

L A U R E L G I T L E N

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JOSEPH MONTGOMERY *VELVETEEN*

January 8–February 19, 2012

Velveteen begins with *Image One Hundred Nineteen* and ends with *Image One Hundred Thirty-Six*.

Named in the sequential order in which they are completed, Joseph Montgomery's paintings are propelled by a sense of adjacency, where each work sets the conditions for the next. In his second solo exhibition at the gallery, Montgomery's approach to generating paintings is both streamlined and complicated by combinatorial structures, repeated forms (shims or wedges), and radical scale shifts. Shifting between positions of painting, sculpture, and the spaces in between, his work interrogates the nature of the image: its repetition, fabrication, origin and duplication.

Some works are built up over an extended period of time, accumulating traces of painterly gestures, layering paintings on top of paintings. Others are constructed of wooden shims and wedge forms: combined, repeated and painted over in a neutral monochrome, creating corrugated surfaces of ridges and troughs, surfaces and interiors. Using his shim paintings as readymades, a third subset of work is painted from photographic representations of extant paintings – illusory images of images with diminished physicality. In standard frontal or three-quarter photographic views, the referenced paintings are inflated to body-like proportions and set afloat on near-white backgrounds.

This exhibition is a series of images of abstract painting, some of which seem entirely earnest as abstractions, others as earnest attempts at representation, and still others that fit neither type fully. It posits a number of slippery problems around the porousness of "image" and "abstract" as categories, and the strange familiarity and iterability of abstraction. Is the image a mere representation? Does the image mirror an extant painting, or is it the thing in itself? And what does the surrogate substitute?

On the floor of the gallery are a few large marbles, two pulled from a storm-bloated stream, one cast in bronze. Formed by manmade and geologic processes, the corrugated marbles bear an uncanny resemblance to Montgomery's paintings, and their curious and recent appearance near the artist's Vermont studio presents an unlikely but seductive possibility: are all images just waiting to be found?

Joseph Montgomery lives and works in New York. In the past two years, his works have been exhibited in numerous group exhibitions, including upcoming exhibitions at Brand New Gallery, Milan, and Annie Gentils, Antwerp; and past exhibitions including the White Columns Annual and the Bridgehampton Biennial, New York, and a two-person exhibition at the Kunsthhaus Baselland, Basel, Switzerland.

The gallery is open Wednesday–Sunday, 11–6, and by appointment. For more information or images, please contact gallery@laurelgitlen.com or 212.274.0761.