

hanged man. Bands of blocky lettering arranged helter-skelter across the picture plane contain statements like “PAIN CONTRACTS THE TIME” and “PAIN EXPANDS THE TIME” and other references to violence and suffering.

Another work that enralls, either despite or because of its ultraviolet imagery, is *Capricho #4*, which depicts on the right a large, green birdlike creature wielding a sword with its beak. It appears to be in the act of decapitating a wildly distorted yellow-headed personage on the far left that seems to be screaming in agony. Ribbonlike passages of script bear cryptic phrases such as “AFTER GREAT PAIN” and “LIKE TOMBS.”

Pittman, who was shot and seriously wounded by a robber in 1985, knows firsthand the trauma of violence and being near death. It’s certainly probable that the experience figured into his desire to create “Nuevos Caprichos,” which echoes the kind of violence and aggression that turn up in the news every day. In this tightly organized series, Pittman lends a passionate and personal resonance to the theme.

—David Ebony

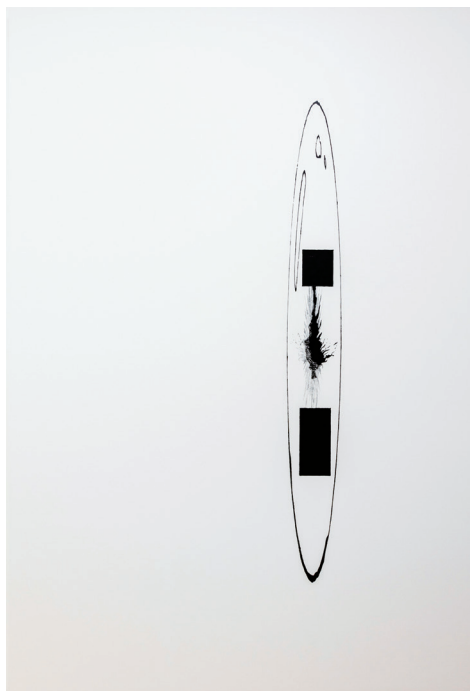
ROB HALVERSON

Soloway

Rob Halverson presented a focused selection of new works (all 2016) in “All Repeat,” his show at Soloway in Brooklyn. Austere paintings and works on paper depicting vaguely diagrammatic forms were juxtaposed with photographs and personal ephemera. The imagery in the three untitled black-and-white paintings on view appears to have been stenciled or printed—the process is not entirely clear. Halverson rendered the schematic imagery with mechanical precision in a style that resembles the single-pixel plotting of dot-matrix printouts. Even the minute wavering of the lines appears calculated. Such careful idiosyncrasies suggest the influence of a lo-fi, mechanical image production method and imbue the work with an awkward grace.

In each painting Halverson restricted the abstracted diagrams to a 8½-inch-by-7-foot area (out of a 4½-foot-wide canvas), and certain figurative elements recur from piece to piece. One work depicts a bubble enclosed by a rectangle with rounded edges—suggestive, perhaps, of some Apple product in profile. The bubble reappears in a second painting, this time enclosing two black rectangles and an inky splatter. In the third painting, an irregular black form is the ground for the silhouette of an ambiguous shape that could be a feather, a frond or a small, spiraling galaxy. There may be an underlying logic to the repeated forms, which appear cemented in the gesso. Yet many of the images are symbols of ephemerality (bubbles, feathers, microscopic electronics and cosmic dust) that seem to drift, double, distort and degrade.

Despite their apparent refinement, the paintings deviate from Halverson’s otherwise exacting technical approach in subtle but important ways. Light brushstrokes bristle on the gessoed surfaces, and small, fragile inconsistencies in the paint give texture to the images. The material imperfections evident in the works, as well as in the two drawings that look like



Rob Halverson:
Untitled, 2016,
solidified paint on
canvas, 84 by 58
inches; at Soloway.

details from the paintings hanging nearby, reveal the conscientious stylization of Halverson’s plotter-hand.

Two other works introduced non sequiturs—an unframed diptych of 5-by-7 photos depicting seedpods in window screens, and an irreverent and gross little mud-ball sculpture containing hair and nail clippings that sat high on the gallery’s fuse box. These works are sappy and humanizing and fail to achieve the same alluring mystification of the other works in the show.

“All Repeat,” the exhibition’s title, appeared as the sole text on the press release, where the words were spelled out in caps along a vertical axis. That composition recurs in a poster-size work on paper. The self-reflexive repetition of the phrase as a label, explanation, work, etc., tended to confuse rather than elucidate. Like the paintings, which, by convention, the press release is meant to clarify, the language acts like a machine awaiting user input. “All Repeat” is a mantra for the works in the show. The title phrase may offer an incantation for the do-and-do-again of artistic practice, which requires the careful performance of workaday tasks: maintaining the studio, priming the canvas, rendering precise lines. Instead of drudgery, “repeat,” in this context, suggests care, focus and refinement.

—Sam Korman

KATHERINE BRADFORD

Canada

Often little more than daubs and smears, the miniature figures populating the textured expanses of Katherine Bradford’s recent paintings seem as though they might at any moment melt back into the once-formless substance that constitutes them. The sensation is not without meaning in the context of her subject matter: swimmers in various kinds of waters, from pounding ocean waves to tranquil night-lit pools. The paintings plumb a venerable theme—that of the bather, beloved of Cézanne and Renoir. Accordingly, alongside the feeling of sensuous immer-



Katherine Bradford: *Fathers*, 2016, acrylic on drop cloth, 70 by 96 inches; at Canada.

sion attending the subject of (near) naked humans communing with nature there exist some fundamental issues of form and representation. Still, Bradford has long been skilled at knocking grandiosity down a peg, humanizing the Ab-Ex sublime by populating her big stretches of abstract color, layer upon layer of paint, with quirky superheroes or ships glowing with tiny illuminated portholes. Hers are salt-of-the-earth American swimmers and surfers, not fancy-pants “bathers”; we identify with them, empathizing with their vulnerability and amused at their manifest awkwardness. Her work’s faux naïveté brings to mind that of the all-too-canny Malcolm Morley and Philip Guston.

Fear of Waves (all works 2015 or 2016) was one of the largest canvases on view and was the sole oil (the other 10 were acrylics). It was also the showstopper. The 7-by-6-foot composition is divided roughly in half on a diagonal vertical, with giant waves heaving leftward toward a crowd of swimmers. The swimmers flee through a turquoise impasto occasionally spattered with white and dappled with patches of blue, a swath so thick with paint that their exertions are palpable. There is a broad range of effects, from sunlit surfaces to watery depths. The people—here all brunettes, their heads little more than punctuation marks—have sunburnt orange and magenta skin; some wind up under streaks of gray-blue, as though submerged. We can almost hear the shrieks of terror and delight.

Several night scenes—long Bradford’s strength, suggesting as they do the realm of dreams—show swimmers under the moon and stars, or even in outer space. *Fathers* floats an oblong pool in a thick, dark heaven; ringed with bright blue and luminescent pink, this Jacuzzi-in-the-sky hosts a party of men communing in the great beyond. Three large figures stretch their bodies vertically in *Pool Swimmers, Green*; they are dressed in chaste white attire and swim straight ahead in their lanes. We see them from above, and, though no time of day is indicated, the yellowish green coloration implies night lights inside the pool. Most wacky is *Swim Team Miami*, a veritable constellation of swimmers in some celestial realm, enjoying through eternity their pink patch of water and colorful props. One figure looks as

Marcel Dzama and Raymond Pettibon: *Disco Death of Rasputin*, 2015, pencil, ink, gouache and collage on paper, 21 by 16¼ inches; at David Zwirner.

though she is standing on a planet; another appears to crawl right through a bright blue hole in the sky.

It is precisely the figures’ finitude in relation to something bigger than themselves that gives Bradford’s paintings their particular pathos. To make the struggle believable, she has to make the “bigger” gorgeous and unfathomable, seductive and threatening all at once. The stakes are high, and Bradford grows ever more daring.

—Faye Hirsch

MARCEL DZAMA AND RAYMOND PETTIBON

David Zwirner

Collaboration is typical in film, music, design and other mass cultural forms, but less common (or less recognized) in the fine arts. High regard for the singular author’s hand is so ingrained that visitors to this exhibition of collaborative drawings by Marcel Dzama and Raymond Pettibon likely found themselves trying to distinguish which marks were made by which artist. They may have found satisfaction in recognizing a delicate line or frail archer figure as belonging to Dzama, and a slashing stroke or crudely rendered Gumby as characteristic of Pettibon. Yet the artists titled the show “Forgetting the Hand,” possibly to discourage this mode of viewing.

Dzama often works collaboratively. As an art student in Winnipeg in the mid-1990s, he founded the artist collective the Royal Art Lodge. He has since worked with bands such as Arcade Fire and Department of Eagles; with artist and musician Kim Gordon; and, most recently, with choreographer Justin Peck, designing sets and costumes for the fairytale-inspired ballet *The Most Incredible*

