

The following essay was written by **Esther Espino**, as a press release:

Ari Norris: *Fully Filtered* at Artruss

April 19 - June 13, 2025

As we move through this world we leave a whisper trail of hair, skin, dust and oil that collects in the spaces we inhabit. In the same way film collects and traps light in the accumulation of emulsion, we deposit imperceptible traces that build and record our presence. Ari Norris (b. 1995) elevates this shadow record by creating oversize filters that capture and arrest the offcut gestures of his practice. At the exaggerated scale of 48x48 inches, the drips and scuffs caught on Norris' studio dropcloths wriggle like a party of amoebas under a microscope, inviting the viewer to examine the secondary product of the artist's hand. It is an unintentional vocabulary of marks, incoherent but lyrical. An echo that impels us to reach for meaning.

Viewers of Norris' work expect this magnetic draw. Previous examples of his sculptures wink and beguile, beckoning the viewer closer with an uncanny angle or skewed proportion. Rubber bands appear languidly indifferent to gravity, a tower of filing cabinets careens vertiginously, seemingly frozen just before crashing to the ground, a plate of brie and triscuits materializes out of bronze like something dug out of the ashes of Pompeii. Norris achieves this sleight of hand with a deft manipulation of material and fabrication. The success of the illusion is in the mastery of his craft.

If there is one thing this exhibition asks of visitors, it is to look closely. However, there is a reverse voyeurism simultaneously at play. The monumental eyeglasses, a bow to minimalist artist Charlotte Posenenske, reduce the gallery and those inside to dollhouse size. The glasses, cleverly constructed from plywood, perfectly imitate the shape and scale of ductwork, Posenenske's preferred medium. Looming like the eyes of Doctor T.J. Eckleburg, the glasses reflect our gaze inward, somewhat uncomfortably. The ductwork sculpture conceptually loops the exhibition into a HVAC ouroboros, connecting to the filters on the wall as they would in reality. With a smirk, Norris reminds us that we leave a litter of interactions and gestures that create an impression of our character. He pokes us to consider how we are arrested in the swirling petri dish of memory.

— Esther Espino