

# SAM LEE | GALLERY

*Candy Magazine*  
2009



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Intro - Beautifully arranged compositions harbour serious and lonely undertones. Curious subject matter like cast-aside disheveled bed sheets, porches, bathed in slow sunsets, of those big houses you notice only fleetingly whilst driving by, evoke the tales of a continent.

There is no soundtrack. It's silent most of the time. There is loss and bright colours. Behind doors there's loud music, shouting, throwing, bellows. His work certainly stirs an emotional response.

Welcome to the world of American born artist Chris Doyle. Chris resides in Brooklyn, New York, studied in Harvard and has exhibited extensively all over. His work is striking and powerful; both surreal and familiar. Watercolours aren't supposed to be this contemporary, this beautiful. They wash over like waves, fresh and charged.

Go to [www.chrisdoylestudio.com](http://www.chrisdoylestudio.com).

## Question One

When did you start painting and has the journey been worth the trip? What have you learned about yourself?

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## Answer One

I have been painting since I was a little boy. It seems like the thing that I always come back to, however long I've been away. All of the other work that I make has an impact on what I paint and making paintings changes the way I see the world.

As I make more projects in the public realm, I have found that I don't return to the solitude of painting, I am out of balance.

I have made video and digital projects in collaboration with a lot of people but when I paint, I'm pretty much alone. Among the things that I have learned about myself, I suppose one of the big ones is that I need both in my life, that I tend to swing like a pendulum between working alone and working in groups.



## Question Two

Do you see all the situations you encounter, the important scenes that stop you – do you see them through your painter's eyes?

## Answer Two

I guess I choose to paint things that I see as eloquent, moments that when isolated in time, have an expressive power.

But to answer your question, I would say that I guess I do see the world in a particular way.

Sometimes I see things that I feel a real affinity for and paint them, but occasionally I think of painting as a chance to revise the world. I see something that troubles me and then I paint it the way I would like it to be.

## Question Three

Can you tell us about the Untitled House series? What was the inspiration behind it and why do you afford the houses so much space in each space?

## Answer Three

So much of my work, whatever the scale, begins with the notion of "animus", the idea of bringing the inanimate to life, or imbuing things and places with soul.

I grew up moving around from house to house, year after year, in places that were not always

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very charming. I was always the new kid in school and as a result, I spent a good deal of the time contending with isolation and watching from the edge of things.

The Untitled House series is a lifelong project where architecture is a surrogate. The houses are a kind of portrait. More than anything, the space around them is my way of recreating a sense of vulnerability. I started the project from memory as a way of thinking about those feelings of isolation and outsider-ness but soon moved beyond that. The challenge has always been to take those funny, sad, or banal little houses and find humanity in them.

## Question Four

When did you decide to turn these into animations? Will you possibly ever work on a feature film?

## Answer Four

Animation seems a logical way to breathe life into the images I was making. In fact, the first ones I made were not based on the drawings but were more sculptural.

Some years ago, I had a residency for a few weeks at the McDowell Colony in New Hampshire with a fantastic studio, perfect for making sculpture. Inspired by the space, I put aside the watercolors and I decided to have a ton of bricks delivered from a local yard. I set up a camera and started moving the bricks around. I ended up making thousands and thousands of frames, and editing them into a series of stop-action animations.

I guess I have always thought of the animations as time-based sculpture, even when they come from drawings. They loop and they don't really have a beginning or end. They rarely have a narrative arc, because I am not thinking so much about telling a story in the way you do when you make a film. I usually think of them more as a state of mind than as a story.

## Question Five

In the series, "Do you like plain pleasures?" is this about the normal everyday occurrences being very important or do you think we miss them and not care?

## Answer Five

Well, I don't know about everybody else but I'm always a little afraid that I'll miss them. One of the big reasons that I choose to paint something is to spend time with it, so that I can get to know a subject in a closer, deeper, and more attentive way.

I labor over it and that becomes a very sensual and loving act. I get pretty involved in making work and sometimes feel like I am not paying enough attention to everyday things. Plain Pleasures was about my family. In a way, it was about making sure that I am looking closely at our lives. After they were finished, I realized that those paintings make the case that life and art making are not so separate for me.

The visual experience of everyday life gets mixed up with all the paintings, drawings, and other stuff that I have looked at and it all ends up being part of the same soup of seeing.

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