REAL
FINE
ARTS

Whitney Claflin, Maggie Lee, Dave Miko, Jon Pestoni, Ned Vena

September 12 - October 25, 2015
Real Fine Arts

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September 12 - October 25, 2015
Opening reception: Saturday September 12, 7 – 10 PM

Expression and inner desires can take many forms. Collage can be a metaphor for the unlikely elements that come together to define individuals. Quotidian imagery from an imaginary teenage girl's imagination, although perhaps somewhat inappropriate, can nonetheless act as a completely valid personal zeitgeist. Rough edges and imperfect supports can pretty much sum up the life of an artist today. Especially in New York.

What we have here is a cornucopia of different paintings wafting in and out of abstraction. With all but one artist employing spray paint. Yet the overall display has the quality of a museum exhibition in that there is a lot to choose from, and despite its humor and approachability it is all very serious. We present this to you in collaboration with the artists who are in collaboration with one another. As we are all in collaboration with the history of art. Many of them are friends. This is not however a ‘friendhibition’. This is more like 'The Musicians Show' on 89.9 which highlights jazz greats throughout the years. The emphasis of that radio show is on the musicians. The emphasis of this art show is on the artists as seen through the lens of their own art. Meaning, this show invokes each artists distinct vision and personality. From Dave Miko's spray paint scenes which employ a masterful control and technique in which he is able to shift the medium's typical standing from urban art to something stranger, to Maggie Lee's dangling densely collaged zines as sculptures, to Whitney Claflin's supremely confident mixture of invented slang, lifted convo's, and super-informed painterly moves all packed onto what has become something of a trademark white canvas. In this way they are like sketches. In fact there is a lot of sketching done with paint.

This show is meant to be giving. Art in the despair and decadence of our time cannot be narrowly defined. This exhibition is inspired by this self-invented truism.

We adore every artist in the show. Ned Vena. What can we say. He is an angel of refinement coming from the dark heart of New England. Operating with practically no color ever he finds such depth in blacks, whites, grays, tinged with yellow, built up and dappled with the detritus of the cans of spray paint used to make them, specifically the rubber washers which separate the caps from the spray paint cans, he reminds us that art is portal that acts as an abstraction, a representation, and a physical reminder of the action that went into its making. In this case vape clouds from the last Grateful Dead concert ensconced in luxurious black frames remind us that the transcendent beauty we seek can’t be what we expect.

And Jon Pestoni as the classic. And as the true classic. Not the mocking classic, which in all honesty, we do also love. But as something a bit braver in a way. Never hedging his bets. And by making these works over the past 10, 20 years never really backing down from what he believes in. And what he is. And that is a painter expressing himself through color, which in this case is layered on top of

gessoed cat litter on paper, mounted to aluminum, and floated in understated white frames.

This show's inception was a product of circumstance and fate. Similar to all of our positions in New York. What brought you here? Will you have the headspace required to reflect on these paintings, drawings, and collages?

Real Fine Arts is pleased to present our first RFA curated group show in the gallery in over 6 years. These artists were chosen because we thought they would go well together. In a way this show goes back to our roots as painters and admirers of painting. This admiration however, stems from a love of graceful, clever, naughty and nice, transgression. A questioning. In a way this show is all about painting but none of the works are as simple as oil on canvas. All the works somehow transgress the normality of this in their own unique way. By bringing them together we hope to highlight the similarities and differences between them in an effort to enhance all of their positions as arbiters of expression and as artists defiantly enacting their own consecration into this place we have come to call the art world.

We love Maggie for who she is. Her zines, blogs, movies, sculptures and drawings acting as an extension of herself. She has so much style and such a keen eye for style its ridiculous. And Dave is the consummate counter-puncher in terms of what could be perceived as the status-quo of painting that dominates the collective unconscious of the non-philistinian masses. Ned, with his new works, where his roots and personality had previously been filtered through cold beauty, through the relation of his forefathers with only glimpses of his graffiti roots showing up here and there, has opened the floodgates and a total breakthrough has resulted. His new drawings are beguiling voids. Whitney, what can you say, she is such a weird joy, the best at what she does. Jon as well.

Vape clouds, zines, colors, hearts and stars; all things we see our world through. Because there's no art world without a lot of love and a lot of stars.

See you in heaven.





Whitney Claflin, Maggie Lee, Dave Miko, Jon Pestoni, Ned Vena
Installation view, September Group Show, 2015
Real Fine Arts, New York





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Jon Pestoni
Untitled, 2015
Oil and mixed media on paper mounted to aluminum in a frame
31 x 23.75 inches (78.74 x 60.33 cm)



Maggie Lee
Untitled, 2015
paper, acrylic, newspaper, clay, beads, wire
44 x 7 x 0.25 inches (111.76 cm x 17.78 cm x 6.35 mm)



Dave Miko
You're standing on my neck, 2015
spray paint on canvas
60 x 36 inches (152.40 x 91.44 cm)



Dave Miko
tent, 2015
spray paint on canvas
60 x 36 inches (152.40 x 91.44 cm)



Maggie Lee
Untitled, 2015
paper, acrylic, newspaper, clay, beads, wire
51 x 5 x 0.25 inches (129.54 cm x 12.70 cm x 6.35 mm)



Ned Vena
Untitled, 2015
acrylic, spray, charcoal and plastic hardware on paper
84.25 x 65 inches (214.00 x 165.10 cm)



Maggie Lee
Untitled, 2015
Paper, acrylic, newspaper, clay, beads, wire
18 x 4 x 0.25 inches (45.72 cm x 10.16 cm x 6.35 mm)



Ned Vena
Beyond Vape, 2015
acrylic, spray, charcoal and plastic hardware on paper
84.25 x 65 inches (214.00 x 165.10 cm)



Maggie Lee
Untitled, 2015
Paper, acrylic, newspaper, clay, beads, wire
44 x 6 x 0.25 inches (111.76 cm x 15.24 cm x 6.35 mm)



Whitney Claflin
Liberation, 2015
mixed media on linen
36 x 48 inches (91.44 x 121.92 cm)



Maggie Lee
Untitled, 2015
paper, acrylic, newspaper, clay, beads, wire
56 x 6 x 0.25 inches (142.24 cm x 15.24 cm x 6.35 mm)



Dave Miko
Kathleen's Tag, 2015
Spray paint on canvas
30 x 18 inches (76.20 x 45.72 cm)



Jon Pestoni
Untitled, 2015
Oil and mixed media on paper mounted to aluminum in a frame
48 x 31 inches (121.92 x 78.74 cm)



Whitney Claflin
Hiatus, 2015
mixed media on linen
48 x 36 inches (121.92 x 91.44 cm)