

<http://glasstire.com/2014/07/09/the-top-ten-painters-in-houston/>

The Top Ten Painters in Houston

Bill Davenport

1. [Rachel Hecker](#) is the most consistently great artist on this list. In different bodies of work she's waved the feminist banner, illustrated the arcade game of love, examined life's pocket lint, and flirted with genuine piety. Her works are have always treated serious themes with overwhelming technical polish and pointed pop humor.





Mark Flood, 25 *ADDITIONAL PAINTINGS*, 2009. Spray paint and acrylic on cardboard, 48 x 48"

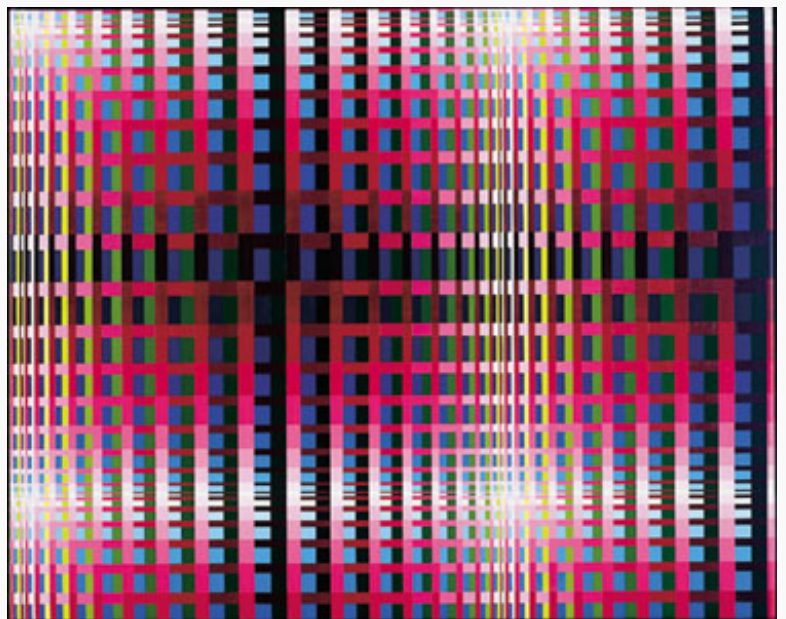
2. [Mark Flood](#). For decades, Flood has been using painting as a conceptual weapon in a passive-aggressive war on artworld pretensions. His churlish antics have recently propelled him into the art stratosphere; this year he was named the most desirable emerging artist in the US. Whether that means he's failed or succeeded, or both, his stealth approach to fame is fascinating, horrifying, and unprecedented.



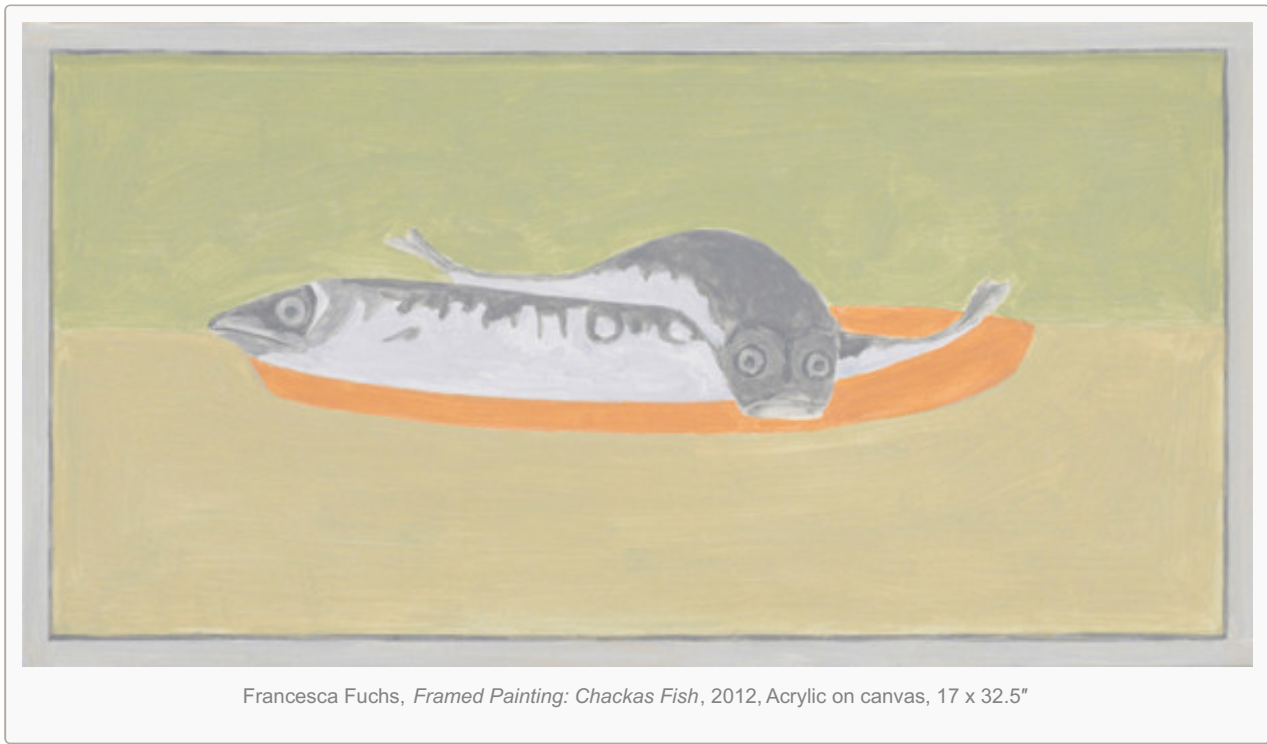
David Aylsworth, *Moon of Alabama*, 2011. Oil on canvas, 14 x 14"

3. [David Aylsworth](#) plies painting like a sailboat, holding a true course against the fitful headwinds of artworld fashion. His quiet, genial abstractions are free of bombast and full of alert, inventive byplay.

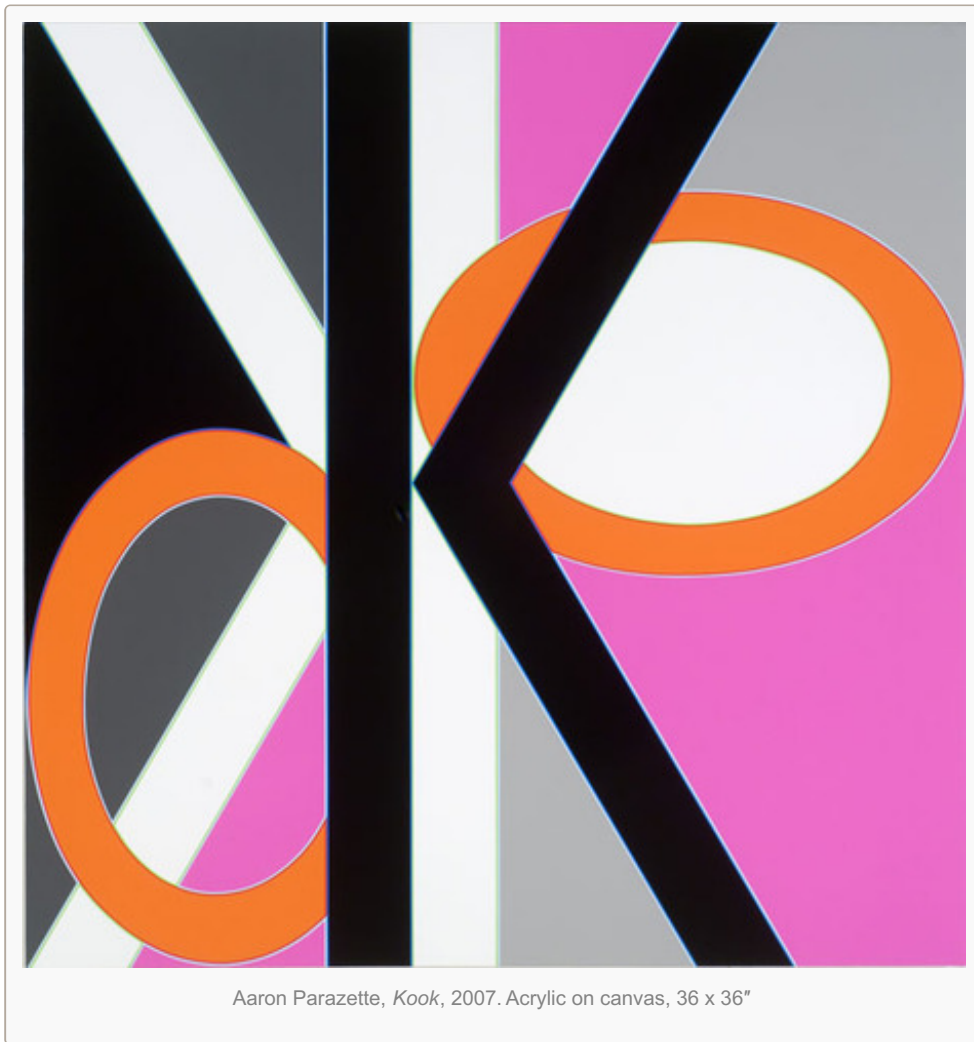
4. [Susie Rosmarin](#). Eye-bending op art with a mad scientist's monomaniacal discipline.



Susie Rosmarin, *Variation Study (#295)*, 2003. Acrylic on Canvas, 24 x 30"



5. [Francesca Fuchs](#) tackles the uncomfortable reality of paintings beyond galleries, presenting the panoply of images that furnish our lives on subdued, uncannily colorist canvases. (Full disclosure: I'm married to her. A complete list of other disclosures is below.)



Aaron Parazette, *Kook*, 2007. Acrylic on canvas, 36 x 36"

6. [Aaron Parazette](#) makes visual puzzles, interlocking curious geometry with dazzling, off-key colors, exquisite craftsmanship, and an earnest, almost fanatical, work ethic.



Daniel Anguilu mural

7. [Daniel Anguilu](#). A few months ago, I called street artist Daniel Anguilu a Houston treasure. Prolific and more than citywide, Anguilu's ubiquitous, vivid murals convey the hope of beauty and social justice on an environmental scale.

8. [Geoff Hippenstiel](#) uses paint as if it were colored clay, building up surfaces that shock and awe.



Geoff Hippenstiel, *Murder Ballad*, 2013, oil on canvas, 10 x 6.5'



Seth Alverson, *Useless Hand*, 2013. Oil on canvas, 40 x55"

9. [Seth Alverson](#) is a painter of greasy flesh and ambiguous, uncomfortable situations. Specializing in the grotesque, his paintings have matured from album-cover surrealism to dark, psychological vignettes.



Shane Tolbert, *Mother's Day Flowers*, 2013. Acrylic on canvas, 15 x 11"

10. [Shane Tolbert](#) is the best of a crop of new-nothing abstractionists. Smears, pools, blobs and scrubs fill canvasses with a peculiar semi-decorative materialism that keeps you guessing.

Part II: The Caveats

How to use this list: If you're an artist and find your name absent from the top ten, you've been unjustly overlooked. Choose a caveat from the list below to explain why.

1. Like any list, mine is arbitrary, and it gets more arbitrary as it gets longer. Only the first seven places are firm. I could just as well have put any of the following painters in spots 8-10, if there had been a west wind blowing or my bagel was a shade browner this morning.

[Kent Dorn](#)

[Earl Staley](#)

[Will Henry](#)

[Jeremy DePrez](#)

[Brian Portman](#)

[Harvey Bott](#)

[David McGee](#)

[Perry House](#)

[Marcelyn McNeil](#)

2. My list is limited to living artists working and showing in Houston, and is in part based on recent activity. Several of the artists on the lower list either earned their spots years ago, and are less active currently, or, conversely, are relative newcomers who have not yet had time to exert as big an influence as those nearer the top.

3. This is a list limited to painters. Artists like Trenton Doyle Hancock, Michael Bise and Dario Robleto don't count. Don't worry about what painting is— you'll know it when you see it.

4. Disclosures: As mentioned above, I'm married to Francesca Fuchs. I'm friends with David Aylsworth. Susie Rosmarin baked my son a birthday cake yesterday. I've known Rachel Hecker since 1990 when she brought me to Houston as a Core Fellow. I've also known Mark Flood and Aaron Parazette since 1990. Earl Staley was my boss when I taught at Tomball College in 1994. Harvey Bott gave Francesca and I his wicked cool 1979 Toyota Celica with the futuristic digital speedometer for a wedding present in 1999. Shane Tolbert worked on our building renovation. I gave him a show at Optical Project in 2012. The rest of the painters on the lists are merely professional acquaintances.

That Houston's painterly pride rests on the shoulders of a basketball team of artists is cause for both fear and celebration: if I were an ambitious young painter, looking at that team, I'd realize that there is still room at the top. Writing this list made me appreciate just how few really good painters there are in this city, and how valuable their contributions are.

This is *my* list, limited by my knowledge. For sure, there are painters in Houston whose work I don't know. Artists like Pat Colville and Alika Herreshoff are on my curious list: I've seen single pieces, or an interesting photograph, and want to see more. My ten list is also, inevitably, biased by my tastes. All I can say for it is that it reflects my honest opinion. Feel free to write your own list in the comments section below.