

The Stage and the Mantle

Susanne Déry and Justin Stephens are artists and lovers who share creative space. Creative space (often in the form of the artist's studio) is one of making, but it is equally an arena of discussion, contemplation, and negotiation. It is a harbour for fantasy, anxiety, and boredom. Above all, it is both a sanctuary and an oasis of great expectation for one's own creative force!

What of artists couples who choose to share this site? Who share a home, a bed and a workspace but work on different canvases? This further complication of the ecosystem offers consideration over constraint, risk over singularity, and generosity over self interest. These artists' practices each hold their own unique qualities, processes and sensitivities. That of Déry is methodical while that of Stephens is astir. Déry builds an iconography of symbols. Stephens employs new strategies with each work. But there are murmurs that radiate quietly in both practices - a colour, a line, a certain balance of forms.

Perhaps the advantage of sharing both life and creative space with another is the opportunity for a footing in which to share solitude; an undercurrent of mutual respect that runs invisibly beneath the surfaces of each practice in turn.

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