

PETRINE.

Michael Caudo
Painting and Sculpture
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Stacks with the appearance of happenstance were precisely planned and produced. Their precision does not cancel out their chance. A psychedelic pattern hanging on the wall arrives all at once as a painting does. Despite its instantaneity, this structure also sustains its contingent origins. Mike explained to me that the pattern is a painting of something that he sees every day. He is not attracted to this pattern and it was not “for him”, but the familiarity that has developed in cohabitation with it has made it a part of him in extension. He did not choose this arrangement. It happened by chance. Recognizing extensions such as this constitutes the development of his work. Acting upon that recognition (via the attempted production of artworks) takes things further and tests the insight.

Materially the works in this exhibition consist of steel and paint. From this detail many questions can be posed and answered. Like paintings, these works render their images in an instant of cohesion: stacks of paperboard, a box cut into the shape of a heart, a cover of a pad of drawing paper... And like sculptures, one can visibly detect the artist's manipulation. In so doing they can offer scrutiny to this act. This is to say that these works allow for viewings both in delay (in which chance and accident are still recoverable) and in the instant (in which there is no alternative).

There is also an element of fiction at work here. What looks like X is really Z. The writer has used their observation. They fill in details convincingly, so as to make us forget the story. For some, forgetting is a pleasure. One could describe these works as accumulations of viewings, settled into place and made to corroborate each other. For at least a few the story and its telling will be inseparable.

But I question after what appears to be fictive and wonder if it is a product of uncertainty. Perhaps someone needed convincing. I feel that something like thought is on view here. Not the grand process of analysis, and ideation, but something more pervasive and reliant. Something like wondering what time it is or if the bird is still on the branch. Something that bears checking in on. A reaching out toward the hand held or grazed not a moment ago. Or the shaking of a can to see if it is empty or as full as it looks.

— Jason Hirata

Michael Caudo (b. 1992, New Jersey) lives and works in New York. Selected exhibitions include Chatham Soccer (2023); SOLDES, Los Angeles (2025); and Papa Projects, Minneapolis (2022).

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