

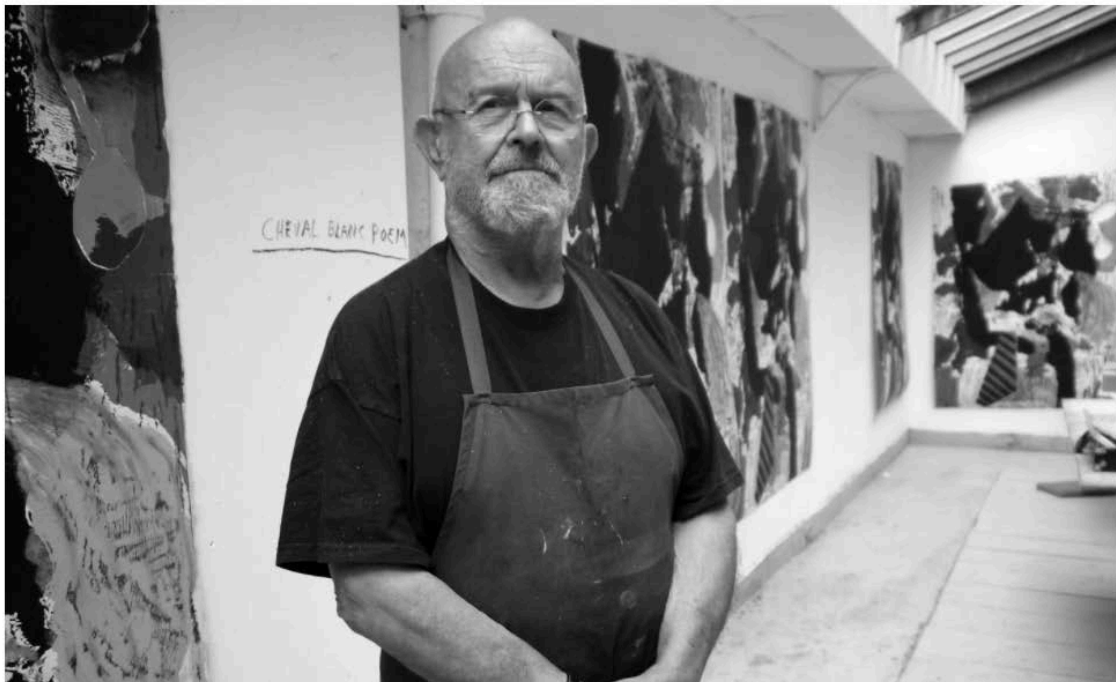
TEMPLON



JIM DINE

ART INTERVIEW, November 2020

Jim Dine



By Fanny Revault

Jim Dine is a major artist on the American art scene. He continues to fascinate at the age of 85, while never ceasing to pursue his pictorial questions. As a pioneer of Happenings and abstract expressionism, Jim Dine transcends twentieth century art and positions himself as a decidedly contemporary artist, whose work is prolific and disturbing in equal measure, while escaping all classification. In his latest show *A Day Longer*, held at the Templon gallery, he displays vibrant energy in color and material. In the exhibition, which was partly produced during lockdown, the artist's work is powerfully intimate and full of contrasts. It is violent yet tender, structured yet chaotic, prophetic yet introspective, poetic yet pictorial. In this interview, the indefatigable American artist talks of his creation which is born from the subconscious and his intuition, as well as his desire to touch the human soul.

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How did your passion for art come about?

I was born with it, I knew from the age of 5 that I wanted to be an artist. For as long as I can remember, that's all I ever wanted to do. It's my life.

Improvisation is at the heart of your artistic process. Your last exhibition appears to have a slightly freer and daring touch. What prompted you to revisit your work?

There's two sculptures included and they're a new departure for me about how to work. I built the sculptures on the floor, face down. Then, piece by piece, we took them apart, took them to the foundry and cast each piece. Then, at the foundry, I redid the sculptures. I invented them by holding them there and then we'd weld a piece. It was a collage method for me, it was a big discovery, another very lively way to work and I will do more of that.

I trust my instincts, I go on my nerve, I try things before I necessarily have worked them out conceptually. I let my hand do the thinking much of the time and that's intuition. I create everyday, it is a gift.

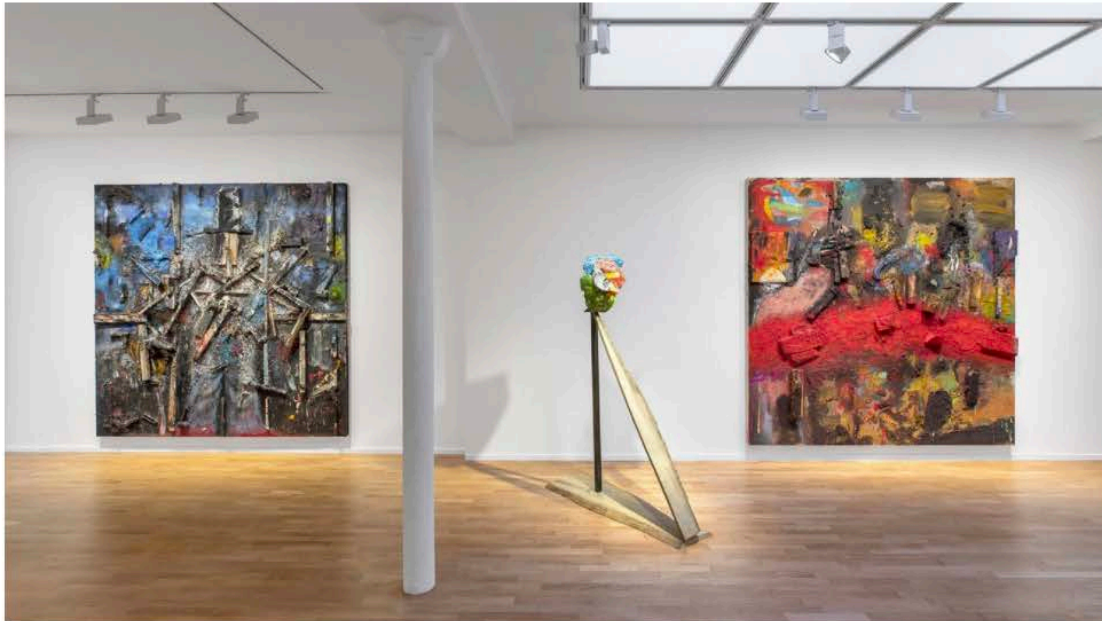
In your paintings, prophetic characters (such as the "Prophet in the Storm" or "Twisted Lyre") interact with poetry and humor ("Red Laughing", "The Tongue"). What do you wish to express with this binary drive, this oscillation between, worry and happiness, violence and tenderness?

I don't think I have a violent relationship to the material. I think that my life as a workman / artist informs how I build a painting and that means: tear it off, put it back another way, tear it off again, move it to the side. I don't consider that violent, I consider it efficacious and I do what's necessary to make a painting work.

And titles have always served as objects for me, an opportunity to add another dimension to the work.

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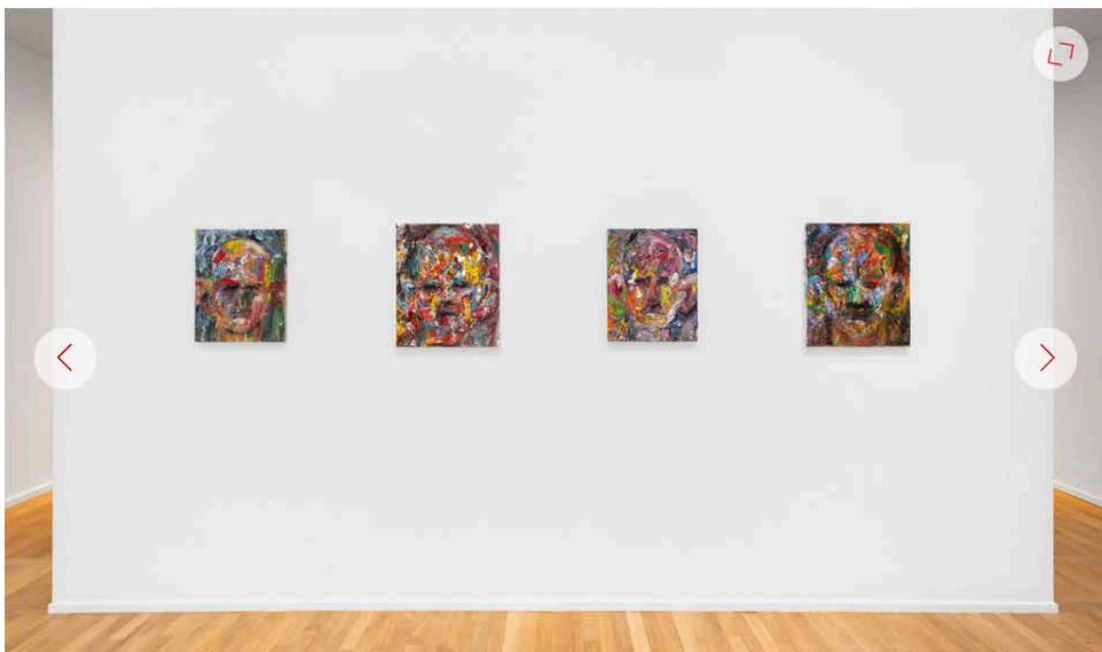
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Jim DINE – Prophet in the Storm & Red Laughing – Vue de l'exposition – A Day Longer – Credit : Nicolas Brasseur – © Courtesy Templon, Paris – Brussels

Does *Me*, the series of self-portraits pursue an intense study on yourself, existence and time?

I have been drawing and painting myself for decades, it has always been a study of me and my unconscious.



Vue de l'exposition – A Day Longer – Credit : Nicolas Brasseur



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The self-portraits series freed from physical likeness, and *Prophet in the Storm*, which you define as a “still-life transformed into a figure”, both appear to move away from the subject to reveal something different. Is there a desire on your part to erase the subject in order to further question the painting itself?

No, I think the paintings look like me, the subject is there, present. These paintings were an opportunity for me to work in oil again, so their materiality is very real.

Rules of the Forest, four acrylic panels on wood, stand like headstones, *At Dunkirk 1 & 2* resemble totems, *At Night I Ride*, shows faces emerging from the canvas like tribal masks; several works denote a primitive world. Is there a desire on your part to return to a form of archaism so as to better question the world?

My desire has always been to make the work, put down a mark and react, correct it, and start again. The surprise and discovery of my left hand. The paintings are never within my grasp: they are always elusive. Paintings are mysterious objects and they have a life of their own... you have to harness it. It's like the wind.



Jim DINE – Rules of the Forest – 2020

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The title of the exhibition, *A Day Longer*, is also the title of the poetry book, a kind of book-object with a voice. To what extent does poetry nourish your pictorial approach?

A Day Longer was born after my exhibition at the Centre Pompidou in 2018. What was important to me was to show in a physical form the relation that the poems, the act of writing and correcting, have to the paintings and sculpture. The relationship is symbiotic, the poetry stems from the paintings and the paintings inform the poetry, the whole born from my unconscious.

There is a fruitful dialogue between both art forms; both words and color convey emotion and one accompanies the other. But what is it that differentiates the practice of painting from that of poetry in terms of the creative process?

My method is one of correction, both in the paintings and the poetry. I make no distinction between the two. In the studio I work on both, not simultaneously, but they feed each other and benefit from each other's presence.

How do you regard your career?

I am grateful to have had the opportunity to make my work.

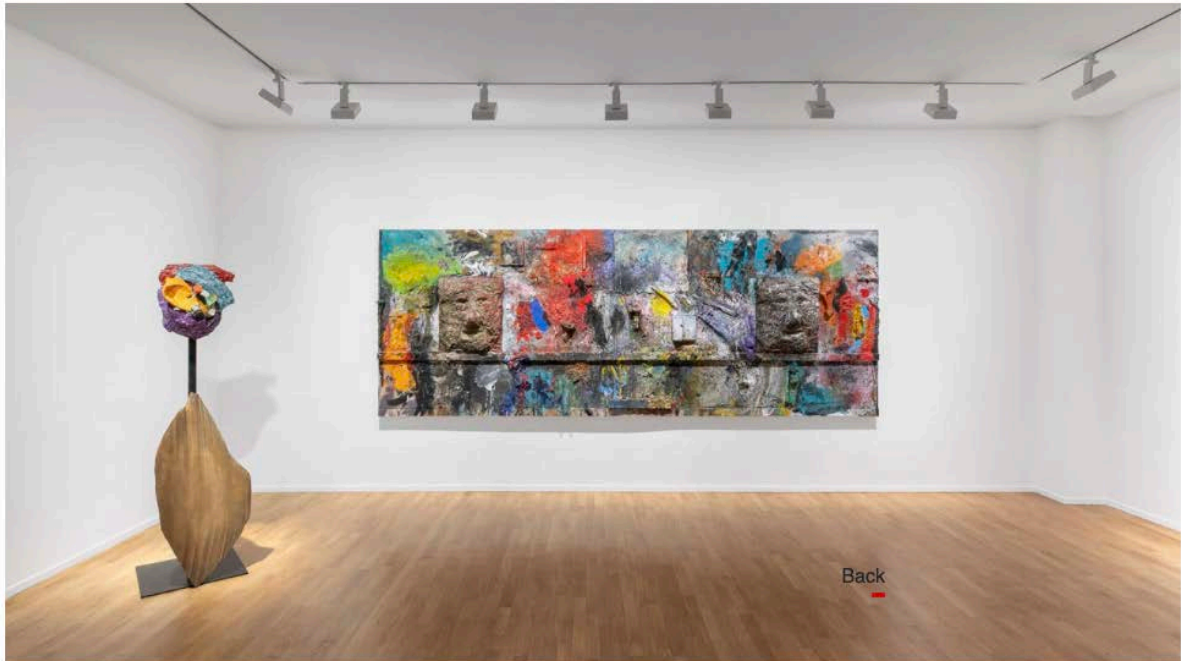
You always work tirelessly, with both pleasure persistence. What are your dreams now?

My dreams now are to stay healthy and after the three years spent making these paintings I have the desire now to immerse myself in a new group of sculpture. I am in the process of re-organizing my studio to start work on some new bronzes.

The idea of creating, it's the blood that runs through your veins. And I have an ambition to carry that on, to be part of human history of enriching people's soul.

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Vue de l'exposition – A Day Longer – Credit : Nicolas Brasseur

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