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ART IN REVIEW

Scott Reeder: 'People Call Me Scott'

By [ROBERTA SMITH](#)

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*Lisa Cooley Gallery
Lower East Side
Through Dec. 22*

Courtesy of the artist; Kavi Gupta Gallery, Berlin & Chicago; The Green Gallery, Milwaukee; Lisa Cooley, New York

The folksy simplicity of the title of Scott Reeder's fourth solo exhibition in a New York gallery befits his easygoing approach to art as well as a temperament that doesn't mind playing dumb while waiting for you to catch up with him. The all-purpose fluidity of painting, joined with a preference for wordplay and gentle parody, may be the central theme of his work.

In the past, Mr. Reeder has favored clunky, seemingly naïve figurative images that veer between cartooning and Picasso. Lately however, he seems to have moved into a late modernist-Conceptual phase, using pasta to make big, allover (Pollock-like) abstractions and smaller (Ruscha-like) word paintings.

The abstractions are achieved by scattering uncooked (and in one case cooked) spaghetti over a canvas and adding a thin layer of yellow-green, light blue, turquoise blue, charcoal or black spray paint. Usually he rescatters the pasta and sprays again, for a blurred effect that adds more depth and a weird sense of movement (call it performative or Futurist, as you will).

In the word paintings the palette brightens to include pinks and oranges. Here uncooked spaghetti of different widths spells odd phrases of two four-letter words: "Post-Good," "Idea Jail" and "Word Jazz." The letters change in font, dimensionality and perspective from painting to painting. Shadows are occasionally evoked and, in "Dark Math," Old German script is even broached. Which is to say that these works become more complicated as you think through each one. A series of sculptures are a little too jokey, but two paintings mimicking blackboards show off Mr. Reeder's satirical gifts. This show is surreptitiously very good.

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