

TWO COATS OF PAINT

Andy Meerow, medium cool



Andy Meerow, installation view of "Slanted Andy" at Derosia

In Haskell Wexler's iconic 1969 counterculture film *Medium Cool*, John Cassellis, a cold-eyed TV photojournalist played by the great Robert Forster, has internalized the notion of television as a "cool" medium in the McLuhan-esque sense of requiring viewers to search for context in order to understand what they are seeing. When covering the shockingly violent 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago, though, he finds it increasingly hard to stay objectively aloof. If Cassellis succumbs to passion, Andy Meerow finds a more nuanced solution in the realm of painting – also a relatively cool medium – manifested in his gratifyingly quizzical work in "Slanted Andy" at Derosia. Meerow doesn't either opt out or surrender; he just takes a sidelong view.

Media of all kinds, of course, have become "hotter" as technology has advanced. The challenge now is not so much the sparsity of information as the surfeit of it. Artists inclined towards Minimalism – say, Jacqueline Humphries – resort to reductive filters and symbols. More expressionistic ones like Albert Oehlen have embraced the complexity, defying it to beat them. Other estimable examples on this score include Steve DiBenedetto, Chris Dorland, Steve Greene, and Carter Hodgkin. Meerow's novel conceptual dispensation is to merge what an artwork is with what he says in or about it. This involves treating a painting as a kind of artfully maladroit trick – this quality undergirded by a Minimalist, DIY approach – and casting himself as a deliberately unreliable narrator whose arch deceptiveness, ambiguity, or cluelessness evokes something penetrating and often disturbing.

Derosia

Jonathan Stevenson, Two Coats of Paint, January 27, 2024



Andy Meerow, Flip Me Over, 2023, oil on canvas in steel frame, 60 x 60 inches



Left: Andy Meerow, I'm Green, 2023, Acrylic on canvas, 60 x 84 inches; Right: Andy Meerow, 2020, 2023, oil on canvas, 60 x 60 inches

Derosia

Jonathan Stevenson, *Two Coats of Paint*, January 27, 2024

The sheer range of angst that Meerow covers in a mere eight works is impressive. The painting *I'm Green*, which unabashedly presents that lie in shambolic black typescript against an expansive yellow acrylic background, can't help but conjure the insouciant disregard for truth facilitated by near-universal digital access. In counterpoint, 2020 is a nauseous green, but the apparent verbiage it contains is hopelessly fragmentary and obscured: what happened that year may be incomprehensible, but we know how it made us feel. *Flip Me Over*, depicting three intersecting hard-edge rectangles overlaid with the washily-stenciled phrase "I'M UPSIDE DOWN" and a clunky downward arrow, commands the viewer to avoid looking by means of an act not permitted in an art gallery, imparting the structural prevalence of exposure over privacy.



Installation view.

The work is not all about the zeitgeist, and some seems timeless. *Rubbed On* consists of two stacked panels of different sizes, the top one displaying a truncated personal declaration and the bottom one the clipped designation "Tuesday Morning" – perhaps the heading of a to-do list or a diary entry – visually connected by a repeating hexagonal pattern resembling snakeskin. The piece could be an exotically wayward iteration of *Exquisite Corpse*, reflecting a clash of existential priorities. Relatedly, two untitled works – one the profile of a woman whose mind is literally overflowing against an onslaught of intangible input, mounted on a found fiberboard pedestal, the other words of different values (apparently philosophical versus commercial) equally obscured by a dark ether – relay worldly confusion and dread.

Derosia

Jonathan Stevenson, Two Coats of Paint, January 27, 2024



Andy Meerow, Rubbed On, 2023, Oil, wax and acrylic on canvas in steel frame 78 x 60 inches



Andy Meerow, and the dogs all came, 2023, acrylic on canvas, 60 x 84 inches

Derosia

Jonathan Stevenson, *Two Coats of Paint*, January 27, 2024

No doubt Meerow is hip to the grave urgency of the immediate situation, America's national life having become one long-running B melodrama not unlike the 1968 Democratic National Convention writ large and the wider world roiling. But he also reflexively sees the potent irony in all the handwringing, sourced as it is in willful blindness, and here his provisional calibrations strike an apt chord. In a third untitled piece, nonchalantly composed on paper, a coffee mug featuring a petulantly smiling face reminiscent of Ernie the Muppet has tipped over, spilling its contents in an agreeably lyrical meander. Messes can be funny, even endearing, when they're manageable. Less so, of course, when they're not. In *and all the dogs came*, Meerow splays the line "We gave a party for the gods, and all the dogs came" across two panels in naively celebratory magenta against a fecal brown field, riffing on John Giorno's poem by replacing "gods" with "dogs." In that sardonic diptych, he captures the promise and disappointment of this century so far, essayed in an arresting exhibition, without losing his sense of humor.

"Andy Meerow: Slanted Andy," Derosia, 197 Grand Street, 2nd Floor, New York, NY. Through February 10, 2024.

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by SABRINA TARASOFF

October 20, 2016

FIAC and Paris Internationale

October 19–23, 2016

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Adam Curtis's new film *HyperNormalisation* (2016) is about the diffusion of power through the manipulation of the media. It posits that politicians adopted the basic tenets of techno-utopianism to create an oversimplified worldview of a global economic and political landscape which had become overwhelmingly complex. The creation of mass-mediated, caricatured villains, alongside the triumph of algorithms that create an echo chamber of opinion, reify the sense of felt anxiety and support new forms of power. Participation reinforces these structures, maintaining the fantasy of status quo in society even as we feel assaulted by the unpredictable.

Art fairs seem to operate in similar ways, spreading states of disconcert and powerlessness which reify comparable anxieties about the demands of the market whilst providing the grounds on which to idly fantasize about structures which could undercut the existing order. While the critique of fairs—writers pointing fingers at excesses, entanglements, or trends—only exacerbates the problem, we all fall into the trap of assuming that power lies in some displaced “other,” ignoring how our collusion enables the structures we seek to oppose. Display, discourse, commerce, and criticism all consolidate the fair's encompassing power by refusing to acknowledge how normalized its ebbs and flows have become.

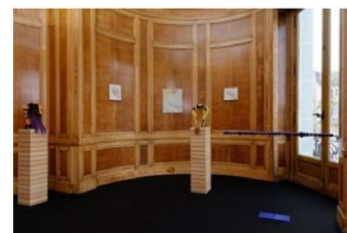
Alternatives do exist. Like Curtis's narrative journalism—which interweaves surprising, and seemingly unrelated, events to tell political stories as they are felt and lived—the fair format, too, can take on an experiential, theatricalized tone. When Paris Internationale launched in a disused *hôtel particulier* near the Arc de Triomphe last year, it offered a similarly shoe-gazing, adolescent fair experience, which by disposing of a certain professionalism and polish opened up a promising alternative to the traditional format. Participants engaged with the limited space by staging performances in stairwells, innovating display solutions, and finding places to make out or make deals, thus rendering the market into a lived experience. Galleries spilling into one another, crowds spread out in comfort around the rooms: it felt unpredictable, but not overwhelming.

This year, however, Paris Internationale relocated to higher ground (literally up the block on Avenue d'Iéna) into another *hôtel particulier*, more dizzying and more troubling than the last. The 61 participants (54 galleries and 7 project spaces from 21 countries) found themselves neatly organized along three pristinely upholstered floors, not counting a lewdly lit basement allocated to younger spaces and non-profits. Whatever romanticism was held within the decrepit debauchery of last year's fair, here felt lost (at least on the upper levels) to the grandeur of the venue. Paris's High Art used the architecture to its advantage by highlighting the decorative language of the space: Cooper Jacoby's honeycomb drops (*Untitled*, 2016) hung like sconces around a mantle, while Bradley Kronz's thrift-store paintings (*Without Men and Lost?*, both 2016) were hung at an elegant museum-height on mauve walls. One down at New York's Bodega, two cartoonish bottle openers by Andy Meerow (charm (yellow) and charm (blue), both 2016) were humorously enigmatic beside Alexandra Noel's sweetly deadpan paintings (such as *Rockabye Toilet Baby* and *It's Like Going To Church*, both 2016). That said, Bodega was precisely the kind of well executed booth that was dwarfed by its placement; a fate suffered to an only slightly lesser extent by its compatriot Karma in an adjacent room, whose mischievous hang made up for the otherwise conservative vibe of the surroundings.

Offering a more conducive environment for dazed displacement was the tiled, windowless basement, which, with its encompassing Berghain-esque interiors, hosted 16 spaces inside its eddying layout. Sharing one of the rooms, Tokyo's Misako & Rosen showed portraits by Kaoru Arima (*Land Man*, *Nightforest*, and *Sunglass*, all 2016) beside drawings by Lucie Stahl and David Rappeneau courtesy of New York's Queer Thoughts. Paris-based non-profit Shanaynay adorned a narrow corridor with another edition of their yearly fundraiser (not to mention a refreshing,



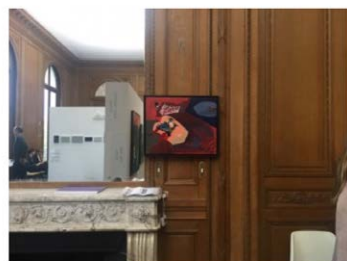
1 Exterior view of FIAC at the Grand Palais, Paris, 2016.

2 Kaoru Arima, *Sunglass*, 2016.

3 View of Sultana's booth at Paris Internationale.



4 (Left) Guillaume Maraud, i.e. "a reward", (upcoming), 2016. (Right) Guillaume Maraud, i.e. "a reward", (ongoing), 2016.

7 Walter Price, *Untitled*, 2016.

Derosia

Sabrina Tarasoff, Art Agenda, October 2016

necessary acknowledgement of alternative economies,) with 25 works donated by the likes of Bjarne Melgaard, Kim Farkas, Louise Sartor, and Nathan Zeidman. Comfortably lodged in an alcove nearby was local Galerie Édouard Montassut, with new works by Guillaume Maraud (i.e.”a reward”, (upcoming) and i.e.”a reward”, (ongoing), both 2016) hanging on fixtures drilled, like everything else, straight into the tiled walls. Against the grim tiling in poor light, their pearl-lined romanticism caters to the possibility of an alternative fair that is structured so loosely as to let moods shift with individual artworks, as distinct from the overarching structure of the fair-as-storefront, fair-as-fair.

The upgrade speaks to the organizers’ shifting priorities, as last year’s successes are consummated in structures of presentation more typical of the bigger fairs. It is not the Grand Palais, but with a slightly shinier venue, more polished booths, displays verging on conservative, and a small pool of non-profits (and only one from Paris), not to mention the lurking presence of the Fondation d’Entreprise Ricard, Paris Internationale comes close to falling prey to the institutionalization it wanted out of. The casual, documentary photographs by Jean Baudrillard at Chateau Shatto, Los Angeles, offer up a warning: we live in a world with more and more simulation and less meaning. To Baudrillard, photography was a window to the non-objective world; these photos cut through the fiction of comfort provided by the market and flood the basement with (no) meaning.

FIAC’s 189 galleries are laid out the same way as last year, with some minor corrections. The fair still overwhelms visitors with its manic pace, sacrifices the autonomy of artworks to an engulfing set, and promotes a simplified, financially secure, and complacent model of interaction. Yet, all the same, FIAC’s predictability ensures that galleries continue to participate: it offers the blind comfort of an established clientele, familiar procedure, and surefire sales, becoming a mechanized production which re-presents, in an enclosed area, all the messy complexity that constitutes the art world. Retreating into this false security, however, fails to acknowledge an “outside” that is increasingly precarious and unpredictable. Its complexity can no longer be carried by the fair, let alone disseminated by it. The art world is elsewhere, and FIAC a sad surrogate. Whilst wandering around the fair, I asked an artist whether he was showing with anyone: “In a few booths,” he said, “but it’s not about me anyways.” I digress.

What is lost in that model is an acknowledgement of the potential affect of that “outside,” as touchy and vulnerable as it is. My cynicism was undermined by the display at Cologne’s Galerie Buchholz, where I was faced with a untitled, chocolate bar-esque Vincent Fecteau piece. Lured into its folds, I had a vague recollection of my first time at the fair, eager simply to see things I hadn’t seen before. Those encounters are still possible: a moment of clarity peering into the watery basin of a Roni Horn piece (Untitled, 2016) at Xavier Hufkens, Brussels; a miniature, wooden, zigzagged sculpture that turned out to be a Judy Chicago at San Francisco’s Jessica Silverman (Small Slatted Sculpture, 1961); bright Pink Panther paintings by Katherine Bernhard (Running Pink Panther, 2016) at Canada, New York; William N. Copley’s paintings (such as Untitled, 1978) at Venus, also from New York; a surprisingly intimate and painterly portrait of Alex Israel’s mother at New York’s Reena Paulings (self-portrait, mom, 2016); and last but not least, a weird, stringy Jessica Stockholder poster-cum-installation (#622 Palpable Glyphic Rapture, 2014) at Nathalie Obadia, Paris. Though in writing this, I fail to address my own participation, I also notice an opportunity: if hypernormalization is a product of complacency, perhaps looking can be a mode of active engagement or, more simply, a new mode of participation. As Curtis declared in promising optimism: “Maybe this feverish atmosphere we’re in is part of the transition to a genuinely new kind of society, from which a new kind of politics might emerge.”(1)

(1) Alex Miller, “The Filmmaker Adam Curtis Shares His Thoughts on Our Generation,” VICE (December 7, 2012), http://www.vice.com/en_uk/read/looking-beneath-the-waves-v10n12.

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8 Matthew Wong, *The Human Cloud*, 2016.



9 Alex Israel, *Self-portrait mom*, 2016. Acrylic and bondo on fiberglass, 243.8 x 213.4 x 10.2 cm.



10 View of Jessica Silverman Gallery, FIAC, Paris, 2016.



11 Judy Chicago, *Small Slatted Sculpture*, 1961.

1 Exterior view of FIAC at the Grand Palais, Paris, 2016. Photo courtesy of Paris Internationale. Photo by Marc Damage.

2 Kaoru Arima, *Sunglass*, 2016. Acrylic on canvas, 65.2 x 53cm. Courtesy of MISAKO & ROSEN.

3 View of Sultana's booth at Paris Internationale. Photo courtesy of Paris Internationale.

4 (Left) Guillaume Maraud, *i.e. "a reward"*, (upcoming), 2016. Melamine foam, polyurethane foam, fabrics, cardboard, paper, glue, faux leather, acrylic paint, plastic, 62.0 x 52.0 x 7.5 cm. (Right) Guillaume Maraud, *i.e. "a reward"*, (ongoing), 2016. Melamine foam, polyurethane foam, fabrics, cardboard, glue, acrylic pearls, adhesive, plastic, 52.0 x 62.0 x 7.5 cm. Courtesy of the artist and Édouard Montassut, Paris.

5 View of High Art's booth at Paris Internationale. Photo courtesy of Paris Internationale.

6 View of Shane Campbell Gallery at Paris Internationale, 2016. Image courtesy of Shane Campbell Gallery.

Derosia

Simone Krug, Kaleidoscope, May 6, 2014

KALEIDOSCOPE

STOP BY Essex Flowers, New York

Essex Flowers is a gallery space that lies below a flower shop in New York's Lower East Side. The artist-run venue opened in June 2013 after the flower shop's owner, Bill Frazer, offered his basement as a project space to a group of young artists. In the spirit of DIY, nine artists collaborated in renovating the 400-square-foot basement, also converting a back room wall and garden into an exhibition area. In addition to taking turns curating exhibitions, the group rotates programming duties and gallery tasks. Last summer's inaugural exhibition, titled "Group Show," presented the nine artists' works. Subsequent shows have featured community-themed projects such as "Frequencies Vol. 2," a collaboration between visual artists and DJs at nearby Beverly's Bar and The Institutional CriTiki Lounge; upcoming events include a backyard book launch of Bunk Club's FAN OF: JOSHUA SMITH and a poetry reading event by Keith J. Varadi, Lucy Ives and Andrew Durbin (May 9th). Flowers are mostly absent from the gallery setting, save for Lizzie Wright's trio of wooden sculptures embellished with lime-green blooms from a piece featured in "EZ Spirit," a show organized by the artist in collaboration with Saira McLaren and Janine Polak. The current show, "Lion King" by Andy Meerow, features monochrome beige two-word diptychs, which share the basement space with life-size casts of salted pretzels under Plexi frames. Word combinations such as "body/text" and "system/prison" float around in the same space as the popular carbohydrate. Just upstairs, the flower shop functions with little sign of the innovative programming beneath the bouquets and floral arrangements.

- Simone Krug

Derosia

Andrew Russeth, Gallerist, July 23, 2014

Gallerist

On View: 'Changing Table' at Kate Werble
Andrew Russeth
July 23, 2014



Andy Meerow, *Beige Split (MILK DEBT)*, 2014

Almost all of the work here is battered, decaying, melting down, sprouting fungi, broken, deadpan, or obscure—and also thrilling and alluring. It looks like water is shooting from a metal pipe adorning Win McCarthy's long, low cardboard sculpture, but it's glass. Bananas are going very bad, affixed to a Plexi box—empty but for incense—that Carlos Reyes has hung from the ceiling, the remnant of some ritual act. That little red-and-white-winged dart stuck in the wall is by Brock Enright, its tip supposedly poisoned, though we will just have to trust him on that one. The show, organized by Werble's manager, Jody Graf, teems with uncanny energy. It wonders how much we really know about objects and their psychological power when they are open to flows—and become stores—of time, information and energy, as in Ben Morgan-Cleveland's slice of burlap on the floor, which was imprinted with dirt and dust by trucks cruising over it while it sat on cobblestones. (Or forget objects: it's just words in the case of Andy Meerow's deliciously wry and discomfiting stacked diptych, each tan slab of vinyl printed with one word, "MILK" and "DEBT.") Gems of videos from the mid-1970s by artist Pooh Kaye (in which she figures naked, in mud and on a table) and a huge 1980 painting by Jon Imber (a nude man with a clownish face, sleeping in a bed alongside a proper, reading woman) lend an eerie psychological foundation to what is a very lucid, specific picture of some of today's most intriguing vanguard practices.