

DORSKY
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DONUT MUFFIN

MIKE AMRHEIN, SARAH BRAMAN, ARIEL DILL, JOE FYFE, EJ HAUSER,
CLINTON KING, PAM LINS, LAUREN LULOFF, CHRIS MARTIN, NATHLIE PROVOSTY,
ROBERT RHEE, CHRISTIAN SAMPSON, AND STEPHEN TRIAX

Curated by Jessica Duffett and Tamara Gonzales

January 13 – March 10, 2013

Opening reception: Sunday, January 13, 2:00–5:00 p.m.

DONUT MUFFIN

donut | 'dɒ, nət

noun

variant spelling of **doughnut**.

doughnut | 'dɒ, nət (also donut)

noun

a small fried cake of sweetened dough, typically in the shape of a ball or ring.

muffin | 'məfɪn

noun

a small domed cake or quick bread made from batter or dough: *blueberry muffins*.

• short for **English muffin**.

ORIGIN early 18th cent.: of unknown origin.

What is a donut muffin? A donut muffin is a highly addictive muffin-shaped donut. Made from donut batter and dusted with sugar, it looks like a muffin and tastes like a donut. It is both a donut and a muffin, and it revels in its shameless sugary seduction.

Eating these delights in a local coffee shop, we (the curators) came to realize that our conversations about art and these hybrid pastries were related. Planning *Donut Muffin*, we had conversations with artists approaching painting from a sculptural perspective. We discussed sculpture as drawing, and light as painting. We came to realize that in contrast to the orthodoxy of Modernist and subsequent postmodern practices, these artists embrace porous and iterative approaches to art-making, and in so doing, acknowledge the ever-shifting experience of the viewer. We saw the studio and talismans of everyday life folded into formal practices of painting and sculpture. Hierarchies of art objecthood and materiality were being challenged. Above all, we found the



Pam Lins *Lincoln Bookend Obstruction*, 2010



EJ Hauser *forgetmenot*, 2012



Clinton King *Confetti you make me cry*, 2012

role of memory and perception, the subjective and emotional aspects of art-making and experiencing art, at the forefront of discussions about their bodies of work. This last alchemic piece encompasses the attitude and position of *Donut Muffin*: transcending two worlds through unification of seemingly contradictory camps—painting and sculpture, conceptual and intuitive, the space between intention and perception.

Clinton King arrived at his painting practice from a body of sculptural work in which he often transformed found objects from everyday life into the rigorous forms of minimalist sculpture. His work has also been informed by working closely with the works of LeWitt and Stiegel. As such, King approaches painting with, at first, a clearly defined set of parameters and technical processes. From here the work goes through numerous iterations. King draws from imagery and touch ranging from minimalist art to traditional textile patterns. The intuitive sensibility that defines King's work is at once rigorously conceptual through its commitment to parameters and specific processes, yet leaves room for intuition and improvisation.

EJ Hauser's painting practice is deliberately multifaceted, an aggregate of multiple threads and conversations. Discrete bodies of work coalesce to form a larger project. Subsets include text-based works, figurative painting, abstract painting, and conceptual approaches to color. Similar to King's initial "parameters," Hauser approaches paintings by first establishing an armature, and then building up and out from this initial structure. These early forms diverge and challenge singular readings of painting, canonical notions of "signature" practices, and gender identity as it relates to painting and art-making.

Pam Lins' work digs deep into the viewer's psychological readings of sculpture and the hierarchy of art objects. Methods of display (pedestals) are conflated with sculpture and painting. Iconic motifs from sculpture, architecture, painting and design combine to disrupt conventional approaches to reading an art object. In *Lincoln Bookend Obstruction*, 2010, Lins cheekily appropriates an image of a sculpture of Lincoln for the subject of the painting displayed at the top of the work. Figurative associations result from the relationship of the plywood pedestal to the paint-



Stephen Truax *I never knew a man could tell so many lies* (detail), 2012

ing, and sum up to create an “obstruction” within the space of the gallery. It is as if what was once a demure object on a pedestal blocking a path towards a painting is now a linebacker holding ground for sculpture.

Stephen Truax's project-based work brings into conversation the history of painting and the personal experience of the artist in context. The intimate and the formal are put forth on the same plane, advocating for an art that can be at once conceptual and rigorous while simultaneously deeply emotional and personal. In *I never knew a man could tell so many lies*, 2012, two thinly painted vibrant abstractions hang on plywood panels. The casual installation brings the presence of the studio into the gallery. Truax's deft handling of materials in these paintings on paper stretched on traditional canvas stretcher bars pointedly reveals the paintings' classic preparatory structure. What at a distance are bold gestural abstract paintings, at closer look are delicate arresting works that collapse perceived rankings of materials in painting and its display. Furthermore, the title itself leaves room for interpretation. This appropriated Neil Young lyric could be just a riff on a common cultural icon. After all, the album *On the Beach* from which it is derived jibes well with Truax's breezy palette. At

the same time, the darker implications of the text reverberate with the role of memory.

The works of **Sarah Braman, Chris Martin, Joe Fyfe, Mike Amrhein, Lauren Luloff and Rob Rhee** in *Donut Muffin* all share a common relationship to Modernist painting and sculpture as well as materials that hark back to the sensibility of Arte Povera. Here the choice of cloth, wood, bread, gourds, and recycled metal do not so much announce a “poor man's art,” but an artist's choice to embrace the familiar stuff that makes up our everyday lives. The implications of such choices acknowledge the extraordinary in the quotidian.

Martin's bread painting and Rhee's gourd sculptures will inevitably (d)evolve due to their organic materiality. In Martin's hands, “our daily bread,” is transformed to make a humorous minimalist grid out of a still life and pantry staple. The quintessence of mass-produced preservative-laced food—Wonder Bread—is here positioned as high culture for years to come. The unfixed nature of the work's material, destined to change past the bread's expiration date, critiques preoccupations with preciousness and archival attributes of artworks.

Rhee's *Wind Egg* gourd sculptures are evocative of ancient ritual and common use. Some are embellished with jewels, sport light bulbs, or are adorned with rich painterly swashes of color. Like a steampunk Brancusi, the work is at once familiar and alien. Rhee's practice deploys formal historic motifs of sculpture, such as the totemic forms of *Second Bird of Passage*, and the Arp-like forms of the *Wind Eggs*. They simultaneously engage in deliberately impermanent materials, such as the gourds themselves, that relate to folk and craft applications.



Robert Rhee *Second Bird of Passage*, 2012



Joe Fyfe *TALAT SAO*, 2011

Tensions are created between art object and functional utility, as well as the possibility of ritual intention as opposed to agnostic interpretation. These uncanny objects are shrouded in a cloud of mystery. Multiple meanings arise from the sheer possibility of interpretation.

Braman's signature purple color irreverently sets her apart from the strict rules of the predecessors she often evokes: Judd, Bell, and Shapiro. Her geometric shapes result in art that straddles both domestic and interior life with the history of abstract painting and sculpture. Her formal explorations of shapes are always imbued with a "found" quality. In *In the Woods*, 2012, minimal panels and expressionist paint result in tensions with scrappy appropriated support materials, challenging the pecking order of art materials. Driving by her home in rural Massachusetts, Braman will often find such abandoned fragments by the side of the road, and later imbue them with the same significance as the pure forms of major postmodern sculpture.

Fyle's deliberate repurposing of common fabrics from his travels form artworks that are at once paintings, sculptures, and appropriations. Objects once fluttering from a clothesline are treated with the reverence of a Palermo monochrome. They pay homage to the legacy of non-representational art while simultaneously

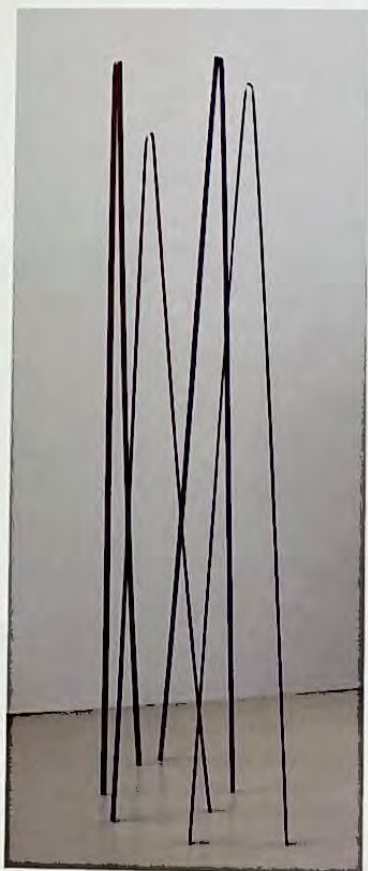


Sarah Braman *In the Woods*, 2012



Lauren Luloff *Pregnant*, 2010

embracing the spontaneity of *readymades*. His subtle hand nudges the cloth into something larger than its humble origins. Able to be rolled up and carried like an art nomad's *thanka*, they feel made to be kept close



Mike Amrhein *V*, 2012



Chris Martin *Bread Painting*, 2012

and contemplated.

Comprising Mike Amrhein's Stanley tape sculpture, *V*, 2012, are tall stork-like legs that appear to be anchored or frozen mid-step. Yet with the slightest breeze they collapse. The startling rattle of the metal is unnerving, revealing the viewers' associations with the preciousness of art objects. The fallen sculptures transform into line drawings on the gallery floor, reacting to the moving presence of viewers and the subtle shifts of the exhibition environment. In *Condenser*, 2010, a playful tic-tac-toe drawing scrawled onto an air-conditioning condenser makes for a provocative wall relief poking fun at glamorous metallic paintings of artists ranging from Burri to Warhol to Koons. The vernacular of common New York City air conditioner graffiti is positioned as high art. Both pieces imbue utilitarian materials with the cerebral flourish of minimalism, while maintaining irresistible humor and verve.

Lauren Luloff often uses fabric to make paintings and sculptures. Dipped in rabbit skin glue, a traditional painter's sizing material, then placed over unique shaped stretchers, her work explores the nebulous territory between sculpture and painting. *Pregnant*, 2010, is a full-bellied three-dimensional painting on a whimsical wooden frame. The curvaceous translucent "body" of the artwork resembles the Venus of Willendorf while the airy pinks and wash of white suggest a Rothko in their hue and proportionality. Luloff brings the personal associations of fabric, light and three-dimensional forms into the lexicon of painting, collapsing public and personal memory and iconography.

Arial Dill's works take as their starting point diverse early-twentieth

century experiments in abstraction. Kupka-esque lines swirl into baskets, sunlight, and wind. Intimate scale and economical paint surfaces are expansive beyond the limits of the paintings. Wild vibrations emerge from language that nods to historic painting as well as craft and cultural traditions. Through conflating high art with motifs of common culture including weaving and textiles, Dill undermines the weight denoted to the American patriarchy of signature gestural painting. *Black and White Orgone Accumulator Blanket*, 2009, a collaboration between Dill and Christian Sampson is executed to specifications as originally designed by legendary psychoanalyst William Reich. In the gallery context this "cosmic healing device," adorned with patterns inspired with Sonia Delaunay, is imbued with new meanings as viewers observe and engage with the work.

In the *Donut Muffin* installation, reverberating above the Orgone blanket is a light sculpture by Christian Sampson. Painted Plexiglas becomes the conduit for reflective auric stripes and waterfalls of color. Channeling equal amounts of James Turrel and C.W. Leadbeater (Annie Beasant's Theosophical partner) Sampson's sculptures could be a color healing apparatus, or a prototype of a thought-form machine along Theosophical lines. It's worth mentioning here that Malevich, Kandinsky, Kupka, and Mondrian were all interested and influenced by Theosophy. Then again Sampson's sculptures fit right into the contemporary climate working as they do in a white cube casting prisms for one's sheer pleasure.

Nathlie Provosty works look to a time when art and science were coupled. Studying the vast amount of



Christian Sampson
Projected Form 7, 2012



Nathlie Provosty *Miran, 2012*

present exhibition lies in their ability to reach across time, materials, and borders. ■

— Jessica Duffett and Tamara Gonzales,
New York, 2012

BIOGRAPHIES

Jessica Duffett is a curator based in Brooklyn, NY. During her recent time as part of the team at the Castelli Gallery she had the privilege of organizing historic exhibitions including *Robert Morris Five Decades* and *Reflected in the Mirror There Was a Shadow: Roy Lichtenstein and Andy Warhol*. While part of the team at Mitchell-Innes & Nash she was honored to organize exhibitions including *Chris Martin Works on Paper* and *William Pope.L October Projects*. Her interests range from impressionist painting to post-war and contemporary art, also having served while at MI&N as the project-lead for the forthcoming Cézanne catalogue raisonné. Independently, Ms. Duffett has organized group shows in Brooklyn at Storefront Bushwick and Lumenhouse.

Originally from California, multidisciplinary artist Tamara Gonzales, has lived in New York for more than 3 decades. She has exhibited her paintings most recently at *Norte Maar*, The Dependent Art Fair with James Fuentes Gallery, Derek Eller Gallery, and NURTUREart. Upcoming events include *Art In the Corner Room* at the New York Public Library and a solo exhibition with *Shoot the Lobster* at Martos Gallery. Her work has been described as "One part Fourteenth Street and one part dirt road."

art and hermetic visuals that pre-internet would have taken a lifetime to gather, she engages in her own personal exploration of transmutation with paint. The painting *Mantapa*, 2012—also the architectural name for a Hindu temple porch—can be read as an invitation to enter an artwork or a physical body. Alchemically ruddy and bright, it is aligned with *rubedo*—the final work signaling the alchemist success in fusing spiritual and material.

Using a *Donut Muffin* as the conceptual springboard for an art exhibition, may not be such a stretch as it first seems. Similar to alchemy, baking has very strict rules—you have lots of leeway making a stew but fail to measure for your cake and the results are disastrous.

Perhaps the most popular reading of alchemy is turning base metal into gold but another reading also exists: a practitioner of the arts who in co-existence with the "tools-of-their-trade" undergoes an inner gnosis. At one time, painting was seen as a cousin of alchemy because of all of the chemistry involved in making paint. That may not be the case today, but artists who are deeply involved with "inner-work" in their art making could be said to lead with the heart. In contrast, conceptual artists lead with the brain. We put forth that, in fact, both practices may be two sides of the same coin. The Greeks acknowledged the heart as an organ of perception much like we today acknowledge the brain as the main arbitrator of sensations. In bringing together these artists' work, we seek to join rather than separate these two centers of origination. The readings we have described give way to many.

The strength of the objects in the present exhibition lies in their ability to reach across time, materials, and borders. ■

CHECKLIST

MIKE AMRHEIN

V, 2012
Steel
108 3/4 x 17 1/2 x 7/8 in
Courtesy the artist
CONDENSER, 2010
Copper, aluminum, steel
18 3/4 x 12 x 3 in
Courtesy the artist

SARAH BRAMAN

FRIEND, 2011
Spray-paint and latex
on wood
22 1/2 x 19 1/4 x 16 1/2 in
Courtesy Mitchell-Innes
& Nash

IN THE WOODS, 2012
Table top, wood and paint
44 3/4 x 46 x 2 1/2 in
Courtesy Mitchell-Innes
& Nash

ARIEL DILL

ASTROLOGY, 2012
Acrylic and oil on canvas
20 x 16 in
Courtesy the artist

CALICO KAZOO, 2012
Oil on canvas
30 x 22 in
Courtesy the artist

CLUB SCENE, 2012
Acrylic and oil on canvas
20 x 16 in
Courtesy the artist

JOE FYFE

SOEUR CONCEPTA, 2011
Felt and cotton
58 x 64 in
Courtesy the artist
TALAT SAO, 2011
Cotton
76 1/2 x 39 3/4 in
Courtesy the artist

EJ HAUSER

GOOD NEWS, 2012
Oil on canvas
63 x 60 in
Courtesy the artist
FORGETMENOT, 2012
Superpages, marker, oil
paint on canvas
14 x 11 in
Courtesy the artist
HANDLERS, 2012
Oil on canvas
25 x 21 in
Courtesy the artist

CLINTON KING

CONFETTI YOU MAKE ME
CRY, 2012
Oil on canvas
47 1/2 x 32 in
Courtesy the artist
DON'T TELL ME TELL HER,
2012
Oil on canvas
11 x 14 in
Courtesy the artist

HOW TO HANDLE THE
PAIN OF UNREQUITED
LOVE, 2012
Oil and enamel on canvas
14 x 11 in
Courtesy the artist

PAM LINS

LINCOLN BOOKEND
OBSTRUCTION, 2010
Acrylic on panel, acrylic
paint, plaster, ACX plywood
60 x 23 1/2 x 23 1/2 in
Courtesy Rachel Uffner
Gallery

LAUREN LULOFF

PREGNANT, 2010
Oil on fabric, wood
70 1/2 x 24 x 22 in
Courtesy the artist

CHRIS MARTIN

BREAD PAINTING, 2012
Acrylic and acrylic gel me-
dium and bread on wood
20 x 16 in
Courtesy Mitchell-Innes
& Nash

NATHLIE PROVOSTY

MIRAN, 2012
Oil on linen
44 x 36 in
Courtesy the artist
MANTAPA, 2012
Oil on linen
44 x 36 in
Courtesy the artist

ROBERT RHEE

SECOND BIRD OF
PASSAGE, 2012
Gourds, styrofoam, paper
towels, croslite™, cage,
paint wheat paste, crayon
143 x 36 x 31 in
Courtesy the artist

WIND EGGS, 2010-12
Gourds and mixed media
Dimensions variable
Courtesy the artist

CHRISTIAN SAMPSON

PROJECTED FORM 7, 2012
Acrylic on Plexiglass, wood,
aluminum
18 x 24 x 2 in
Courtesy the artist

ARIEL DILL AND CHRISTIAN SAMPSON

BLACK AND WHITE
ORGONE ACCUMULATOR
BLANKET, 2009
Mixed media
48 x 30 x 5 in
Courtesy the artists

STEPHEN TRUAX

I NEVER KNEW A MAN
COULD TELL SO MANY
LIES, 2012
Gouche on stretched and
prepared paper on plywood
with clamp
2 parts: 48 x 96 in each
Courtesy the artist

Cover: **Ariel Dill, Astrology, 2012**

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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This exhibition of course would not have been possible without our dear family and friends with their constant support and encouragement. Lastly, we would like to thank the inventor, of unknown name, of the Donut Muffin for their brilliant contribution to the culinary arts and our lives in particular.



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