

ARTFORUM

Critic's Pick

"Painter Painter"

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by: Jay Gabler

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Modesty is not a word commonly associated with the history of abstraction, but in this exhibition, curators Eric Crosby and Bartholomew Ryan have gathered work by a group of up-and-coming artists—nearly all born in the 1970s—who largely eschew grand gestures, illuminating their own painterly processes in a manner so humble that it sometimes borders on self-deprecation. In Charles Mayton's diptych *Blind Ventriloquist*, 2012, for example, a rough roller-made painting is paired with a more delicately painted canvas that's almost entirely obscured by a stained rag and a silkscreened image of the artist's accidentally painted studio wall. In *We lead healthy lives to keep filthy minds*, 2013, the multimedia artist Jay Heikes shows an eclectic wall-mounted array of sculpted tools—sticks, paddles, scrapers—that might conceivably have been used for the application of paint in his studio, though in this piece they weren't.

Other objects—treated somewhat more violently—also appear in *The Failure of Contingency*, 2012, by Molly Zuckerman-Hartung, in which a long spaghetti-cut drop cloth is strewn over the floor, with one end culminating in a matte black globe under two foldable chairs. Part of the globe's northern hemisphere has been scalped, and its convex skin is incorporated in an entirely different work (*The Impossible*, 2012) installed on a nearby wall. Here, the radial detritus of one work becomes the genesis of another. While most of the pieces in this show suggest an inward (or even downward) gaze, the work of Sarah Crowner is an exception. The boldly colored blocks of canvas in *Ciseaux Rideaux*, 2012, were stitched together by the artist in a manner that takes inspiration both in method and in composition from the worlds of fashion and design. Crowner implicitly suggests that an occasional glance beyond the confines of the studio walls is liberating and does painters—and painting—a world of good.