

TINMANTIS interviewed by **Pujan Gandhi**, April 2026

Pujan Gandhi is a curator and writer, focused on South Asian art, ancient and modern.

TINMANTIS

Oh dear, I don't know if I could do this. I was just thinking I'm not an artist really. I can't do anything like this. I can't answer questions or talk sensibly or do anything.

Pujan Gandhi

That's all right. That's why you make the work and that's why there's people like me that try to make sense of it.

I've just been doing Superman poses—you know if you do a Superman pose then you feel more confident about what you're gonna say?

Is that so? I've not tried it.

So I was standing here with my hands on my hips with my chest out thinking yeah I'm Superman and then punch in the air, thinking yeah I'm gonna save the world. I don't know if it works.

Has Superman flown into one of your 'poster-paintings'?

No, I hate him. I hate Superman, don't you?

Why?

He's so pukey, American fucking...blah! That's everything that I hate: Superman, all Marvel stuff, and everything like that. Just disgusting. I don't know why I'm doing Superman poses.

What's the difference between Marvel, Superman, and Star Wars?

Star Wars is OK. I like that. Maybe it's all the superheroes. **I don't like superheroes, people being super great and saving things. I think it's such an extreme American dream.** You know. It's gotten even worse with AI crap, and I hate watching New York blow up: all that glittery annihilation and Superman standing there saving the day...Do you like Superman? Do you watch Marvel movies?

As a kid, I thought Superman was a fun story. But it could be that I appreciated the outfit more than the actual content.

I was thinking about that since you sent me those questions. I've been thinking about everything and I try not to think about anything: about why I hate things and why I like things. If you sit down and think why do I hate this, you just go around in circles. So yeah, I don't know why I hate Superman.

Maybe you have to hate something to like it and hate it again

Yeah.

Let's start with the substrate: your 'poster-paintings'-- did you coin that term? Could you share more about your process?

I used to think of them as posters 'cause I didn't really think of them as art. I didn't think of myself as an artist. I used to say they're my posters, like a sign painting. I thought I was a weird sign painter, in private, making posters for myself. I'm glad I kept them all because I didn't think they were anything.

So how long have you been making them?

I can't reveal too much. Remember, I'm supposed to be mysterious.

We could talk about that?

Well, you sent me all these questions. I've been thinking about them all week and I thought there's no way I can answer this. I thought you were gonna send me a question like what's your favorite color?

What is your favorite color?

Black!!! (laughs). But that's just stupid...that's why I think I can't be an artist. I don't know what an artist is.

Didn't André Breton say: "if your experience isn't strange to you it's false."

Oh, I like that.

When we last spoke, we discussed how they started as found objects?

Everything, everything's found. My paint, everything, everything...Let me read from my notes:

I didn't know I was an artist really, and it's painful to think and talk about it. I think it's so cringe! I always felt excluded from the art world: to say this is me, I'm so special. I couldn't afford paint. I've never been able to afford paint or stuff or materials or gallery tickets or anything. But I felt like I didn't want to bow down to it all, and worship great art in great galleries. I thought why are they better than me? I thought fuck you. I thought I had a problem with the art world. I

don't get the rules. I can't talk like an artist. I don't buy paint. I don't buy paper or canvas anything. I find everything. I get free paint from the recycling dump, and I'm always stealing pens. I thought I'd never lower myself to go into an art store. That's everything I'm at war with, but I don't really know why. I think I retreated into my own lonely art world where I might be super cool, but it's just me in a vacuum. I used to think this is how to justify why I was getting nowhere and nothing meant anything— I thought success and acceptance is like being tamed or something. I thought the whole thing is a cage. I've gotta stay anonymous (I didn't know what I was doing anyway): I thought yeah if I'm accepted by everyone I hate, that's the end of everything. My work is inspired and motivated by revenge, and I had that written on the post-it: **revenge on those fuckers who thought my work was shit**. Like a private war, and that's sort of what's led me here—an art process fueled by revenge, which I thought was so funny. But again, they say the best revenge is success, so I mean, I fucked that up because if get successful, the whole thing is wrong...

But I have dreams though. I saw Keith Haring's checkered studio floor, so I thought fuck, I want that checkered studio floor! And Mike Kelly, I saw his *Clovered Hoof* prints when I was younger, I thought, oh my, I've gotta have one of those. And reading *World of Interiors* magazine, I always look at the paintings in the background and I thought wow that's one thing I want, is to have one of my paintings in the background in someone's house in *World of Interiors* magazine. The final thing would be an art book about me, which I can put next to my book on Dürer, who is just like the single most inspirational artist ever. I had one book on Dürer when I was young and it just blew my mind.

But my studio, it's a dungeon. It's always been a dungeon. I've got no space or time for anything. Sometimes I have floor space smaller than my painting so I have to fold it, and I paint upside down so I can fit myself around it. I think I read once (this is probably a lie) Michelangelo said that small studios force you to concentrate. I thought that's quite a good idea, I naturally have a small studio. He's probably got a fucking massive studio, even though he's dead.

And Manet or Monet (laughs) said: "it's hard to paint when you know how to paint." I thought wow! I've gotta remember that because I think I could paint all day in my dreamworld. And I don't try to paint, I just tried to be honest. I'm not trying to do anything. I don't plan anything. I never talk about art. I don't have anyone to talk to. No one knows I paint, not even my family. I don't know why, I supposed it was easier for me, and my mask really was to disappear. Yet here I am, appeared! I slowly collapsed into this. I didn't have a master plan. I just wanted to be supremely honest. **I think that's what art is to me: supreme honesty, freedom, and magic. No style, no skill, nothing. Not just fine art, but elite fine art** (I say that a lot). I don't try to sell it or show it or talk about it, but somehow it happens, this connection to others. But I want mystery and magic and honesty. I feel like I'm creating art and understanding it would be like destroying it. I work on the floor, accidentally spilling paint, things get torn, I get

annoyed, pens run out: I need pink, but I've only got blue! I work minimum wage and I've got no time. I feel like I have no time to waste on art. It's so limited. I'm in a panic all the time. And I end up painting like someone else but doing it in my style, doing it wrong. I'm dreaming of being Goya (!) and then I'm looking down thinking what depressed mess! But I've kept it all. I don't know why, but I've noticed I paint in bipolar pulses. I'd like to poetically say "I paint like the tide" (that's what a real artist would say) but hopefully **I paint more like the plague, because I read that flow of the black death went above ground into humans and then would retreat back into rats**. That's how I'm dreaming when I'm painting—dramatic and poetic, and then look at it and say, oh God what is that?! But then I just pile it up and get on with the next. If I've got five minutes, I get on with the next.

What about the exterior? How did you come to use Instagram?

I've only had a phone for the last few years, and I saw Instagram and thought it could be a good place to store my paintings if I ever wanna look at them instead of trying to dig them out. And that was just before COVID. So I started taking photos, thinking I've gotta document this crap—I don't really know why...

It was kind of an accident. I thought yeah take photos, store them on Instagram then I can always get them. I don't understand the Internet, where the pictures go or anything. Very quickly I wrote to Mark Flood, the artist. I thought, how interesting you can write to people on Instagram. He wrote back immediately— I think he was sitting around during Covid not knowing what to do either, and he said wow your stuff is really good. And I was like what? Are you the real Mark Flood? I thought it's all fake, the Internet, no one is real. He was saying "you're such a good artist" and I was like what? So that gave me a real boost talking to him. I'd only seen him on YouTube. I love looking at gallery tours and shows on Youtube because obviously I can't get to them. I'm too poor. I saw all Mark Flood's shows—I like this stuff because it didn't seem like art to me. It was amazing to have him write back, for him to say you are an artist like me. So that got me thinking, if I'm an artist this is what I've gotta do.

I fall asleep at night watching youtube art tours, at the Louvre or something. I think maybe that ends up in my dreams, to think about what it would be like to be one of the great artists in the Louvre.

Do you like watching them?

Not really. I rarely watch them, I suppose because I've had to do them! But I've always been curious about the impact of those initiatives?

Yeah, I don't know because I'm stuck in South Carolina and there's nothing here: there's no gallery to go to, but when I did live in cities, I did love going to them. But I always felt I was looking in a different way to everyone else. People

creep around like it's a church, like getting on their knees to worship. I would walk past and think—am I missing something here? Because that's shit isn't it? I mean there could be amazing backgrounds with these paintings, but actually, I thought: would I have that in my house? No, it's crap no matter what it means? But then, I'm not part of this cult worship. But I also love it. I love creeping around galleries—I told you I kissed a Giacometti?

That was fantastic. To go to a gallery when you're drunk and have fun. Why do you have to do it the way you're supposed to do it: on a tour, with headphones on and being told what you're supposed to like? That's probably why I'm always painting the Mona Lisa and things like that. I think God, that's so shit, like Damien Hirst, everything he does is such shit. Not that I'm so great...

I think you can have a personal view about art. That is art, isn't it? To say that's shit, that's good, that's shit—shouldn't that be it? I don't know about art anyway—sorry, I'm getting mean now. I'm a nice person, really. I'm not angry at art galleries. I wouldn't punch a painting, I kiss them. **I kissed the Rosetta Stone, before they had guards and a case around it. I thought if I kissed it I could suck out all the magic and knowledge from ancient Egypt.** Maybe I did, I just haven't accessed it yet in my head.

The object is important, even when hyper-mediated?

Yes. That Giacometti sculpture – a hundred-million-dollar sculpture, to just grab, and kiss, squeeze just like you were hugging a tree. Why can't you? Why do you have to stand 10 feet away and worship and whisper “that's so good.” I just wanna eat it.

I agree. You can't understand the sculpture until you touch it.

Good, yeah, grab them. The Rosetta stone was so cold, can you imagine? I'm making a full size replica of the Rosetta Stone right now. I'm really into it, but I just can't quite finish it off at the minute. I'm trying to make a stand for it. It was gonna be emojis on it instead of the writing, but I think I might do a blank, black, glossy Rosetta Stone. Like a jolly rancher, but black. Make it out of black sugar, so everyone can lick it. Anyhow, I don't have time or materials or money or anything to actually do what. I'm making the Rosetta Stone out of insulation sheets that I found at the recycling dump. I'm blabbering...let's get to your second question.

When I began delighting in your practice (thanks to Alexander Meurice of Foreign & Domestic), it prompted further reflection on this age of hyper-information. I encountered Marshall McLuhan's publication *The Medium is the Message* (1967). In it, he asserts: “Societies have always been shaped more by the nature of the media by which men communicate than by the content of the communication.” To what extent do you think this still rings true?

It's all medium these days. Modern life is all medium. All the messages are just smashed into a medium. Nothing means anything. All art these days is medium. I mean, what is a message? Politics, porn, art—all medium with shit, pointless messages. What's a banana?

Who wants to actually put a Yoko Ono piece on their wall, I mean seriously. I know it has a lot of meaning but sorry, it's so shit. Do you want a Kaws sculpture? Ahhh, for god sake's—I can't even say his name. Or do you want Damien Hirst pile of shit?

Burn it all. I've written, **burn it all: pathetic pointless irrelevant crap.** I thought it's the content of your character, not the color of your skin. But then I'm going round in circles cause I suppose my medium is just a pile of messages. I used to walk past the big statue of Nelson Mandela every morning, and the plaque said: “the struggle is my life,” and I read it as life is a struggle, but now I think he meant the struggle was his life—you know the fight.

Someone told me my work looked like a search history, and that's all medium; and in another recent comment, someone said that I was “fully committed to my own strange world with an undercurrent of amusing, social commentary and psychic debris from modern life.” That's all message: my confused messages are my confused medium. It's like painting a turd blue cause I ran out of brown—that's always happening to me. But I agree, the message is in control, or rather, medium is in control at the moment. (I'm getting mixed up because it's kind of the same to me). Real messages are so boring these days, no one listens.

Do you think it was different for Dürer?

No, I think it's always been that everything's medium. There isn't a message. Even if you write a huge message, no one would look at it, or if they looked it, they'd see it as a medium. The wall artists went on about this. But I contradict myself all the time: I've written, **I try not to think too much and be more feral!!** So God knows, medium and message. I can't even remember the question.

I agree, even when we try, the message ends up subservient to the medium. When I was working in a museum, folks would try to look at a sculpture or painting and attempt to memorize the mythology of Krishna or the life story of the Buddha. Few could retain it all, and more would get frustrated. In our enlightenment-cum-capitalist framework, it's much easier to register a Chola bronze or a court painting from Kishangarh. Which is ok, perhaps the medium is the vessel for regurgitated messages?

Yeah I think of religion, especially all the bullshit of Christian religion. I'm always ranting about that. Like from the Bible, people constantly use these phrases that they think are cool and meaningful, but no one is actually reading it or listening to it properly. They just want the big medium of religion to say, oh, I'm Christian. But if you ask them one thing about what they're reading that doesn't make sense, you realize

no one wants to know. They don't wanna know the real message. Hey, I suppose it's because I'm all about truth and honesty (laughs)... What's the next question—the one about everyone knowing everything?

Exactly. So, in the ways you probe subjects, from celebrity culture (Poor Mathew Perry!) to apocalyptic social strife, your imagery is incisive in ways both naughty and profound. I'd argue that most audiences can on some level intuit it. This got me thinking of the notion of "Singularity"—coined in 1950 by John von Neumann—to describe an 'ever accelerating progress of technology and changes in the mode of human life, which gives the appearance of approaching some essential singularity in the history of the race beyond which human affairs, as we know them, could not continue." *The Age of Earthquakes* (Basar, Coupland, Obrist, 2015) echoes the theory with the quip: "The last time humanity had so much in common was when the few remaining cave men sat out the last Ice Age." I wonder if you think we are there?

I use everyday life stuff in my paintings because that is my everyday life. Everyone knows everything, so people must be able to relate to my stuff because it is just normal life stuff. I have a shit job. By the way, this is a really good **TUMMANTIS** quote: **I have a shit job. I am real people.** I can see that in a magazine like blown up. I love it when I'm not one person...

But I think there's too much information at the moment, we are folding in on ourselves. I reject knowledge, I want to reject knowledge or I want to feel like I'm rejecting knowledge. Someone once asked me if I'd been diagnosed with DKS? I said, "what's that?". He said: "Don't Know Shit." I said "yes, I've got DKS". I've tried to know as little as possible, it's so much more magical. Who needs to know where the nearest restaurant is, serving some niche oyster shit? Or, I could have dry bread in a cave gazing at the moonlight. Who's the winner? Who's alive here? Someone paying loads of money for oysters or me looking at the moon? I don't know about information value. I've written: **Fuck Information, Fuck Knowledge.** That's another quote... and this is a good one: "The most damaging art lesson is the art lesson."

Black Dungeons is my music intervention, a made-up band. (I'm always writing about black dungeons in my paintings.) But *Black Dungeons* says: "Never evolve, the future is the past." I think we're barely alive these days and I think it's getting worse. The trees used to talk to us; giant boulders used to walk. We had spells and spirits and a reason to live; life was extreme and real. Now we have nothing but information. We've destroyed everything:

Mystery builds, and knowledge destroys.

Now we have knowledge like Siri, "where's the nearest restaurant?" Fuck Siri. Why don't we try to find a restaurant, get lost, have an adventure? I was the one always getting lost and everyone else was on MapQuest. But I thought: you're smoothing your life down, you're smoothing your

brain down, like a perfect clear crystal. Information really means nothing. We're not like that—I think we are apes. I've gone right off topic, but I think we peaked in the dark ages. We should be enjoying the land and caves and trees and the moon. I reckon people's brains back in like the black death were so much more alive to everything, to superstition and magic. I mean, I know it was brutal back then as well, but while we are trying to not be brutal we bomb Iran and Gaza... it's insane what we're doing now.

It's true, knowledge lies in the realm of philosophical speculation, arising from mystery. But in the spirit of taking oneself too seriously, I'm obliged to talk about art history. Your work compresses the 20th and 21st century arc: the surrealist notion of free association vis-a-vis the artist's search for inner-consciousness; the way Rauschenberg's "combines" would invert those possibilities outwardly onto the viewer; and the 'lowbrow' vernacular criticism of artist-cum-publisher Robert Williams, all blended with the added mix of punk. I make these references because your work seems to idolize the mythology of the artist, e.g. Anish Kapoor and Gerhard Richter (Hail Hitler!), and the art world, e.g. meta-verse viewing rooms. What's your take on art history?

I love those two, but not Robert Williams. I never really liked that LSD crap. I'm more into Anish Kapoor, just wow. I don't even know what I'm looking at with his stuff. If I walk through a gallery thinking that shit, that's good, shit, shit, good, and then Anish Kapoor... suddenly I'm on another planet looking, especially the red wax stuff.

But let me read my notes:

Art history is just a load of old books. Books on the shelf, all dead. 99% of art is irrelevant, but I love the old glory of old art. You know the glory days. **I don't like the way the art world sets artists up to be worshiped by us scum, when we should be ridiculing most of them.** It's a house of cards, a house of cash. But I love the fake romance of the fake past, of what we think it was like: paint fumes and antique easels.

I love taking shots at all those fuckers, bringing them down to my level in my head. All that old shit set in stone, but I think it's not like that anymore. The whole history of our art is its own single era. It's one book. But it's nice to dream that you're part of it when you're not. **The future of art history isn't all this technological AI shit, it should be a retreat into the dark ages.** To real art, to magic, because I think that's what we all are. Art history seems to click onwards every 10 years in comfort—something new to break old rules with new rules—but I think the whole thing is just one style.

I like to think I paint like Bruce Lee. He said to fight in the style of no style, although I do have my selection of weapons. I am an art fan and a history nut. I rant on in my head like I'm clever when I'm not. If I could be anything, I'd be a poor untrained realist painter during the black death in the 1660's. Can you imagine, these realist paintings of all that squalor. I could be part of the history of art with paintings like that, but I don't

do paintings like that.

But like I was saying about Anish, I do fall in love with modern artists and their work. Sometimes it just crushes me. I've got that red wax in my brain at the minute, it's like **I can nearly puke and burst into tears and I go into spasm when I look at something like that.** But that's kind of rare, but that's real, what I call **elite fine art.** I think yeah it is out there and I love it, but it's very rare.

In the painting *A Portrait of Anish Kapoor*, you write in one register: "A MAN LAYING in the leaves...BLACK COCAINE"

Mmmm... *Anish Kapoor: The black snowman* I made a black snowman out of mud, and thought, god, it would be good to make it out of Vantablack, to honor him (Kapoor). I go for a 5 mile walk every morning in the dark, and was thinking, what if I came across Anish Kapoor's spirit under a pile of leaves... I could see it sparkling so I tried to paint it, but I can't really paint like that, so I was trying to build a black snowman. Free association...

But, imagine black cocaine! I mean you could rule the drug world if you invented black cocaine. Everyone would ask: **have you tried the new black cocaine?!** It would be the same as the white stuff, but it's just black. Or, you could just cover it with the vantablack stuff.

In that case, it would be imperceptible! On the prostrate body there's a frieze of glyptic annotations, reminiscent of cave painting, or Paul Klee.

I do like all that stuff, hieroglyphs and magic like voodoo patterns. I'm just dreaming that I'm Goya when I'm painting, but I'm not actually looking at what I do, so when I look down it's a bit of a shock. I think about being that realist painter back in the dark ages, but we just gotta stick with this **TINMANTIS**ness, mess. And then get back to work.

What about your Gerhard Richter painting?

Yeah, that was a mistake. I remember when I was looking at his work, I thought I could do that. I know everyone says that—I'll just slide a rule across some paint. And then I thought what if I have these yellow minions to help Gerhard Richter. I wasn't thinking at all and I happened to just write Hail Hitler above. I had thought the top part of that painting was gonna be a different painting. But I had put it all together, and then I just moved on. Then Mark Flood asked if he could buy that one; he thought it was so funny. I hadn't even thought about Richter being German, and then thought, oh my God it started making sense. Hail Hitler, the minions, yeah it all made sense, so then I had to pretend that was actually what it meant. I said, oh yeah, it's about the "cult of..." But really, I add things until it's accidentally made sense. That's the end of that painting.

I don't know if you knew this, but Richter once said: "art is the highest form of hope."

Oh...Yeah, I've gotta think about that for a few weeks. That makes me think: **there is no higher religion than the truth.** I love that one as well.

That's why I'm always trying to be truthful. I'm religious, right! Oh God, this is why I hate artists, this is why I hate myself. Once you uncork an artist, blah blah blah—i'm so great, my work is so great, everything's about me.

Well, curators are no better! It could be that we're all just trying to keep the magic alive. Your gestures into the public realm do this well—could you walk us through some of your interventions/performances?

Very briefly, I'll talk about it. With paintings, I think they're not good but I just won't stop. I'm just trying to make life a bit more interesting. It's like when you're in your little bubble and reach out every now and again and try to mess with the outside world.

One that I keep doing now is these evil coins. I stamp the word "evil" on those quarters you need to put into the Aldi shopping cart. I've been doing this for years. I must've stamped about 1,000 quarters with the word "evil." I think God, what if someone gave me some money and it was stamped with the word "evil." It would be insane! To think: who has done this? How did it get to me? What does it mean? I've got a little coin collection of crappy coins, but that would be the star of the show. I know people around here, they would freak out and think they'd been cursed.

I just thought it was funny to just keep putting these coins into circulation. I don't know what happens to them. Out of 1000 evil quarters, I've gotten one back. I've even waited in my car watching and waiting for the next customer to get my evil coin just to see what they would do. But it hasn't happened yet.

And the shoes?

I'd get old shoes, from a thrift store or some of my worn out shoes, and then paint them with acrylic paint so they look new again. Then, I sneak them into a Niketown or Footlocker. I'd put them back on display and take pictures of them, if I could. It is a bit scary: haven't done one for a few years cause I think these days you'll probably get arrested or shot—they would think it's a bomb. I thought it was funny, to give a shoe back to a shoe stop: to say thank you, I've won. We paid 100 bucks for your shoe, we've worn it or got it from the thrift store: I've painted it and I've given it back to you to say thank you. They must take a while to realize that it's not a real shoe. I've done a lot of things like that. They aren't projects, you know, just what I think would be funny. Dreaming that I'll be watching the local news one night and they'll say, "mysterious shoe was found in footlocker." I have a free rush like that. It's almost like snorting some black cocaine!

I've made a lot of things I've put on eBay that didn't sell. Things I thought would be funny that they'd even be for sale.

Like what? And if you put it on eBay, do you use the name **TINMANTIS**?

Oh no different ones... I made these really big metal pendants that I knew no one would want for \$29.99. I put them on Etsy as well. I did about 20 of them. No one bought them. But one day, they'll regret that!!!

Indeed.

I did stupid paintings of World War II tanks. My God, I did about one a week and I put them on eBay. I must have sold about 50 paintings at 50 bucks each. They were so bad. I tried to age them to make them look like they were painted back in the 40s. In the description, I'd write things like "origin unknown." I've got a few left. I suppose these things make you feel alive, right?

You've got to poke the bear, which lends itself to the hyper-presentness to your work. You digest and regurgitate propositions revealing the bitter ironies of the everyday, but there are icons (or weapons) which seem to re-occur: castles & fences, the masses (dead and alive), text (including your pseudonym), and aliens. How do you think you arrived at your iconography?

They're easy, icons. It's just me and it keeps repeating. I don't really go through mega phases. It's just me from the start: aliens, vampires, antichrist, Goth stuff, history, and death. I always ask myself what do I like, honestly? I make lists: chains, mazes, castles and that's pretty much what I paint. I like glitter and I like Star Wars so I made my glitter Star Wars paintings. Wow: what an equation: "Glitter" + "Star Wars" = "Glitter Star Wars" ! I mean there's 1 million other reasons in there, but it makes simple sense to me. I like aliens and vampires and I worship the devil, and I paint.

But I am the alien. I am the alien, and I am the stick man, and so are you. I don't understand anyone or anything: nor do you. A stick man with the top hat—that was my old graffiti thing—and we called him the uninvited; so, obviously that's me. Same with my name, which isn't my name, but it is too. I can't leave a painting without tagging it with an upside down cross, and my name: **Hail Tinmantis, Elite Fine Art!**

I've noticed more bodily imagery in your recent work?

I've been going through all my old paintings, from 10-15 years ago, and they were a lot more big tits and big dicks. It's kind of coming back, but I think it's quite funny really. I think of being at a job interview, and then I paint a naked woman or man, or both, boobs and a big dick at a table together. What an interview?!

My mum always used to say if you're ever nervous just imagine everyone with no clothes on, and I think that's probably it. I don't paint people with clothes on much.

You mentioned sculpture, and if I'm not mistaken, music too? But to me, it's hard to ignore the pluck of your brush. Neil Jenney once said, "'you cannot out paint the paint.'" What does the medium of painting mean to you?

What's painting to me? I have a couple of unresolved sculptures on the go right now. I've got a Mexican drug war victim. I made a cast of my brother and I was gonna put daggers in it, except my brother died a couple years ago and now I've got this replica of him and I'm trying to build up the courage to put all these knives into it, as the drug victim. I was telling you of the Rosetta Stone I'm love with at the minute, but I don't have much room. I have to paint on paper as it's easier to pile up. I don't have room or money or time for canvases or sculpture. I make a sculpture when I get a bit of extra room: I suppose that's the reason for my interventions because they take up other people's space. Though I have to paint. I found some thicker paper once, but it took up more physical space than thin. In fact, I found some thicker paint paper today and I thought that's gonna take a lot of room, that thick paper. I use thin paper. It sounds nuts as like an art practice but it's real, and I've said again and again, I live in the real world. I don't have 50,000 square of studio space—thank fuck, I'd probably make soulless irrelevant art, pathetic bullshit like everyone else. So painting is really my only option, it is quick and free and easy. I think back in the day I'd paint on the cave wall with just my hands, mud, and magic. That's really what I'd do. **I'm not clever. I don't wanna be. Just honest and make direct art. My hands with mud on a wall—that's it, painting. That's all I can do.**

You've mostly been working in isolation, under a pseudonym which has become your signature. Is there still a desire to remain anonymous? In this regard, how are you processing the prospect of your first solo show in New York?

My mask was always so I could disappear. When I first started putting my paintings on Instagram, I was gonna hold up my paintings. I thought I would just hold them up and take a picture. I'll dress in white with a white mask and I'll just disappear. But that ended up being a thing rather than not a thing. I thought about this show and the only way I can step out of the gloom, or my gloom: I asked the gallery to fill the space with dry ice so I can just stand in the middle and just dissolve in the white. **But I'm only agreeing to the show because things have gotten out of hand and there's no going back. I feel like I'm stepping into my grave at that show.** I think maybe I am. I'm in a coma really but I don't care because I'm not part of that world. I'm not even an artist. I can't paint and I'm not even **TINMANTIS**! And if you can fill it up with dry ice and I can just dissolve, that's perfect, right?