

Artist Statement  
**Ashley Norwood Cooper**  
ZINC contemporary

Our dog digs in the backyard. He barks at the mailman. He sniffs the butts of all of our house guests. We tell him, "No." We fill his holes and plant grass seed over them. We remind him about etiquette and the harmlessness of mail carriers. He is a dog. He is driven by his primordial dogness and there is nothing we can do to change him.

Humans are driven by different impulses. We plant seeds, draw pictures, tapout rhythms. We gather the disparate random events of our lives into tales of heroes and demons. These impulses run deep. They are the essence of our humanity.

Go ahead you Rational Thinkers: Call us obsolete. Psychoanalyze and pathologize. Medicate and eradicate. Cut the funding and declare the whole thing dead.

It always rises again. It is the graffiti on the subways, the heroes in our comic books, the sad but hopeful container garden on the apartment balcony. You can see it rising in the communities of previously hermetic poets, painters, and fiddlers who find each other on social media. Painting is forever because the unpredictable, viscous quality of paint expresses the messiness of the human condition in a way that cannot be replaced by any other technology.

So let this be my artist's statement: I paint because I am a human being and when I stop you will know that I am dead.