

rodolphe janssen is pleased to announce Illustration, an exhibition of new paintings by Los Angeles based artist Sayre Gomez. In Illustration, Gomez's works further elucidate his discipline of painting and the understanding of the airbrush medium, as a material and as a concept of representation.

Central to the exhibition are works from Gomez's ongoing Thief Painting series. In each, a visual plane of the artist's 'fog', the term lent to his iconic watery amorphous treatment of the canvas, is lifted by a pair of white-gloved hands to reveal the empty primed canvas below. A simple and elegant trompe l'oeil effect that suggests not just the permeability of each image, but also that there's no real or paramount surface to the work, only another window, specifically a trespassed window, that has yet to be lifted. Similarly, Gomez's Peeled Page paintings employ trompe l'oeil to an equal effect. In each, the bottom right corner of the image plane peels up toward the center, revealing again the canvas open to possibility. Perhaps a motif now best known through desktop icons, but initially stemming from surrealist tropes, Gomez uses the peeled page as a gesture toward the proliferation of images from fine art and into popular ubiquity.

Gomez's exhibition harps on representation, and the generation and ownership of meaning in a discourse whose material canon has collapsed. As a painting tool developed at the end of the 19th c., but that didn't come into ubiquitous use until the height of modern art, the airbrush is perhaps the 20th century's native painting tool. However, in many ways airbrush is diametrically opposed to the labor and time required by its traditional predecessors. Integral for many years to the advertising and illustration industries, airbrush operates differently than that of traditional brush painting. Like a courtroom stenographer or a screenplay editor, airbrush is a shorthand. It takes a history of hard-fought painting and drawing approaches and like Bob Ross, reduces them into the popular and the accessible. More so, airbrush is rarely an end in itself, much like how the unadulterated viscosity of abstract painting dictates its translation into text, the reduced shorthand that is airbrush dictates a markedly different transcribing, into the flat space of photography.

With these works, like much of his growing oeuvre, Gomez presents a new material formation of fin-desiècle political avant-gardism for an information age, championing the anarchistic adage that 'all property is theft' - whether it be the property of material or that of meaning.

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