

Michael Benevento is pleased to present a solo exhibition of 100 paintings by California artist, Mark Roeder.

Initially made from personal photographs produced for the purpose of painting and then later using sourced imagery, Mark Roeder's ongoing collection of black and white Antipaintings mine the unique and complicated relationship between photography and subjectivity. They examine how photography's ability to represent actual events is complicated when personal significance or idiosyncrasy become rationalized by the proliferation of so-called user-generated content on the Internet, particularly through online image bookmarking collections (visual 'surf' blogs).

Black painted outlines on white canvas vibrate, drip and droop in a manner psychedelic, visually resembling automatic drawing. The title Antipainting expresses hesitation about making paintings, and communicates that the work is not about painting or making pictures, but rather about using pictures. Often a painting is made twice. First, the initial painting is made, and then some of the image is painted out with white. Then, the artist tries to make the same painting again. A certain quality of vital information is removed from (but yet evoked by) a communication in such a way as to cause a kind of explosion of associative connections with the recipient. Something is revealed by what is withheld, obstructed, redacted.

Roeder's chosen imagery reminds us that even paradise requires promoters, and promotion requires strategic selection of information. The further one is from the fabled locale, the greater its charms in the imaginations of the freshly smitten. The birth of Southern California boosterism occurred in 1873 with the founding of the first Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce along with their printing and disseminating of 5,000 pamphlets titled "Condition, Progress, and Advantages of Los Angeles City and County, Southern California". This new propaganda completely ignored the fact that Los Angeles was extremely vulnerable to the economic depression then ravaging California and instead focused on the healing properties of the Southland's climate.

Roeder's interest in furthering the fabrication of mythologies associated with California is consistently evident. Gryphons, seascapes, miners from the gold rush, the Westward Ho! Clipper, A Chumash shaman, a sourced map of L.A. area film locations, feminist zines and the handwritten request Aldous Huxley made to his wife on his deathbed are just a few of the mythological symbols appearing in Roeder's 100 paintings.

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