

[Ocean in a drop](#) by [Cate McQuaid](#) Apr 16, 2024

Intimate yet exhibitionist; Emily Eveleth shares the process behind her monumental painting "Tsk" at Anderson Yezerski Gallery.



Emily Eveleth, "Tsk," 2024. Oil, colored pencil, and metallic pen on Yupo, 127"x212". Photo courtesy Anderson Yezerski Gallery. Process photos courtesy Emily Eveleth.

*Emily Eveleth may be best known for her paintings of doughnuts: Gorgeous, fleshy and alluring, often frosted or sugared, plump, with orifices dripping with jelly. They're sirens beckoning to the senses, teasing an utter abandonment to desire. What better medium than paint – so oozy, so tactile, so luscious – to embody pure sensuality?*

*Her monumental painting "Tsk," on view in her show "[In Silent Mode](#)" at Anderson Yezerski Gallery, may come across as an epic retort to all that doughnut delight. Emily has been painting hands for years, too. Bare or gloved, holding things or gesticulating, sometimes dramatically lit like actors on stage, the hands command uncanny attention. The pink-gloved hands in "Tsk" are giant and scolding. Yet at that scale, with those undulating patterns and that dripping paint, they are hardly prim. Or maybe they're performatively prim. Propriety can often be an armor and a*

*cudgel. People loudly and publicly police others rather than attend to their own bruises and backgrounds. In this case, the background is a vibrant Lily Pulitzer.*

Emily writes:

It's all [Pontormo's](#) fault. Ever since I read [Leo Steinberg's analysis](#) of Pontormo's [Capponi chapel](#) in Santa Felicita I've wanted to do a show where paintings talk to each other from across the room.

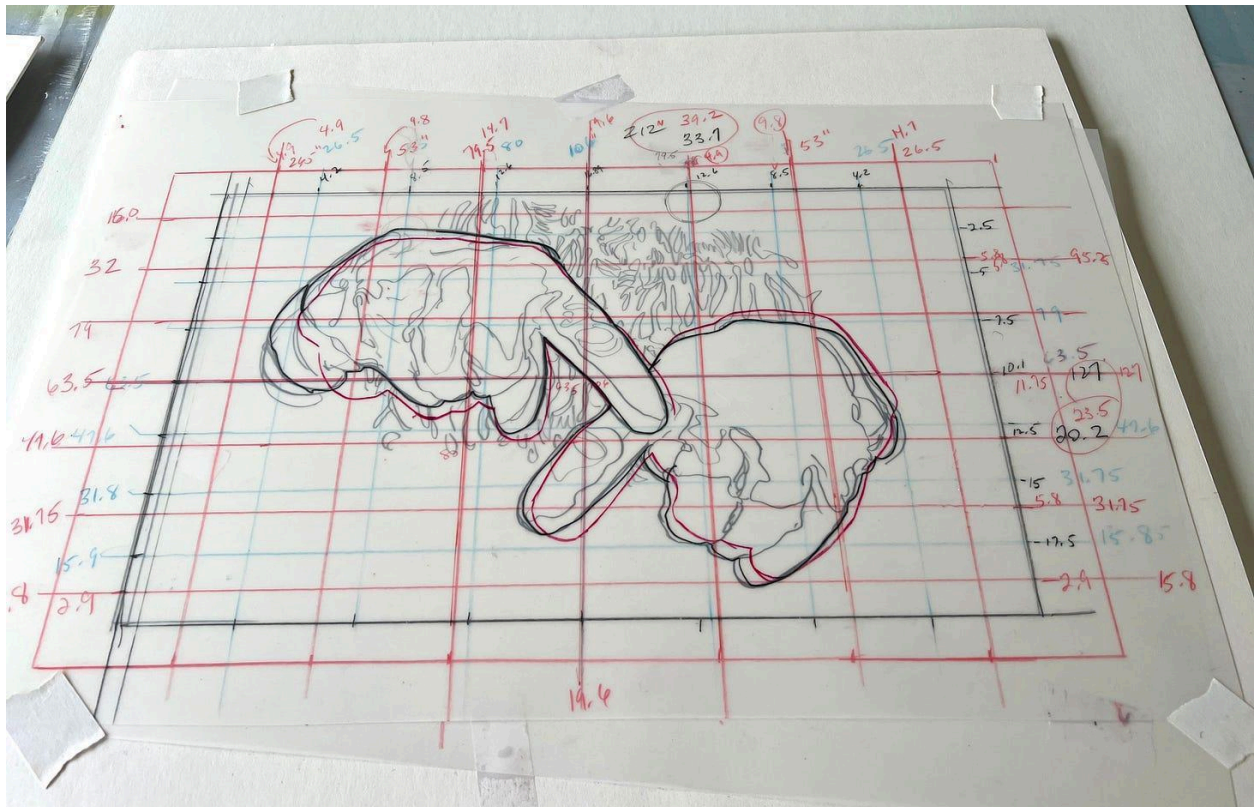


Emily Eveleth, "Rant/Rave," 2020. Oil and colored pencil on mylar. 90"x36" inches. Photo courtesy Anderson Yezerski Gallery.

“Rant/Rave” came first, with its silent dialogue between a subject and its counterpart, at once itself and the reflection of itself. But its doubling remained an interior conversation and spurred a desire for a third party to enter the conversation. That’s how “Tsk” came to be.

Planned out in drawings and done on Yupo cut from 60 inch wide scrolls to the exact dimensions of the gallery’s wall, the question became, could it escape the boundaries of its edges to envelop us in the conversation?

The initial drawing:



I’ve always felt that painting on a large scale is an invitation to see things differently. We inherently sense this when we are standing in front of a huge painting. And it turns out this has been proven. Neuroscientist Margaret Livingston has shown that when we see an object much larger than it usually is, we engage different neural pathways to process that information. We use a different part of our brain. We are, in fact, ‘seeing it differently’.

The drawing done on the Yupo on the wall in red pastel:



Detail:



The studio with the makeshift platform needed to reach the top:



How I came to use the pink zebra Lily Pulitzer pattern is a story for another time, but incorporating pattern was spurred by three things: an anecdote about visiting Key West where “pink and green” was used as social critique, a visit to a 16th century palazzo in Venice, and a deep dive into works of the Rococo.



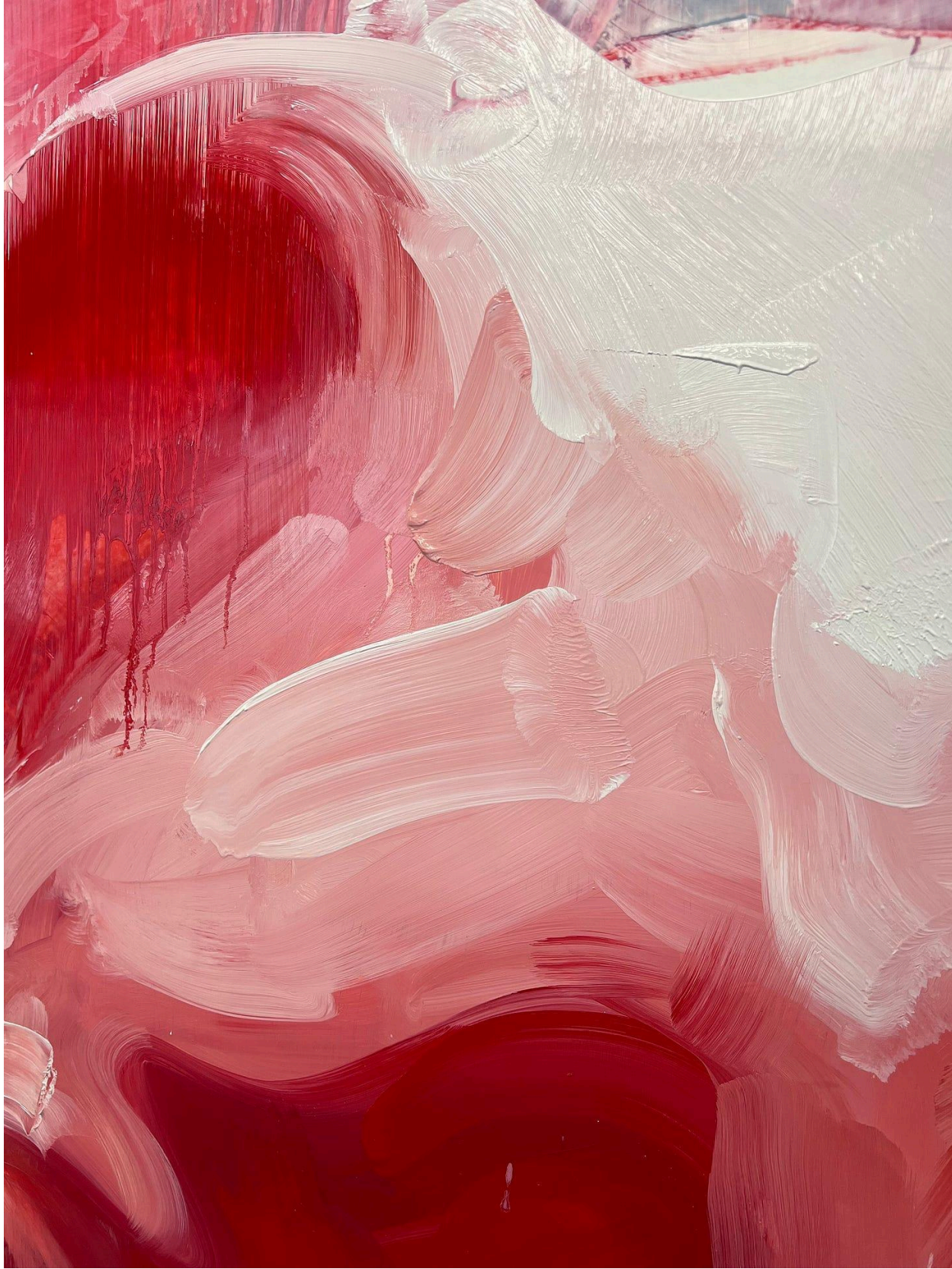
The brushes used:



A detail of the brush work:

For any painting there is the challenge of making each mark read simultaneously as itself and as an illusion. For each, there is a spot in the room where a shift takes place, that moment where a piece of paint flips from being a physical mark to part of an image. With a large painting, that shift happens further into the room and the awareness of the simultaneity of understanding the physicality, the 'reality', of the paint as it is paired with the illusion's seduction, its lie, can overwhelm you.





On the studio wall you can see “The Balcony” (also in the show) hung to the right of “Tsk,” which gives a feel for the wall painting’s 127.5 x 212 inch size.



But most of all, I’ve always been fascinated by how large works invite you in. Your entire visual field is taken over, you are immersed. It seems counterintuitive, but it becomes a very intimate experience.



In the end I was hoping the monumentality of this familiar, scolding gesture, overwhelming us in hot pinks, would do three things; be a display of an intimate and yet exhibitionist gesture situated in a critique of culturally coded fabric, implicate us as participants in this now three-way conversation, but most of all, give us the feeling of being inside the experience of looking.