

## I KNOW WHAT I DO, BUT I DO NOT KNOW WHAT WHAT I DO, DOES

When, as a freelance writer, I am requested to write a text about an artistic practice I am unfamiliar with, I frequently feel like a clairvoyant, attempting to extract truth from a few scattered elements and to give them a new relevance through my intuition.

Tarot reading has long fascinated me since it provides insights into real-life events through patterns of meaning—similar to how art critique works. For this group show, I drew a tarot card for each artist and wrote a brief description connecting the card's significance to their work.

The card deck I used for this experiment is the Rider-Waite deck from 1909, which set the standard for numerous future tarot decks.

*Paola Paleari, September 2024*



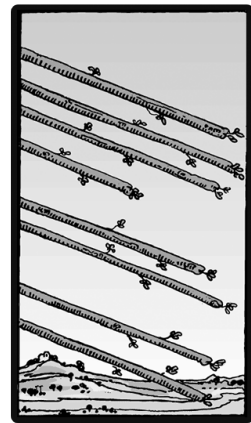
The Eight of Cups



The Emperor



The Six of Pentacles



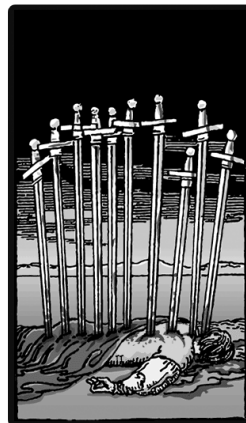
The Eight of Wands



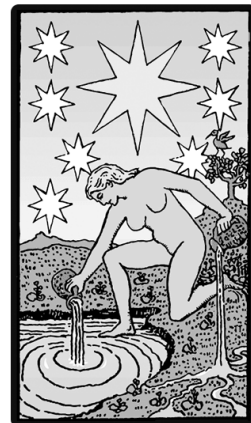
The Tower



The Three of Cups



The Ten of Swords



The Star

### **Kenneth Alme - The Eight of Cups**

The Eight of Cups suggests movement—both physical and emotional—as it represents walking away from a known situation or mindset in search of a more meaningful alternative. Alme’s work is similarly marked by pondered motion, with abstract gestures conveying both contemplation and dynamic energy.

The Eight of Cups represents the emotional strain that comes with leaving something familiar to seek what hides under the surface. Similarly, Kenneth Alme’s work lives in the tension between the two poles of abstraction and figuration. His paintings and sculptures often balance between the concrete (symbolic or natural motifs) and the conceptual, creating a space where the viewer is invited to explore what lies beyond the immediately recognizable. This tension mirrors the Eight of Cups’ journey—a quest for something beyond the visible or tangible, hinting at the unknown.

### **Leda Bourgogne - The Emperor**

The Emperor symbolises the physical world and mastery over the material realm. His establishment of boundaries can be paralleled to Leda Bourgogne’s use of metal applications, zippers, and timber frames to partition her works. These rigid interventions imbue a sense of order upon the soft, flexible textiles she operates with, much like The Emperor’s role in imposing structure on his reign.

Her balance between control and freedom evokes the Emperor’s capacity to dominate yet also protect the milder, more fluid aspects of life. The Emperor card is about dominion over the external world, while Bourgogne emphasizes the power of imagination in art, love, and knowledge. In this sense, the artist moves beyond the purely physical sphere that the Emperor governs, suggesting that true authority can as well lie in the creative and emotional domains.

### **Magnus Frederik Clausen - The Six of Pentacles**

The Six of Pentacles depicts a figure distributing coins to others, symbolizing the allocation of resources and power. The balance of giving and receiving is mirrored in Magnus Frederik Clausen’s process of orchestrating the creation of his clock paintings, where he delegates the task of creating the paintings to his assistants through a system of instructions, while allowing them to bring their own gestures and styles to the work. This collaborative model breaks from the traditional notion of the solitary artist, much as the Six of Pentacles challenges the idea of keeping resources to oneself.

On the other hand, The Six of Pentacles can raise questions about the power dynamics involved in any type of trade. In Clausen’s work, the notion of taste remains his artistic variable, which could be seen as his retained authority in the creative exchange. While his assistants contribute to the execution with their temperaments, Clausen’s personal preference drives the overall selection process.

### **Dag Erik Elgin - The Eight of Wands**

The Eight of Wands often symbolizes clear communication, rapid information transfer, and efficient idea exchange. In his painting series “La Collection Moderne”, Dag Erik Elgin’s use of museum labels in place of the paintings they refer to can be seen as a form of transmission, where the artworks’ cultural significance is communicated through text rather than image. This transformation of labels into the main subjects of the artwork creates a unique type of communication—one that is textual and operates on historical reference instead of visual representation.

Elgin’s labels are exact, clear, and rich in historical significance—just like the eight wands that are shooting through the sky on a precise path. Finally, Elgin presents the viewer with the trace of the artwork in its translation to written language, similarly to how the Eight of Wands symbolizes the effect and direction of movement rather than what originally caused it.

### **Angélique Heidler - The Tower**

The Tower represents rapid upheaval, confusion, and the downfall of false structures. Just as the card depicts the disintegration of established standards to make place for deeper honesty, Angélique Heidler’s art dismantles consumer society’s glossy surface. She collects abandoned materials from the edges of urban life—business cards, press cuttings, faded paintings—and transforms them into new forms that defy conventional perceptions of beauty and worth.

Like in The Tower, her canvases are places of transition, where the relics of a previous existence are dismantled and rebuilt into something raw. Heidler challenges the boundaries of taste with her unfiltered and instinctual approach, creating confrontational pieces that demand the viewer to take on the fragmentation inherent in modern existence.

### **Max Ruf - The Three of Cups**

The Three of Cups suggests fluidity in relationships and the way life flows through interactions. It represents the confluence of different energies coming together to create something larger and more meaningful than the sum of its parts. Similarly, Max Ruf emphasizes how painting should remain open, allowing multiple interpretations. Ruf speaks of painting as both a natural and artificial landscape, which resonates with the way the Three of Cups symbolizes a balance between different forces.

Various energies coming together is a common theme in this card—much like Ruf’s paintings integrate natural and symbolic elements, physical movement, and abstract representations. The gestural approach employed by Ruf could be compared to the collective dance seen in the tarot image, where the merging of the physical (paint) and symbolic (concepts) is in constant motion.

### **Maria Wæhrens - The Ten of Swords**

The Ten of Swords represents the culmination of an arduous journey. It evokes a sense of finality and a profound, transformational process—both physically and emotionally. With a focus on personal experiences and spiritual abstraction, Maria Wæhrens' practice reflects the tarot card's themes of confrontation and eventual renewal. Both are concerned with endings that culminate in transformation, whether via the deconstruction of social traditions or the endurance of emotional hardships.

Wæhrens' investigation of sexual identity, motherhood, and spirituality are expressions of the same cathartic energy brought on by the card and her paintings, like the Ten of Swords, depicts the painful but necessary process of pushing beyond personal and collective bounds to create something new and highly contemplative.

### **Molly Zuckerman-Hartung - The Star**

The Star often represents the possibility of revolution and the birth of new ideas, bringing clarity after a period of uncertainty. Zuckerman-Hartung's work "95 Theses on Painting" evokes a similar revolutionary spirit, challenging not only painting conventions but also broader societal values through her engagement with capitalist codes. By asserting herself in the art world with these theses—bold declarations of her intent as an artist—she provides a new way of seeing and making art.

Like The Star, which shines brightly as a visionary force, Zuckerman-Hartung's work provides a critique for painting both as a medium and a form of intellectual inquiry. This process of illuminating and rethinking the current systems mirrors The Star's function as a compass, offering a path forward when circumstances appear unclear or are simply taken for granted.