

1. JP: What is your medium? What made you decide to work primarily in this area, what do you like about it?

TZ: Photography - I became very absorbed by it in high school, and at first it was the process that attracted me. I loved printing in the darkroom, and I would make different setups in my backyard with things from my house and garage. There was this mix between direct representation and scenario which was so gratifying, and I became fairly dedicated to exploring this.

2. What influences and inspires you?

Of course it is partly the conglomerative effect of everything that I absorb such as books, films, etc. It is above all my interactions with people who spur me to re-analyze myself which has the most impact.

3. What made you decide to be an artist? How did you make the decision to make this your career instead of something more reliable?

At a golden wedding anniversary when I was about 12, my uncle looked at me squarely and told me that he spent his whole life at his office job. Despite the financial security it had provided him, he had hated every minute of it. His regret was so apparent, and he insisted that I did not make the same mistake. Shortly thereafter he passed away, and it was awful to think that he had not even enjoyed a retirement. Because of this I was not deterred from pursuing my real interests.

4. What is the mental process you go through when you create your artwork (i.e. do you need music, total silence, etc.)?

If I have a shoot that is fairly predetermined, it can be more of a mechanistic process where I establish all of my settings and repeat the actions. Usually here I am trying to make sure that everything is precise and I'm not reflecting until afterwards. If I have a less specific vision of the final result, I am able to dissect the concept further and experiment with position and lighting.

5. What goes through your mind while you are working on a piece?

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6. What is the physical process you go through to create your artwork (i.e. how do you do it)?

It can vary greatly depending on location, but when I have everything needed to begin shooting, there is a lot of running between the camera and wherever I need to be in the shot. I try to close the margin of placement error as much as I can by using various markers to indicate an accurate position. In Self-Portrait With Ectoplasm, for example, I made deep depressions in the ground with my knees so that I knew where to kneel each time. The physical process is my largest obstacle; I am surely no Chris Burden but I have had to invite illness for a successful shot on several occasions.

7. How long does it take you to create a piece?

Usually the idea comes months before I am ready to begin the shot. It is most frequent that I have the location first, and then I find, buy, or make the other elements of the piece. I usually spend about 4 hours on the first shoot, but if I am not easily able to reshoot I can spend up to 7 or 8. At times I have spent a week reshooting only to realize it was necessary to scrap the shot. Other times I have found a location, shot it the next day, and had a good result.

8. What are your favorite colors, if any, to work with and why?

It seems that many of my ideas naturally translate into cool colors, but my last 3 or 4 pieces have been warm.

9. Who are your favorite artists, who do you look up to?

At the moment I am watching a brilliant film series called The Decalogue by K. Kieskowski. Bruce Nauman, Joseph Cornell, and Nathan Oliveira are a few favorites. Since I have seen Bruce Conner's "Angel Arms" it has refused to leave my mind.

10. Who are your favorite musicians?

This is always changing!

11. What is your studio like, and why is it located where it is (i.e. why would you have a studio in New York rather than Boston)?

My studio is very black, and it is here with me in Pennsylvania at the time being. I live in a really great area for making work outside when the weather allows. Living in New York makes it difficult to seamlessly continue this work, but I still plan to keep most of my images visually outside of the urban landscape.

12. What draws you to North Adams?

In addition to the gallery I can now say that Brewhaha will keep me coming back.