

Art Journal | Artist's Project

WHATWETHINKASINSIGNIFICANTPROVIDESTHEPURESTAIRWE-BREATHE

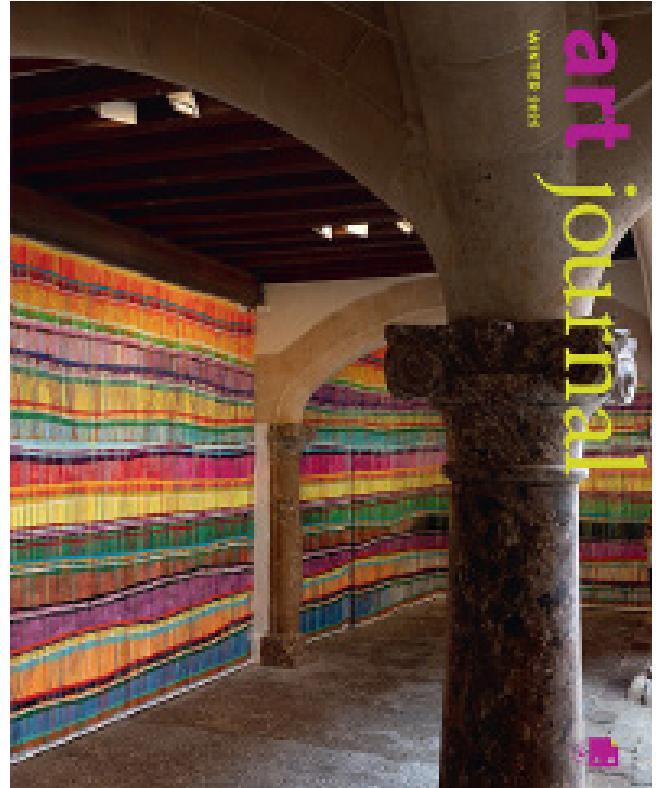
11 December 2025

At Casal Soller, a landmarked, ornate sixteenth-century building now used as an exhibition space by the city of Palma, I had the chance to work in a historic, multistoried site.

When painting on-site, I can change the perception of the architecture by transforming the space. At Casal Soller, the painting became quite complex and can be experienced from different heights. The open courtyard and the change of daylight add to the experience. The architectural propositions I am confronted with are often far from ideal: I have painted tunnels, hallways, facades, lobbies, church walls and museum walls, private homes, a variety of differently intentioned spaces. I had to learn to take on every kind of space without getting preoccupied by its challenges. There are challenges for the viewer as well. My work asks you to submerge yourself, becoming part of the room by entering, and then stepping back to contemplate and understand the installation on a more intellectual level. The abundance of visual information provided asks for an active, self-determined, independent viewer to locate and find oneself inside of the painting.

Painting for me is paying attention to process and detail, and being interested in analyzing the behavior and relationships of materials and colors. For example, if I take a loaded brush and move it across the wall horizontally, I will get a colored line as wide as the brush for as long as the color lasts. Paint drips run down the wall creating vertical lines; the more paint the brush holds, the more drips it leaves behind, their length dependent on the viscosity of the paint. Reloading the brush creates a rhythm, another important component of my work. Repeating single motions like these over and over creates a dense, woven surface which becomes an immensely complex image that alters the viewing experience depending on one's shifting point of view. Applying this concept to a whole architectural space over every surface gives more visual information than one can immediately process. Now a dialogue is initiated where the viewers must locate themselves in the sea of colors.

I like to trigger that first spontaneous reaction where color hits the nervous system without being filtered; the moment when your immediate experience has yet to make room for analyzation—just raw presence of color. Then the dialogue can open up to questions about what painting is for us today: the surface of binder and pigments created by a brush versus a flat digital screen, or the intense physical and sensual experience that lives on inside of us as personal memories.



All Images: WHATWETHINKASINSIGNIFICANTPROVIDESTHEPURESTAIRWE-BREATHE, 2025, Pigments, acrylic binder on walls of Casal Soller, Mallorca, Spain. Photographs by Juan David Cortés; provided by Casal Soller.

Markus Linnenbrink (b. 1961, Dortmund, Germany) studied at the Academy of Fine Arts, Berlin, and the Gesamthochschule, Kassel. Recent solo exhibitions include Museo es Baluard, Palma de Mallorca; Miles McEnery Gallery, New York; and Taubert Contemporary, Berlin. His work is in the permanent collections of the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Ministry of Culture, The Hague; Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts Museum, Philadelphia; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, among others. Linnenbrink lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.



