

For his first exhibition at VI, VII, American artist, writer and editor James Hoff presents two groups of paintings based around language, and abstraction as a culture-bound illness.

One set of paintings tries to imagine a visual counterpart for syndromes that enter language through specific geographic contexts as the outcome of locally existing phenomena and paranoia—Nigerian 'Brain Fag' syndrome for example—formulating abstraction as a cultural malady that is linguistically spread.

A second set of works is based on drawings found at stationary stores in cities like Oslo and New York, casually and communally scribbled onto notepads when customers were testing their pens.

In these works, the scratch pad functions as a surrogate for abstraction illustrating the collective pathos of the community from which they were born. All of this, of course, goes back to Freud and can be traced through the Dadaist affinity with automatic writing and the very imperfect science of twentieth century gestalt theory which used mark-making as a way to determine cognitive skills, sanity and mental health.

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Manchester, January 1977. The Buzzcock's first EP, *Spiral Scratch*, is released on New Hormones records. On it, a young, but balding Howard Devoto quips that he is already a has-been before having turned into a someone. As an exhibition title this has many echoes: it short-circuits common concerns of originality and newness that are a symptom of contemporary art-making; it invokes the creation of something new after a period of failure, and it is taken from a track called 'Boredom.' It is when we are bored that the frenzy of culturally-bound illnesses and doodles tend to rear their faces.

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James Hoff is an artist based in New York City. This is the first solo exhibition of his painted works.

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## Errata

In preparing this exhibition, the artist chose to include new works not previously addressed in this press release. The works were composed by means of flocking the areas left exposed after a first-pass tearing away at the shrink wrap around pre-fabricated canvases, freezing with small colored fibers set into wet paint, the exact moment the canvas is about to be freed to be painted on. In this

sense each of these partially flocked works is a still life, soft to the touch, that documents the innate and every everyday activity of unwrapping a package.

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#### Further Information

Distribution is an area of intense focus for James Hoff, and his writing, visual art, and sound works often derive from his own minor archives. Hoff has recorded several albums, and performed live at the New Museum and P.S. 1, touring under the name Airport War. His performative lecture, 'Inventory Arousal,' has been presented at the Centre Pompidou as well as at Open Forum at the National Academy in Oslo, Norway.

Hoff is also the editor and co-founder of Primary Information, a non-profit organization devoted to printing artists' books and artists' writings. Through Primary Information, he has produced publications and multiples from generations of artists, from Dan Graham and Lee Lozano to Lutz Bacher and Florian Hecker—in many cases making the rare, and out-of-print and hard-to-find available for wider access.

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Recent releases and publications by the artist include:

*How Wheeling Feels When the Ground Walks Away*, PAN Records, 2011.

(Performed in 2009 as part of Riot Radio Ballad, curated by Mark Beasley, c-presented by Performa and Artists Space, New York.)

*Topten* [2008], *Memoires* [2009], *Endless Nameless* [2010] by No Input Books and *Inventory Arousal* [2011] by Bedford Press.

Previous group exhibitions include 'Black Friday' at Printed Matter, New York, 'I Don't Know if It Makes Any Sense' at IMO, Copenhagen, 'Indian Ocean' at Dispatch Bureau, New York, and 'Castillo/Corrales: Freeks and Geeks,' at Air De Paris.

In 2013, Hoff's work will be featured in a two-person exhibition at the Kunsthall Oslo.

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