use of vibrant colors; how do you think your work compares?
 - **I guess about the same, but typically the colors I choose have very specific intentions than just being about color like the Fauvists. So for instance You're In Good Hands, the orange, aqua blue, pink palate is because I wanted it to be very South Florida to represent my relationship with being from that region and about my experience with the 2008 Housing Crisis there. Bright colors for me also represent danger and awareness.**
- How would you describe your use of pattern and what purpose does it serve?
 - **Pattern came out of my research with camouflage and thinking how the Earth would use modern day warfare tactics to protect itself from future colonizers in a post-human world. It can also be considered my way of mark making with painting and my way of representing the environment in the post-apocalypse.**
 - **I attached some interviews/essays that may help describe provide better context about my work as well.**
 - <https://theamericanscholar.org/phaan-howng/#.XoYZb9NKhUM>



The American Scholar: Phaen Howng - Noelani Kirschner - The American Scholar, the magazine of the Phi Beta Kappa Society

Baltimore artist Phaen Howng, a graduate of the Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA), focuses on site-specific installation works. Here, she discusses the impetus for creating Niagara and the legacy of environmentalism in landscape painting.

theamericanscholar.org

Stay healthy!
Sincerely,

Phaan

Hello again!

Thank you so much for your response! Your comments and the attachments have been very helpful interesting to read.

If you don't mind, some follow up questions I have are:

- What inspires your choices of medium (installation pieces, paintings, etc)?
- What do you consider your goals to be as an artist? Is it more about activism or personal expression?

Stay safe!

Thank you,

Hi,

The space where I will be exhibiting and/or what I am interested and/or researching at the time informs what materials to use. I am conscientious of using materials that will minimize my carbon footprint the best way possible.

As for goals, I want to make art the only thing I do and something I can make my living off of but, more ambitiously I want more museum shows and achieving major prizes like a Guggenheim, a Hugo Boss, etc, and be in the Venice Biennale and/or a Documenta (although those may never happen again due to the pandemic). My artwork is a personal vision to help facilitate more activism towards stopping climate change and other environmental issues.

Sorry that this statement is the art professor coming out of me, but I would advise being more specific when using the term "expression" when talking about art making processes. It's become too cliché and has made non-artists and non-art appreciators think that all artists are just painters who paint about their feelings or some privileged life— although yes that is for some—but for many artists the expression is created from being political, challenging the norm, challenging perceptions and perspectives and more, just like what the Fauves did until the next avant garde movement challenged them all the way until contemporary art.

Thanks and please stay safe as well.

Xoxo
Phaan