

Gallerist

ON VIEW

‘Scott Reeder: People Call Me Scott’ at Lisa Cooley

By Andrew Russeth 11/26 12:32pm



Installation view. (Courtesy Lisa Cooley)

Here's a nice surprise. Scott Reeder, the Detroit-based painter best known for brushy, pleasantly sloppy figurative work, has returned for his sixth show in New York, his first with Lisa Cooley, and it is a handsome, focused, bracingly cool affair. Some 30 small paintings from his text-based series line one wall, each with a lusciously glowing background and a phrase made of two four-letter words spelled out in a variety of tall characters: "sexy wind" against peachy pink, "free acid" on a green-to-orange gradient, "iffy idol" on a sunset worthy of Ed Ruscha, the progenitor of such linguistic magic. They go down as smoothly and pleasurably as a tiki drink, at least until you start thinking about those idioms and coinages, which often conjure absurd, maybe even sinister, half-images: "bank joke," "temp monk," "real evil."

Less interesting are large paintings that Mr. Reeder makes by setting swirls of pasta—variously dry and cooked and alphabet-shaped—on canvases and laying down paint. They lack the punch of the all-over abstractions they send up, not to mention his smaller pieces. However, a razor-sharp painting with a long list of “alternate titles for recent exhibitions” alone justifies the entire show (“Abstraction for Beginners” is a favorite, while “Bad Art in Good Taste” could actually describe some of his earlier work). And just when you thought you wanted a decade-long moratorium on new trompe l’oeil sculpture, Mr. Reeder winningly scatters about sheets of paper (aluminum painted white)—some crumpled (*Bad Idea*, 2013), some fresh (*Paper*, 2013). They’re casual monuments to terrifying events in an artistic practice—the blank page and the failed attempt. However, as the paintings hanging all around confirm, Mr. Reeder’s continues to flourish. (*Through Dec. 22*)

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