

Off Vendome

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Jeanette Mundt

Heroin: Cape Cod, USA

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When a friend asks if you would write the press release for their upcoming show, it would be absurd to pretend you're an objective observer with nothing to gain or lose (though obviously a lot gets done this way). This favor is a professional one, but other things always manage to slip in.

I know it's outdated but it feels fitting to call Mundt's newest paintings 'pictures' since most of them began as such and they also occupy the very traditional notion of a painting being an object that depicts something. Mundt's paintings don't really resemble their contemporary peers in either form or behavior; more unexpected and less (seemingly) relevant artists come to mind. Bernard Buffet's telltale pallet-knifing appears here and there as does an irreverence towards materials and social codes that feels much more aligned with the deeply maligned Larry Rivers than anything out of Cologne.

At a time when a painting is allowed to be anything but, Mundt is unembarrassed to recognize her canvases as actual things, objects that exist in the world. We've been wondering about painting's position in regard to itself for quite a while—beside, over, after?—Mundt seems more curious in how that position changes when you introduce the stuff of our everyday lives, at this specific moment in time when her show will be up: *The Revenant*, America's suburban heroin epidemic, selfies, or shows we've liked at MoMA in the past few years—the painting after Redon may be familiar for admirers of Trisha Donnelly (Mundt, a former assistant of Donnelly, surely among them).

There is a painting included here that appears too tired to hang on a wall, using steel piping as crutches, rubbing up against an orange couch nearby. Painted on a board cutout, *Another Double Mountain and the Modern Sofa*, 2016 depicts the Matterhorn, the iconic Swiss Alp, a frequent subject for the artist, which she often visited during her adolescence spent nearby. Maybe because of my friendship with Mundt I can't help but see this work as a limp memory. Despite this mountain's iconicity, grandeur, and personal significance, perhaps at some point all pictures lose the strength to stand on their own.

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