

Galerie Eva Presenhuber is very pleased to be opening its exhibition space in the Löwenbräu Complex with BENT PAINTINGS (WHY HORSES PAINT), an exhibition of new work by American artist Alex Hubbard.

In his first solo show at the gallery, the New York based artist presents his “Bent Paintings” and a video work. The sculptural character of the nine “Bent Paintings” breaks with conventions of classical painting, the geometrical two- dimensionality of traditional picture formats giving way to bent structures, some of them free-standing sculptures totally emancipated from the wall. As a continuation of his “Trash Paintings,” to which plastic objects are attached in the style of a material assemblage, both the support and the applied plastic objects are subsequently cast in urethane. While this collage of different trashy objects resembles a staged presentation of the flotsam and jetsam of civilization, they also seem to be dancing, arranged in a secret choreography, the movement of its individual items frozen. All “Bent Paintings” are based on the same painting, which is nine times molded and cast.

The process of making the “Bent Paintings”, on the other hand, is characterized by a dynamism that recalls the table-top performances in Hubbard’s videos, where everyday objects are playfully staged and then gleefully demolished in unexpected ways in the spirit of an aesthetic of the performative – videos whose specific quality might be described as “moving painting”.

With reference to a quotation from Michael Snow, Hubbard adopts a cross-media strategy in his praxis, making films as a painter and paintings as a sculptor. Using similar strategies in his videos and his painting, he always explores the construction and reception of pictures in unexpected ways. Comparable with his videos in conceptual terms, Hubbard’s painting also calls for an improvisational approach. Working with such quick-drying, volatile materials as resin, latex, and fiberglass means working fast as well as being able to deal with the unforeseen. Besides the move into the third dimension, a top priority in Hubbard’s engagement with the painting format (in the classical sense of a two-dimensional pictorial space) is the principle of “anything goes, as long as it works” His pictures bring together all manner of things: objects attached to the surface, or large blobs of paint that cling on and hold things together. The construction of the pictorial space and the history of its making are always visible and understandable, reflecting Hubbard’s concept of constant motion and change.

Asked about his artistic practice in a recent interview with John Pestoni in *Mousse* (issue 35, October/November 2012, p. 172), Hubbard gave the following answer, which also explains the second half of the exhibition’s title (WHY HORSES PAINT):

Man: How would you like to introduce your practice?

Horse: I think in the infinitive, that is without introductions, or more specifically with its introduction self-evident to its production, its induction. Much like the word painting itself, an infinitive verb and a sedimented product, a being inhered by a potent excrescence of infinity, its beings. Blah blah blah, like I totally become a painter in surplus of my horse-being when my trainer puts a brush in my mouth. It's great being able to layer one's skin like that, to double it up, yield and harness its derivatives, and that painting is a medium that is sensitive, like a photographic plate, to skin's becoming – onion only sweetens the deal – or at least keep my owners from putting ping-pong balls up my nose. While my marks are abstract, my artistry holds greater affinity with the creativity of something like a surveillance camera; a being affected by its ever-possible documentation, a sort of techno-occasionalism. By prosthetic grace of this sensitized material surface, paint becomes me for the eternity that I will be glue.

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