

SHANE CAMPBELL GALLERY

Paddle8 Editorial
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8 Things to Know About Jonas Wood

By Melissa Caspary

A view into the L.A. artist's inspiration, interiors, and iterative process.

Upon hearing the name Jonas Wood, what most likely comes to mind are bold, graphic potted plants and captivating interior scenes. In recent years, Wood has garnered much attention for paintings that treat these and other subjects in a manner that is simultaneously highly accessible and highly personal, at once of-the-moment and rooted in art historical traditions. Wood's fractured interior scenes replete with pattern represent ordinary scenes in a such a way that the familiar becomes foreign. His treatment of space calls attention to the flatness of the picture plane in the Modernist tradition, while his skillful synthesis of disparate compositional elements and layers of pattern imbues the scenes with energy. While paying homage to Modernism and Pop Art, Wood's work is defined by its own charmingly idiosyncratic nature. Whether portraying professional sports, urban landscapes, or his own living room, Wood breathes a second life into the mundane, presenting these quotidian settings in a refreshing new light. As Wood's *Black Landscape Pot 3* comes up in our auction to support the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, we take a look at eight notable facets of the artist's work and life.

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Jonas Wood, "Blue Rug Still Life," 2014, via David Kordansky Gallery and L.A. Weekly.

1. He's equal parts East Coast and West Coast.

A native of Boston currently living in Los Angeles, Wood is represented by Chelsea's Anton Kern Gallery in Chelsea and L.A.'s David Kordansky Gallery. His concurrent shows in 2013 at Anton Kern and Lever House contributed to his rise to fame in recent years. Though Wood draws more inspiration from his SoCal surroundings, evidence of his Boston roots shows up in his work as well. A prime example is *Green Room*, a self-portrait in which Wood's Boston Celtics jersey becomes integrated into the fabric of his surroundings, à la Matisse's *The Dessert: Harmony in Red*.

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Jonas Wood, "Bball Studio," via davidkordanskygallery.com.

2. He's half of an art power couple.

Wood is married to ceramicist Shio Kusaka, also represented by Anton Kern. They share a studio space and frequently refer to each others' work in their own. (Her dinosaur ceramics, shown at the 2014 Whitney Biennial, appear in several of his paintings, including *Blue Rug Still Life*, 2014, below). The dynamic duo started this year strong with a show together at Gagosian Hong Kong that demonstrated the depth of their mutual influence, and have been co-publishing art books together under the name Wood Kusaka Studios.

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Jonas Wood, "Hammer Storage," 2011, via davidkordanskygallery.com.

3. He gives credit where it's due.

Wood cites as his inspiration artists from David Hockney to Alex Katz and Lucien Freud. Having grown up in a home full of art, Wood was exposed firsthand to Warhol, Lichtenstein, Calder, and Matisse at an early age.

4. He believes in the power of iteration.

Wood's carefully conceptualized compositions don't just happen: His process involves a series of steps, from drawing to collage to photography. Wood often paints from drawings and photographs that he collages together. This process comes through in the layered aesthetic of his paintings, and give rise to the fractured planes and sense of compressed space that characterizes his work. The artist explained to gallerist Bill Powers that when he gets stuck in

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the middle of a painting, he takes a picture of it and prints it out, and is able to sort out the composition by drawing over it by hand.



Jonas Wood, "Rosy's Masks," 2008, Oil on linen, via saatchigallery.com.

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5. His work gives nod to Modernist masters.

While distinctly contemporary, Wood pays direct homage to artists from Matisse to Picasso in his compositions. His painting *Rosy's Masks* portrays African masks reminiscent of Picasso's *Demoiselles d'Avignon*, and it goes without saying that the fractured planes that coexist across Wood's compositions owe much to the founder of Cubism. Matisse's cutouts cameo in his *Hammer Storage 2011* (above), in which works that are normally presented in an elevated manner are depicted in the humble context of a storage facility. The bright colors, linear composition, and architectural motifs running throughout Wood's work have led many draw comparisons between his work and Pop Art, namely that of Lichtenstein and Hockney.



Jonas Wood, "Shelf Still Life," 2014, via art.thehighline.org.

6. He's been shown on the High Line billboard.

In 2013, Wood's *Shelf Still Life* was the first painting to be displayed on the High Line billboard. Other guest artists of this prominent landmark on New York's most beloved railroad-line-turned-elevated-park have included John Baldessari, Maurizio Cattelan, and Gilbert & George.

7. Ed Ruscha is his landlord.

Wood has rented studio space in a building owned by Ruscha for the past seven years. He explains to Bill Powers in an interview for *Artnews*, "We're

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friendly, but I try not to super-fan-out on him. Plus he gave me a great deal on the building."



Jonas Wood, "Lakers Floor," 2013.

8. He sources inspiration from ESPN.

In addition to domestic interiors and personal imagery, Wood has continually turned to professional sports as a subject matter, replicating baseball cards and depicting scenes from the court of the French Open to NBA players in action. As Wood explained to *Art In America*, "The sports thing is funny. A lot of people think my work on the subject is based on being a super sports fan,

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because I'm from Boston or because I make these nostalgic pictures, but really the whole sports theme is just a vehicle for practicing portraiture." Bid on Jonas Wood's Black Landscape Pot 3 in our new auction to support MCA Chicago before October 23, 2015. Follow the artist to be the first to know when new works become available.

Image (above) via David Kordansky Gallery. Index image via Anton Kern Gallery.

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