

In tomorrow's Metro: Elina Furman

Check Metro tomorrow for an interview with author Elina Furman, right, on her new book "Kiss and Run: The Single, Picky, and Indecisive Girl's Guide to Overcoming Her Fear of Commitment."



The knives have it

DOROTHY ROBINSON
dorothy.robinson@metro.us



Artist Joshua Meyer tosses his brushes

INTERVIEW. Painter Joshua Meyer is often described as "a young, master artist." In layman's terms this means he's damn good and young as well. The 30-something artist talked to Metro about his upcoming exhibit at the Philadelphia Museum of Jewish Art, how he works mostly with a knife instead of a brush, and how his paintings involve Genesis (not the band).

Tell us a little bit about your show.

It's called "In the Beginning" and the show is about painting as part of evolution and creation. It's about what it means to paint, what it means to create. What compels a person to make something and why they care about it. It's about why we choose to make a white canvas dirty.

Why do you choose to make a white canvas dirty?

[Pauses] I'm trying to think of a simple answer to that. I



Joshua Meyer goes through "cans and cans and cans" of paint to create his paintings. You can tell in these two works now on display at his exhibit at the Philadelphia Museum of Jewish Art.

feel like making a painting is a way for me to sort a very complex world. I use paint to simplify the world for myself.

But your paintings are abstract. How do you

sort when the end work isn't precise?

I guess that's the thing. I think any artist's work is a reflection of how they see the world. I dive into it and make a mess — all my paints get mixed together



— and then I try to create order. The bright colors turn to gray and then I try to distinguish between the two grays. When differences become difficult to make, that's when they become interesting.

Is that why you use a knife to paint? To blur those lines even more?

It's part of that, I think. The knife forces me to create and think in a new language.

Do you paint portraits or landscapes?

I wouldn't use the word "portraits." I really like to think of them as abstract paintings anchored by a figure. It's what pulls you in and it's something that holds you when you walk into a murky area.

It's hard not to talk about your work without talking about Judaism. How does it figure into your paintings?

I'm a religious person. It's figured in the fabric of my life — it's about understanding every day that you are part of something bigger. As an artist, everything I see in the world I think of through the lens of paint. As a human being, everything I see in the world gets focused through Judaism. You put those things together and they just have to overlap.

'In the Beginning': Paintings by Joshua Meyer

Opening reception, tomorrow, 6:30 p.m. Philadelphia Museum of Jewish Art 615 N. Broad St. Free and open to the public 215-627-6747 The exhibition continues through Aug. 10 www.joshua-meyer.com