



**NYO**  
magazine

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DOWNTOWN  
ISSUE

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JOHN SLATTERY TALKS  
STERLING, WOMANIZING,  
AND MATT WEINER

+ Our picks for a modern-day  
Sterling Cooper



*It's Later Than You Think*, top, *It's Not About You*, below.



Trey Speegle.

# PAINT BY NUMBERS

*Trey Speegle brings back an old classic*

By Rachel Morgan

The artist sounds off on his paint-by-number work, what inspires him and his Texas roots.

**Tell me about your recent exhibition at Benrimon Contemporary, 'It's Not About You.' What were the major themes behind the work? The inspiration?**

Every piece has the word "you" in its title. Hence, 'It's Not About You.' It's ironic and a bit subversive at the same time. Everyone is always coming from their own perspective and living in their own head. The tendency is to take the world personally. This may be the time we live in or perhaps it's a uniquely American trait, always making



everything about us.

**What was theme of your show, 'What Are You Waiting For?'**

As with 'It's Not About You,' 'What Are You Waiting For?' is both ironic and earnest, speaking to the viewer and my own internal dialogue at once. The surface and paint-by-number is the hook that pulls you in; once enticed, hopefully, you will linger enough to find some personal meaning.

**How does being from Houston influence your aesthetic?**

I'm not sure it really does. But being gay and

getting out of Texas probably influenced a lot, though.

**So you also collect paint-by-number paintings—why do they speak to you?**

This all started when I inherited a collection of some 200-plus vintage paint-by-number paintings from Michael O'Donoghue, a great friend and the original head writer of *Saturday Night Live*. When he passed away suddenly, his widow, Cheryl Hardwick, gave the collection to me. Now I have something like 3,000. I use them as a visual vocabulary to informs the

work, but my work is not about paint-by-number[s.]

**What book is on your nightstand right now?**

*Clear Your Clutter with Feng Shui*.

**Where did you eat your last meal?**

I ordered from my favorite West Village sushi joint, Sakura, and ate it in bed

**What specific artist do you collect, if any?**

Warhol, Keith Haring, McDermott & McGough, Mark Morrisroe, Charles Lutz, Wayne Coe, Doug & Mike Starn, David Byrne, Lawrence Weiner. I also participate in Art Jambo-

ree, which is a downtown artist's collective—everything is \$50 and under. I have gotten some great work there—Scott Lifshutz, Leah Durner, Maripol, Joshua Jordan, Richard Haines.

**If you weren't an artist, you would be?**

I always thought it would be nice to run a flower shop somewhere, but after having already been an art director and designer for *Vogue*, *Vanity Fair*, *Us Weekly*, etc. It took me decades to actually even consider calling myself an artist and now I can't imagine not wearing that hat.

**Anything else?**

I have to tell you, this makes me think of a line my late friend Quentin Crisp once said. He was being interviewed at great length when he finally said, 'You must stop this interview now as I have come to end of my personality.' Me too.

*Speegle will appear at the Chelsea Market Anthropologie May 7 from 10 a.m. to noon. He has a group show at Fair Folks and a Goat in New York opening June 1.*

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