

ALTMAN SIEGEL

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Liam Everett

Fais semblant qu'on n'est pas ici

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Two eight-by-four-foot plywood panels are raised slightly off the floor in the middle of the studio. On each are placed two objects: what looks like a sawn slab of rock, and a lump of rough timber. Everett stoops to rearrange them, adding to one panel a tall obelisk of what appears—as he strains to lift it with both arms—to be heavy wood.

Everett has described how such objects—along with wooden poles, pieces of fabric, plastic sheeting, sections of metal fence, miscellaneous offcuts and debris—serve as tools that he uses to stain or print onto the canvas (more usually linen) of his paintings. “I don’t allow myself to make any mark without an obstruction,” he told me. Whether he is placing a wooden post across the painting that forces him to work around it, or a sawhorse over which he must awkwardly lean to touch his brush to the canvas, or a metal grill through which to stencil color, he insists on this interference. Soaking the surface of the painting in water before applying oil-based enamel serves a similar purpose. The consequence is twofold, and somewhat contradictory. On the one hand, it eradicates (or delimits) the authorial handwriting, as it were, of the artist. He himself is forcibly absented. It depersonalizes the paintings, strips them of any intentional gesture related to expression or description. The mark is always a reaction, never an action. It is also not conceptual; “At no point can I intellectualize how I’m in contact with the painting,” Everett says. Instead, it foregrounds the material substances themselves, their “ontic” qualities, as he often puts it.

*Conversely, this interference and the subsequent forced abstention of the artist enable Everett to feel himself utterly present during the paintings’ creation. By becoming hyperaware of his own body and his touch, he makes paintings that are repositories for recorded feeling, not in the abstract emotional sense of that word but in the tactile and the haptic. The incorporeal, intellectual ego of the artist may be gone, but his physically sensual self—what Maurice Merleau-Ponty called the “body subject”—is very present indeed.**

Altman Siegel is pleased to announce *Fais semblant qu'on n'est pas ici*, Liam Everett’s third solo exhibition at Altman Siegel. Building on recent investigations, Everett presents a new body of work that unfolds interrelated systems and interpretations of support. *Fais semblant qu'on n'est pas ici* includes new paintings, sculpture and a raised floor. Highlighting the gallery space through a transformation of architecture and light, Everett’s installation emphasizes the physical act of supporting a painting, the routine practice an artist undertakes daily, as well as pedagogical rituals shaped through rehearsal.

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Liam Everett (b.1973) lives and works in Northern California. Everett received an MFA from California College of the Arts (2012). He has had solo exhibitions at Altman Siegel, San Francisco; kamel mennour, Paris; Eleni Koroneou Gallery, Athens; Office Baroque, Brussels; On Stellar Rays, New York and White Columns, New York. His work has been included in group exhibitions such as *2017 SECA Art Award: Alicia McCarthy, Lindsey White, Liam Everett, K.r.m. Mooney, and Sean McFarland*, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (2017); *A Slow Succession with Many Interruptions*, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (2016–17); *Biennale of Painting*, Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens, Deurle, Belgium (2016); *The Presence of the Present*, di Rosa, Napa (2014–15); and *Color Shift*, UC Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive (2014). He has also exhibited at venues such as Headlands Center for the Arts, Sausalito, California (2013); San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art (2013); CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, San Francisco (2012).

Everett's new monograph *Without an Audience* was recently published by Altman Siegel and kamel mennour and was designed by Colpa Press. Published in conjunction with the exhibition, *Without an Audience* will be available for sale at the gallery and includes contributions by Jenny Gheith, Jonathan Griffin and Hope Mohr.

For more information please contact Altman Siegel at 415-576-9300 or info@altmansiegel.com

*Jonathan Griffin, "Mapping the Studio," from *Without an Audience*, 2017