

## [“Stuff Going On”: an Interview with Eric from KateEric](#)

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When I asked to interview you both for the blog, you mentioned that you are living in a remote village in Italy. What brought you out there? Is the seclusion conducive to working?

A long story involving immigration law (Kate being from England and myself from the United States), the profound unsuitability of England for habitation, and a misappropriation of Spanish words when speaking to Italian real estate agents led directly to the purchase of a ruin in the hills of Liguria.

It is secluded because, after completing the construction of the house back in the 1700s, the local property developer said, “Well, that was a very bad place to put a house. Let’s wait a couple of hundred years and sell it off to some passing foreigners who have no idea what they’re doing and think Italians understand Spanish. Meanwhile, no more houses here, that’s for sure.”

Seclusion is conducive to an unfortunate coming to terms with your basest musical tastes and for acquiring the charming habit of absentmindedly picking non-hair items from hair-covered-areas and chewing on them thoughtfully as if waiting for a pattern to emerge.



“Ambush at Mal Hallows”

“Our work is meticulously conceived, dutifully researched, and extravagantly prepared immediately before the step where we screw it up in some elegantly effective and basic way.”

What is it like being a collaborative duo? I’m curious how both you and Kate share in the creative process. Could you describe this?

We don’t really share in the creative process, per se. We more grab what we can of it and start running away from the other in a manner reminiscent of competing cartoon dogs with a string of sausages.



“Terror in the Pink”

Your work is visually very complex, and the titles only add further intrigue. With names like “Study for Thieves” and “Ambush at Mal Hallows”, I begin to search for answers. Can you tell me more about the meaning behind the work?

Some of these titles come from our recent San Francisco show “*Bug War Over Two Blue Mountain*”. The eponymous central piece was meant to show an overview of an entire fictional war. The supporting pieces depicted battles, skirmishes and combatants in a way that let the viewer ‘zoom in’, as it were, to parts of the larger conflict, insinuating that it might be possible to magnify infinitely. The titles in this case were designed to give a sense of place and time.

I am always curious about the spaces in which artists work. What is your studio like? Do you have a

snapshot you could share?

Our studio in Italy is the upstairs of our stone house (which we are currently trying to sell, if anyone knows any low-to-intermediate-level-Spanish-speakers with a conspicuous lack of knowledge of the Italian real estate market...). In San Francisco we use a vacant floor in a friend's building very close to Fisherman's Wharf, which is refreshingly free of artistic ambition unrelated to the humorous sketching of George Clooney.



You both have backgrounds in science and philosophy. Could you tell us how this background specifically informs your work?

School is part of our combined experiences, but I think that any direct impact is now abstracted beyond

recognition. A childhood spent trolling through the piney muds of Oregon off the fringes of suburban sprawl, for instance, aided by the inescapable charms of my sullen disposition probably features more prevalently. That, and Kate's a werewolf.

What is your process like? Do you know what the final image will be when you begin, or do you figure it out as you go along?

Our work is meticulously conceived, dutifully researched, and extravagantly prepared immediately before the step where we screw it up in some elegantly effective and basic way. Then the yelling. Then the figuring it out as we go along.



"Eve (Study for Thieves)"

... the inspiration comes as much from what lies on the other end of a microscope or telescope as it does from whatever evolutionary hiccup just jumped out of the cistern and ate one of our chickens ...



“Flurry and the Fall”

Winston Churchill wrote in a letter to a friend in 1916:

*“I think a curse should rest on me because I love this war. I know it’s smashing and shattering the lives of thousands every moment and yet I can’t help it, I enjoy every second of it.”*

Whether we’re willing to admit it, I think we all secretly relish disaster on some level, at one time or another. Is there a similar fascination for destruction that drives the sort of work you do?

That is almost too good of a question to require an answer.

I’m not too certain that the difference between creation and destruction is attributable to anything other than ‘point of view’. But inevitably having one of these, violence and destruction seem to be the environments out of which true creation can arise. (Or, as this process is alternately known, “Stuff Going On”)

I do feel that our ‘point of view’ as humans leads us to overstate the extent to which intent, sentience and strategy contribute to our rather stunning collection of twisted cruelties and unconscionable horrors. (Or, as they are known on Jupiter, “Stuff Going On”)



“Bug War Over Two Blue Mountain (detail)”

Once I think I’ve figured out what I’m looking at, it turns out I can’t quite place my finger on what it is exactly. Do you keep references with you as you create these specimens, or do they come more from memory or imagination?

We are just really bad photo-realists?

Currently our fascination lies in the commonality between all interactive forces, whether they play out on the molecular, sociological or universal level. So while there is often a discernable narrative that strings the works together, the inspiration comes as much from what lies on the other end of a microscope or telescope as it does from whatever evolutionary hiccup just jumped out of the cistern and ate one of our chickens (although that was pretty interesting).

What are some of the frustrations you encounter with the medium you work in?

We actually work with a broad range of media from carved wood to resin to embroidery to paint. So frustrations are legion and range from, “I just cut my finger off with a chainsaw and the only thing within a mile is a goat” (woodcarving), to spending weeks with your lover listening to her resin-fume-addled mind come up with things like, “Whoa! I never realized that Polymer 240 is an anagram for Lyr0p4oe 2M” to “This would be a lot easier if other people weren’t so good at painting.”



“Fray, Feeder, and Bash”

Who are some of your favorite artists?

Right now:

- *Night Control* (music)
- A guy that cleans the roads here with a weedwhacker clothed only in a daily color-coded headband and large rubber boots. He produces his own calendar.
- *Grottesca Ornamentale* (because I know you meant visual art)
- Butchers (profession)

Random last question: I can grant you one superhuman power. What’ll it be?  
Gardening.

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