

Jon Pestoni
Opening Saturday September 17th, 7-10 PM
September 17 - October 29, 2016

Real Fine Arts welcomes back Jon Pestoni for his second exhibition with the gallery. After looking back this past summer with *Some Years* at the Cleveland Museum of Art, Pestoni has taken a step forward with a new technique of wet-into-wet painting that further complicates the figure/ground instability central to his previous work.

In the pieces comprising this latest show, Pestoni continues his practice of working on a painting until he has reached a finished composition and then further painting over it. Each of Pestoni's paintings is actually several paintings-painting after painting layered on one canvas. Illusionistically rendered forms in the vein of Pop and veils of transparent color accumulate at the edges to frame the final brushstrokes as figure, albeit with an unstable relationship to the ground they never entirely cover. The brushstrokes floating on the surface, almost like an image of brushstrokes, are painted at a scale that mediates the gesture of the hand through the tactility of the brush in one long sweep of the arm. The interaction of layers produces an effect that never falls visually into a fixed surface.

Pentimento, the art historical term for a visible trace of earlier painting beneath a layer or layers of paint on canvas, translates literally from Italian as "repentance." It is not only an apt description of Pestoni's process but also suggests the shadow of a doubt his work casts on the self-assured historicism of late formalism. With the mediated gesture of brushstrokes that appear more like images of brushstrokes, there is a sense that Pestoni is self-reflexively painting that he is painting. However, the various moves in Pestoni's repertoire are never repeated in the same way, and the exhibition directs attention less to the works' similarity than the singularity that makes each piece stand apart.

~ Ben Carlson