

Lisa Cooley is pleased to present a two-person exhibition of abstract paintings by two artists, Jon Pestoni, from Los Angeles, and Zak Prekop, from Chicago. The exhibition runs from September 11 until October 18, with a reception for the artists on Sunday, September 13, from 6 until 8 pm.

The paintings of Jon Pestoni and Zak Prekop have clear affinities – their separate practices arise from a conceptual foundation, but are executed with intellectual playfulness, subtlety, lightness and lyricism. Both artists are highly aware of art historical precedent and yet aim for the discovery of unique forms. Both bodies of work deliver formal investigations with a critical edge.

Neither figurative, nor purely abstract, Jon Pestoni's paintings are imbued with an experiential quality. They highlight paint application, materiality, rich color schemes, and occasionally, blunt, aggressive brushwork. His work is explicit and avoids visual pretense in a direct, immediate way. Scale and color shift subtly from work to work, revealing the internal logic of Pestoni's practice and contextualizing each individual painting.

In certain works, wide, dragged brushstrokes create thick horizontal bands across prepared grounds. Pestoni sometimes contrasts these severe strokes with small, lyrical surface marks and lines, adding yet another layer to the work. Such contrasting moves address the heavy ground beneath and imbue the painting with a decorative but opposing tension.

Pestoni's work plays with ideas of negation. The artist might seem to deny the viewer access to the "interior" of the work, but in fact he is playing with the trope of deriving pleasure from inaccessibility, thereby amplifying awareness of the work's materiality and nuance. Pestoni pushes the act of building up and breaking down, painting something in and painting something out, unifying this practice into a single picture. In short, much of the activity in these paintings is the work of erasing the work. By investigating disappearances, the paintings become evidence of a process and saturated with visual and indexical meaning.

Collage and pencil drawing spark the composition of Zak Prekop's oil paintings. The artist uses these two non-painting mediums to create the nuanced structures, the destabilized geometry, the rambling, gestural creases and the shallow, color-filled ridges that characterize the surface of his paintings.

This approach yields a range of pictures, some of which are more about drawing, others more about painting. Some pictures combine both ideas, emulating collage to create an illusion of torn paper within the underpainting. Other incongruities are evident - torn paper and quick marks suggest

immediacy, but Prekop's creamy paint application and subdued palette evoke a contemplative, slow reading. His layers of color range from translucent to opaque, but always retain a striking luminosity.

Prekop's paintings are notable for their levels of refinement, interiority and sincerity. Even in his larger canvases, the artist conjures an intimate experience for the viewer. Diagetic, almost invisible marks reveal themselves only when viewed at certain angles while the quality of the artist's lines feel introspective and meandering. Reinvesting seriousness and the personal into tropes of abstraction, Prekop creates a new form of subdued and cerebral non-representational painting.

Jon Pestoni lives and works in Los Angeles. He received his BA in Art from UC Berkeley in 1992 and his MFA from UCLA in 1996. His paintings were included in The White Columns New York Annual 2008, curated by Jay Sanders. His work has also been exhibited in New York at Leo Koenig Inc and Marianne Boesky Gallery as well as at Galerie Parisa Kind in Frankfurt, Germany. Since 2005 he has lectured in Studio Art at UC Irvine, UCLA and UC Riverside. Upcoming exhibitions include a two-person show with Shane Campbell Gallery in Chicago.

Zak Prekop lives and works in Chicago, where he also received his MFA from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2008. He is currently studying at the Staatliche Hochschule für Bildende Künste, Städelschule in Frankfurt, Germany. He has recently exhibited at Shane Campbell Gallery in Chicago and Roger Björkholmen Galleri, Stockholm, Sweden.

The gallery is located at 34 Orchard Street between Hester and Canal in the Lower East Side of New York City. The closest subway is the East Broadway stop of the F line. Gallery hours are Wednesday through Sunday, from noon to 6 pm. For more information or images, please email the gallery at [frontdesk@lisa-cooley.com](mailto:frontdesk@lisa-cooley.com) or call 212-680-0564.

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