

Jessica Silverman Gallery is pleased to present *Pastimes*, an exhibition of new paintings and a stop-animation film by Dashiell Manley. The title *Pastimes* has at least three relevant connotations. It refers to the time-consuming rituals through which these works were made. It evokes their subject matter, which explores the artist's visual past. And it also suggests the existential work of artists, whose profession can resemble other people's leisure activities.

Manley's practice is characterized by an obsession with time and restorative ritual. With his *New York Times* paintings, the artist acted like a medieval scribe, transforming a day of anxiety-inducing news into a timeless tableau. With his *Elegy* works, he painted through mindful meditation, spatializing the time he spent in a focused state, documenting his distraction through transgressive lines. Now, with his *Pastimes* series, Manley explores the global past through personal memory.

Manley recently became a father. With the arrival of his son came a flood of images from his own childhood, particularly recollections from the "shinnichi" (aka Japanophile) homes of his parents and his American-born Japanese grandparents. As a result, the *Pastimes* series rehearses and repeats a set of figures, such as the wise man. Possibly seen in a book at his grandma's house, the bearded elder is at once a benevolent patriarch and a judgmental authority. He may mirror the emotional aging that comes with newfound paternity or capture a deep desire for wisdom.

Many of the paintings contain references to bamboo, a grass that turns into a tree, one of the fastest growing plants on Earth, and one with greater compressive strength than brick or concrete. A symbol of healthy vitality as well as alarmingly fast-paced change, the bamboo is laden with ambivalence. The works also bear witness to criss-crossed stars, which have long been part of Manley's repertoire of mark-making. "I've often thought of these marks as noise or scratches – the way celluloid film picks up scratches every time it passes through a projector," explains the artist. Here the marks reappear as a mantra, an emblem of continuity or "north star" direction.

The *Pastimes* paintings are multilayered works that begin as small ink-and-brush drawings of the artist's recollections, sometimes aided by family photos. He then uses an old Kinko's Xerox machine close to his studio to enlarge the drawings – doubling, tripling, sometimes quadrupling their size. These low-res copies quickly lose information and pixelate. The mechanical process is analogous to the way the artist observes his memory working; he discovers a trace of an image, then watches it grow into a high-contrast "reality." Rather than using these prints directly in the work, Manley opts for the paradox of making analogue works that, on quick glance, appear digital. By these means, Manley takes solace in the ceremony of painting. He values the investment of time and infuses the work with intent and meaning.

In the *Pastimes* paintings, then, the artist layers enamel and oil on gouache, which is applied to paper, mounted on linen. What appears flat is, on closer inspection, deep. What may seem fast has a conscientious slowness. What is associated with the mechanical is resolutely and perversely human.

While the *Pastimes* series' nostalgic imagery is in dialogue with Pop artists like Takashi Murakami and their brash color-combinations have a Warhol-meets-Basquiat flavor, their compositions suggest old-school Abstract Expressionists such as Robert Motherwell and Richard Diebenkorn. Through his layered imagery and painting process, Manley offers a kind of reverse excavation of post-war Asian-American culture – both high and popular.

Dashiell Manley (b.1983, Fontana, CA) has a BFA from CalArts and an MFA from UCLA. He lives and works in Los Angeles. He recently enjoyed solo exhibitions at Stanford University's Cantor Center for Visual Arts and LAND HQ in Los Angeles. His work was included in the Whitney Biennial (2014) and the Hammer Museum's "Made in L.A." Biennial. His work has also been featured in museum shows in Brazil, Italy, Australia. His work is in the public collections of Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) and the Hammer Museum. In addition to the "Pastimes" solo show, Jessica Silverman Gallery will exhibit Manley's work alongside that of Jiro Takamatsu, one of the most influential Japanese artists of 20th century, at the Art Dealers Association of America (ADAA) Art Show, which opens on February 27, 2020.

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