

“This Marvelous and Turbulent World: An Interview with Andrew Schoultz”  
Evan Pricco / April 6, 2018



There may not be a harder working artist than Andrew Schoultz. Every time I turn around, he is doing something bolder, bigger, more complex, whether it be through his paintings, sculptures, installations, murals or public art projects. My colleagues and I have worked with Andrew on a bunch of projects over the years, from 3D murals in Austin to a massive skatepark in Miami, and there is such attention to detail and expansive process that has made Andrew one of the most diverse artists working in contemporary art.

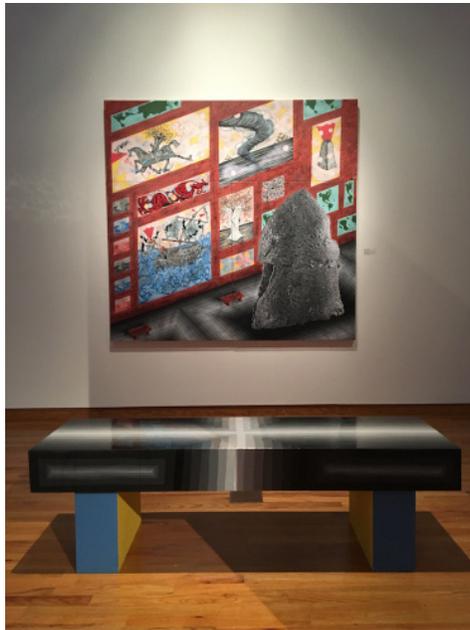
In late March, Andrew opened a new museum show at Fort Wayne Museum of Art, with the perfect title: *This Marvelous and Turbulent World*. The occasion gave us an opportunity to sit down with Andrew and reflect on the new show, but also catch up on what comes next, his observations of the art world and the incredibly busy 2018 he has on the horizon.



**Evan Pricco: You have had a few museum shows to this point, and each one you have approached in new ways. What were your plans for Fort Wayne?**

Andrew Schoultz: My plans for Fort Wayne, and pretty much every show I do, are to utilize the particular space in a very site-specific way. In fact, it is generally kind of hard to really arrive with a rock solid plan. Often times after working in a space for a day or two, you start to really figure out the best and most dynamic way to use a space.

With Fort Wayne, the museum has all these giant movable walls, so I knew I wanted to try to use them in some way or another.. And I also knew that there are really high ceiling with tall walls. I definitely wanted to have some type of massive piece on one of the walls. I created one sculptural installation and one giant painting on location. And then the rest of the work was work that I had shown in a previous exhibition in New York at Joshua Liner Gallery. I wanted to have some of the work be brand new and site- specific and then utilize some work from the past. When doing some of these more regional museums and venues, I realize to a greater extent, you are showing work to a brand new audience that probably is not incredibly familiar with your work. So on a certain level, I do not feel the pressure to have all of the work be brand new, because even work that is a year old will be new to that particular audience. I definitely enjoy incorporating older installation objects and concept into new installations. Re-working them into something fresh and new is always fun. And also feeds my urge to sort of keep an ongoing narrative moving forward and discovery how work and images can constantly redefine and reinvent themselves.



## **And how much did you make specifically for the museum?**

I did one canvas that measured 10 by 20 feet in about 7 days, and then did some wall painting on the movable walls and sort of created a little Romanesque-style room with a floor for a sculpture to sit. Josef Zimmerman, the curator, really works his ass off to make these shows happen there. He definitely made a big and massive install into a pretty easy going experience.

With my paintings and drawings, at this point, they are just taking forever to make. For awhile, I was sort of trying to move away from this process and spending astronomical amounts of time making the works, but I always seem to come back to making this maximal work. Its always most satisfying for me, but the time it takes is always brutal. So that being said,, any chance I get to re-show semi-older work that has stuck around, to a new audience, I'm happy. I always wish I could come up with a more immediate process to making my works, that felt equally as satisfying, but up until this point that has not fully happened... it's a goal for sure.

## **You seem to always try and make your shows, whether it be gallery or museum, something to literally “walk into.” Did that sort of building an experience come with more and more increasing confidence as a both a painter and installation artist?**

Yes, I think that did sort of start to happen a lot more naturally the more confident I have got. I have been messing around doing pretty major installation for well over 15 years at this point, and have learned a lot about what works and what doesn't, and ways to achieve certain types of impact. And it also has to do with what resources are available to you. I try very hard to create a dynamic and memorable experience for a viewer. Even though sometimes these installations are ephemeral in nature, and will only be on view for a few weeks, I feel like the memory of the experience sticks with a viewer much longer than a sterile gallery showing of cleanly hung singular works on a white wall. Not that I'm opposed to that type of presentation of work, either. Ideally it is nice to be working in a big enough space, that you can have a chaotic installation isolated and also present cleanly hung works as well. Having no breathing room around installation or singular works can be very problematic. It can work, too, but I think it is very challenging to achieve a fully great impact if there is no negative space.

**You and I have talked about this before, but this seems to be a really good time for painters who came out of skate or underground cultures in the early 00s. What are you noticing right now with institutions and museums really beginning to embrace a new wave of contemporary artists?**

Yeah. It seems like a decent time for artists coming out of these types of scenes, however for me, I never really wanted to wear being a skateboarder or a graffiti artist on my sleeve. These are things that I come from and have had crucial effects on the way I look at making art, and more importantly the way, I look at the world and the system that governs this world. For me, I still skate pretty hardcore, especially for being 43 years old. It occupies a certain part of my life. I like the experience of skating through a city. I wish every human could have the experience once in their life time just to get a feel for the perspective of skateboarding.

Skateboarding since 1985 has informed and influenced my work in so many ways at this point, it would be hard to dissect the specifics. It has sort of naturally integrated itself into my work, and at times it is much more obvious than others. For me, being a public artist as well, the one thing graffiti, skateboarding, and public art have in common is that essentially they utilize public space in ways that it was not necessarily purposed for. And they all are adding something creative to the experience of being in public space whether that is good or bad is obviously debatable depending upon the person that is experiencing it.

I guess my only concern with all of these things being embraced by museums and institutions is that it is being embraced in a sincere and honest manor, with longevity in mind. It really doesn't come as a surprise, on many levels, for me. It seems like forever that great and original art has been happening in these scenes and was never really taken completely serious. It is tough to really say, but a lot of things like being a skateboarder, graffiti writer, or street artist, have really become these sort of generic pigeonholes, that on one level may attract an audience, but on whole other level turn another audience off. So that is the challenge in navigating it.

For me, I have never really worked too much in the "industry of skateboarding," or really too much in general in the commercial world. But it is really easy for people to place labels on artists instead of actually seeing what they are about. I am just as guilty of it as the next guy. But on the other hand, at this point in my life, it is pretty transparent to see if someone is sincere or not. I do not want to go down the path of talking shit or anything, but it is also problematic to see how some artists are taking advantage of this embracement, acceptance, and popularity as well. Just cause you skated or wrote graffiti 15 years ago, doesn't necessarily make you a skateboarder or a writer today. It is about being active and contributing something to the scene, whether that is small or large does not matter. There is something to be said for people who have had unrelenting commitment to these communities over the years, versus just using it as caveat on their artist statement.

**What was your favorite part of Fort Wayne?**

My favorite part was working in the museum. And the fact that it was not far from where my parents live, so they were able to drive down and spend the week hanging out during installation. My dad even ended up painting a lot of stuff and helping out a lot. It was awesome that they actually got to see what goes into these installations, first-hand. Of course they have seen the end product for years, but I think getting to see the process was really fun for them. I also very much enjoy the company of the curator, Josef, and his partner, Kay. They are very awesome people making really cool things happen in a city where it probably would not be happening, if it were not for them. Fort Wayne is a very cool small city that, for the most part, not a lot of people know about.

## **What else do you have planned in 2018? You are always working on something big and bold!**

This year is a crazy year for me! I am always biting off way more than I can chew, and this has become increasingly problematic for me. But somehow I get myself into this situation every year. Besides the Fort Wayne show, I will be participating in the upcoming art extravaganza here in LA, called *Beyond the Streets*, curated by Roger Gastman opening early May. Then, I will be opening a very large-scale solo exhibition at The Marjorie Barrick Museum at The University of Nevada Las Vegas (UNLV) in late May.

There are several off-site projects happening with this exhibition as well, including painting a local Las Vegas skatepark, and a mural at the MGM. After that, I will be opening a solo show in Germany at Galerie Droste, the second week of June. On top of all of this, I will be also installing a major public sculpture of 6-toppled large scale pillars at the Promenade in Santa Monica, as part of the Project ROAM that started a few months ago (with the help of LeBasse Projects and The City of Santa Monica). Later this year, I will be opening a solo show in New York at Joshua Liner Gallery. Wow, writing all this down is practically giving me an anxiety attack...