

For Immediate Release:

Surfaces, Supports. ***Tatiana Berg & Evan Nesbit***

curated by David Harper

November 16 — December 23, 2012

reception: Friday, November 16, 6:00--9:00 p.m.

These works emit the loud outcry of the material, of the very oil or enamel paints themselves. These two artists grapple with the material in a way which is completely appropriate to it and which they have discovered due to their talent. This even gives the impression that they serve the material. Differentiation and integration create mysterious effects. Jiro Yoshihara, 1955



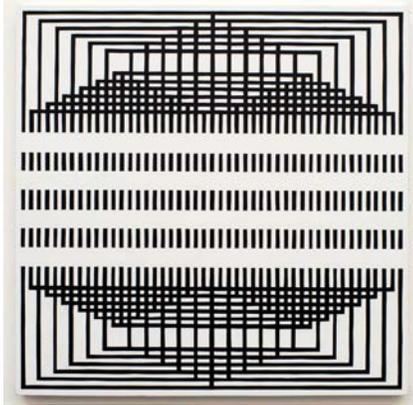
Though five decades old, this quote by Jiro Yoshihara, founder of the Japanese avant-garde artistic movement Gutai, seems to anticipate this exhibition, which examines the practices of two contemporary American painters, Tatiana Berg and Evan Nesbit, and their shared affection for material. The exhibition's title is adapted from the eponymous French artistic movement of 1960s and 70s that, like Gutai before it, shares many of the same concerns including a preoccupation with materiality, especially that which can be considered non-traditional, a sensation of instantaneousness and informalism, and the importance of gesture. The works of Berg and Nesbit fall within this continuum and, at first glance, appear surprisingly related to one another, particularly in light of their East Coast-West Coast divide. Beyond connections to these previous movements, their paintings share many qualities: a strange sense of humor, an exuberant, rich, and sometimes borderline psychedelic palette, various Pop-influenced sensibilities, and a devotion to paint and process.

There are countless ways to paint a painting. Throughout Berg's corpus, one sees canvases made by slashing, as in *Green Valentine* (2012); spraying, as in *Minor Coastal Flooding* (2012); or applying various coats of paint, some watered down to nearly transparent and some thick and opaque, fingers dragged through the surface, as in *X* (2012). In the case of Nesbit, many of his works are created by applying layer upon layer to the reverse side of the canvas. The colors are pushed into one another, sometimes barely staining and sometimes thickly oozing through the surface of stretched burlap or wool, as in works such as *Between Trees* or *Lewis* (both 2012). Both bodies of work appear casual, even indifferent, but neither is. Like many of their artistic predecessors, including Supports/Surfaces or Gutai, both artists have moved past the distinct edges created by stretched canvas, to play with the relationship between pictorial and physical space, as can be seen in Berg's well-known "tent" paintings or in Nesbit's irregularly-shaped works on panel from the series, *Porosity* (2012).

Berg's work is fast, active, and smooth. She has described her work as being about an "indulgent painterly lust." For Berg, the space of the surface of a painting is "performative" and her process an energetic jumping back and forth from canvas to canvas. On the other hand, Nesbit's process appears slower, with a strong relation to gravity. It feels organic, tactile, methodical, and philosophical. His distinctive method strives to subvert traditional picture making by painting the canvas the wrong way, pushing paint from the back towards the front. Perhaps the furthest distance between the two artists resides in their artistic approach to picture making, and in the diverse, often anomalous methods they employ. Despite their similarities and differences, both artists make paintings that take painting as the subject of their investigation and, in doing so, prove it remains audaciously alive.

In the project space:

Mark Sengbusch



The work of young, Brooklyn-based artist Mark Sengbusch investigates the two-dimensional plane, flat representation of space, and the way a graphic symbol may become an object. The eye-dazzling effects in his work result from a reductive palette of black, white, and grey and a surface of meticulously carved and painted scrimshawed acrylic on panel. After an initial ground color is applied, the second color is "inlaid" next to the first color in a chiseled channel. The result is a two-color painting without foreground, background, or layering. All of the paint is equidistant from the eye.

The paintings create an optical and conceptual shift in our perception that disrupts our sense of scale and orientation. The surfaces pulsate with positive and negative patterns, while graphic symbols coalesce and disintegrate. The artist writes, "Like a map on a wall, a painting floats in defiance of gravity and correct "overhead" orientation. This makes it (seem) like an object, not a representation of something else. This back and forth of orientation and scale are the basis of this series."

About the Artists :

Tatiana Berg was born in 1985 in Washington, D.C. She holds a BFA with Honors from the Rhode Island School of Design (2009), attended the Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture (2010) and is currently enrolled in the MFA program at Columbia University (projected 2014). Her work has appeared in exhibitions at Freight + Volume, New York; Regina Rex, Queens; Nudashank, Baltimore; and in the Queens Museum International. Berg has completed residencies in the AIM program at the Bronx Museum, Byrdcliffe Guild, Woodstock, NY and the Vermont Studio Center. Previously a resident of Bushwick, Berg currently lives and works in New York City.

Evan Nesbit was also born in 1985 in Northern California. He received his BFA from San Francisco Art Institute in (2009) and his MFA from Yale University (2012). Solo exhibitions include Motus Fort, Tokyo (2012) and Ever Gold Gallery in San Francisco (upcoming 2013) as well as group exhibitions at Carmichael Gallery in Los Angeles, CA, Koki Arts in Tokyo, Japan and Park Life in San Francisco, CA. Nesbit's work was featured in the 2012 New Wight Biennial at UCLA. Nesbit currently lives and works in Nevada City, CA. This is his first exhibition in New York City.

David Harper is the Curator of Visual Art at the Brooklyn Academy of Music and an independent curator, critic, writer, and editor. Previous exhibitions include *Pariset, Steciw, Wilson* at toomer labzda Gallery, *Bcc#7* at STADIUM with Karen Archey, and *The Petrified River* with Martha Kirszenbaum, part of the *curated_by* program in Vienna, Austria, all 2012. He formerly served as Visiting Associate Curator at the Austrian Cultural Forum New York (2009-2011) and as the Curatorial Fellow for the blog Art Fag City (2010). He lives and works in Brooklyn.

Mark Sengbusch received his MFA in Painting from the Cranbrook Academy of Art in 2008. His work has been equally influenced by early video games like Tetris and ancient Peruvian weavings. Dreams, Time Travel and Science Fiction also play an important role. The works of Roddenberry, Lovecraft and Fuller are common topics. He has had recent shows at Nudashank Gallery and Grizzly Grizzly. Sengbusch lives and works in New York City.

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DIRECTIONS: L train to Brooklyn, Morgan Avenue stop. Walk four blocks on Morgan to Flushing Avenue. Cross Flushing Avenue to Wilson Avenue. Gallery is located between Noll and George Street.