

ROSS SIMONINI - *THE ALL*

Dates January 13 - February 19, 2022
Opening January 14, 12-6 pm
Location 136 Baxter Street New York, NY 10013

The All is safe for babies.

The All is milk paint.

The All is isolated casein protein.

The All is made by repeating a single sentence. Every mark is a letter, every letter makes a sentence, every sentence is repeated thousands of times over many months.

The sentence is private.

The All is private.

The All is goodness.

The All is prepared with the motivation to feel good.

The All is an audience.

Those many faces being Simonini's only audience for many months while he painted. The eyes look outward and the expressions are designed to make him smile—activating mirror neurons.

The All is painting.

The All is taken from an essay by Simonini on the philosophy of generalism

The All is found in various hermetic traditions.

The All means ultimate reality.

The All is both plural and singular.

The All is *Laughing Soil*.

The All is the sound of laughter. The sound of laughing coming from the soil is a recording of Simonini laughing daily, purposely, over many months.

The All is a work in the center of the show that is a mix of soil, fingernails, hair, and all of the leftover paint and water used to make the marks, that make the letters, that make the sentences, that make the faces.

Dried in the sun.

The All is Ross Simonini's first exhibition with anonymous gallery, and his first solo exhibition in New York City. Consisting of several immaculately framed paintings, and sculptures, the exhibition ventures into Simonini's personal philosophies and lifestyle, and fully examines his work as a visual artist, writer, musician and performer.

Ross Simonini is an interdisciplinary artist living in Altadena, California. He has had presentations of his work at the Sharjah Biennial 13, Shoot the Lobster in Luxembourg, Et Al in San Francisco, Fredericks and Freiser in New York, Cat Box Contemporary in Queens, Eddie Martinez's Studio in Brooklyn, and Human Resources in Los Angeles. He has published a novel, *The Book of Formation* with Melville House Books and regularly releases his essays, interviews, and musical compositions. He currently hosts the ArtReview podcast, *Subject Object Verb*.

— Additional text by Sophie Kovel

1.

Ross tells me his paintings are “tools for feeling good.”
I say they’re *teeming*. He says they’re *overflowing*.
I say their content is feeling *good*. He says he hopes they are joyful explosions.

2.

When Jill Johnston traveled by bus to visit Agnes Martin in New Mexico, she describes leaving New York as a “ritual exodus,” that counterpoint to arriving, the “ritual initiation.” Johnston’s telegrams didn’t arrive in time. Her pickup was uncertain, the roads careening, passing gates after gates after gates in search of Martin’s house, amidst the arroyos.¹

3.

On December 29th, Ross sends me two links, two hours apart. From Los Angeles to New York. The first: a lecture by stem cell biologist Bruce Lipton on his recent book, *Biology of Belief*. This is followed by a presentation by the founder of the Dynamic Neural Retraining System™, Annie Hopper. The next day, around the same time, he sends a synopsis of Evelyn Underhill’s 1914 book, *Practical Mysticism*.

The last text? Its afterimage? Jay DeFeo’s epic undertaking: moving her 2,000 pound painting, *Rose*, by carving out a section of a bay window, then lowering it with a forklift.²

4.

Ross’s considerations leave no stone left unturned: the pigments, milk paint (he stopped working with acrylic paint “because it’s plastic”); the wood, reclaimed; the affect: levity. But these choices are by no means highfalutin. He is, earnestly, vested in broadening painting as a practice of mysticism.

5.

These paintings, according to Ross, are all writing. A heap of language that sooner looks like audiences, crowds, faces. Precise yet indiscernible phrases bring kindreds into the room: Lee “Scratch” Perry, J. B. Murray, John Giorno, Hilma af Klint. Spiritualists alike, working with language—symbolic or real—and its rubble. Yet I also see frescoes: Cimabue, Giotto. Milk paint is egg tempera’s cousin, after all. The pigment, soft, the troupe inviting, arrived, their initiation. Between four walls: a *Lehrstück* for enlightenment.

—Sophie Kovel

¹ “Agnes Martin: Surrender and Solitude,” *Gullible’s Travels* by Jill Johnston.

² *Rip Tales: Jay DeFeo’s Estocada & Other Pieces* by Jordan Stein.