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mennour 

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LIAM EVERETT  
PRESSE / PRESS  
(selection)

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Page 1/1

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## liam everett - Le photoblog de Renaud Monfourny



Avec sa manière très personnelle de faire de la peinture abstraite avec des objets concrets qu'il déplace sur la toile avant de pulvériser ses couleurs, Liam Everett s'est construit une solide réputation et un beau corpus. Pour sa nouvelle expo, *The winds*, qui fait référence aux incendies de Californie de l'an dernier, il a recouvert le tout d'un noir transparent. Sidérant. Galerie Kamel Mennour, 6, rue du Pont de Lodi, Paris 6, jusqu'au 23 février.



AGENDA



Toute  
La Culture.

21<sup>e</sup> Festival ARTDANTHÉ

19.03 > 21.04.19



Arts > Galerie > Les vernissages de la semaine du 14 janvier

GALERIE

## Les vernissages de la semaine du 14 janvier

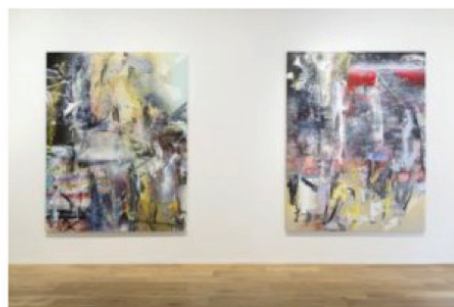
18 JANVIER 2019 | PAR EMILIE ZANA

*Retrouvez les vernissages de la semaine, avec mention spéciale pour l'artiste Vivian Maier exposée à la galerie Les Douches ce samedi.*

### Le mardi 22 janvier – Liam Everett, *The Winds* à la Galerie Kamel Mennour

La **Galerie Kamel Mennour** présente la troisième exposition personnelle de Liam Everett, le peintre américain qui a pris la décision de détruire les créations prévues initialement suite à l'incendie ravageur en Californie à l'automne 2018. La galerie expose donc ses nouvelles créations empreintes de nouveauté et de dynamisme.

Plus d'informations [ici](#).



*The Listeners*, Vue de l'exposition Kamel Mennour, London, 2018



📍 SAN FRANCISCO  
ART, JANUARY 10, 2018

## Must-See January Shows in San Francisco

By Whitewall

**"Liam Everett: Fais semblant qu'on n'est pas ici" at Altman Siegel**

"Fais semblant qu'on n'est pas ici" is a solo exhibition by Liam Everett including new paintings and sculpture. The body of work explores interrelated systems and interpretations of support, such as a raised floor similar to Everett's recent presentation at SFMOMA. The title of the show translates to "pretend we are not here," and the show touches on themes of ritual, practice, routine, and rehearsal.

Liam Everett  
Untitled (Lotus-Eaters)  
2017  
Acrylic paint, enamel paint, salt, alcohol on linen  
99 x 78 inches  
Courtesy of the Artist and Altman Siegel, San Francisco



Handelsblatt  
WOCHENENDE 5./6./7. MAI 2017, NR. 87

Kunstmarkt **65**

Griechische Kunst

## Der Finanzkrise trotzen

Athen lockt Kunstfreunde nicht nur mit der Documenta. Die wenigen verbliebenen Galeristen zeigen Flagge.

Konstantin Alexiou Athen

**H**ier im noblen Athener Distrikt Kolonaki spürt man von der Wirtschaftskrise in Griechenland nichts. Hier scheint die Welt in Ordnung und auch ein kriselnder Kunstmarkt schwer vorstellbar. Gegründet 1995, führt Roupen Kalfayan hier zusammen mit seinem Bruder die Galerie Kalfayan – in der zweitgrößten Stadt Griechenlands, Thessaloniki, betreiben sie einen Projektraum. Doch der Schein trügt. Aus ökonomischen oder psychologischen Gründen seien in Griechenland die Sammler für das mittlere und untere Preissegment komplett verschwunden, erzählt der Galerist. Im oberen Segment seien griechische Sammler noch zugegen, sie würden aber ohnehin international einkaufen, sagt er.

Als Global Player sind die Kalfayan-Brüder nicht die Leidtragenden des kollabierten griechischen Markts, der traf die jungen Galerien – alle, die international wenig verkauft haben. Viele mussten schließen. Die Brüder waren zuletzt auf der Art Dubai und Art Basel Hongkong. Beide Messen laufen für die Galerie optimal, erzählt Roupen Kalfayan. Der mit China und den Vereinigten Arabischen Emiraten sowieso nicht vergleichbare deutsche Markt sei für sie nicht ergiebig, sagt der Galerist. Zur Art Cologne kommen sie deshalb nicht mehr. Die Kalfayans zeigen überwiegend griechische Künstler und verwalten den Nachlass von Vlassis Canlaris, dessen Assemblagen und Installationen international gefragt sind.

Ihre laufende Ausstellung in Athen versammelt drei Künstler unter dem Titel „Perished Sun“. Anhand einer in eine Zitrone gesteckten schwarzen Glühbirne veranschaulicht Kostis Velonis die Sonnenfinsternis und zitiert damit Joseph Beuys' berühmte Capri-Batterie. Panos Tsagaris baut Installationen aus Spiegeln und überführt sie als düstere Mischtechniken und mit Blattgold akzentuiert auf große Leinwände (Preise je 13 500 Euro).

Seitdem das Land wegen der Finanzkrise mediale Aufmerksamkeit bekomme, seien griechische Künstler international begehrt, erklärt Stathis Panagoulis von der Galerie The Breeder. Deshalb haben er und Partner George Vamvakidis sich in den letzten Jahren auf ein einheimisches Programm konzentriert. Drei von der renommierten Galerie vertretene Künstler nehmen an der Weltkunstausstellung Documenta 14 teil, die gerade in Griechenland angelaufen ist und Kunstfreunde nach Athen führt. Angelo Plessas' Neonarbeiten über energieraubende Verstimmungen des Menschen kosten je 7 000 Euro. In der international besetzten Gruppenausstellung bei The Breeder hat Gastkünstler Christodoulos Panayiotou aus eingestampften Dollar- und

Euro-Scheinen fein durchlässig monochrome Bilder geschaffen. Ein Umgang mit dem ökonomischen Ausnahmezustand mit fast poetischer Anmutung (bis 26. August).

Auch der Galerist Panagoulis erzählt, dass sein griechisches Programm auf dem deutschen Markt nicht funktioniert. Die größten Umsätze machten sie bei der Frieze in New York (S. 64), betont er.

Am längsten im Geschäft ist Galeristin Eleni Koroneou. Sie hat die zeitgenössische griechische Kunstszene mitgeprägt. Ihr amerikanischer Künstler Liam Everett entwickelt farbige, virtuose Abstraktionen in Öl, Acryl und mit Alkohol und Salz auf großformatigem Vinyl (Preise umgerechnet



**Liam Everett „Untitled (Bagnac)“:** Die Abstraktionen des Amerikaners aus Öl, Acryl, Salz und Alkohol bietet die Galerie Eleni Koroneou an.

Gallery Eleni Koroneou Athens

18 400 bis 41 400 Euro, bis 3. Juni). Christina Androulidaki hingegen hat in Kolonaki erst vor fünf Jahren ihre Galerie gegründet, sie handelt ausnahmslos im schwierigen unteren Segment. Keine Frage, die Documenta bringe Aufmerksamkeit und viele ausländische Journalisten zu den Galerien, sagt sie. Schade fände sie nur, dass die Kuratoren keine intensive Recherche nach griechischen Künstlern betrieben hätten. Die meisten ausgestellten Künstler aus Griechenland seien Bekannte aus dem engsten Netzwerk, so die Galeristin.

Aber vielleicht bekommen die griechischen Künstler auf dem im Vergleich zum angelsächsischen Raum schwachen deutschen Markt ja einen Schub, wenn die Documenta auch in Kassel gelaufen ist.

Aktuell ist bei Androulidaki eine Einzelausstellung von Maria Kriara zu sehen. Die Künstlerin lenkt mit hyperrealistischen Zeichnungen den Blick des Betrachters auf politische und (kunst-)historische Motive. Mit ihren Schriftarbeiten erzählt sie über Werteverlust im Spannungsfeld von Geschichte und Politik – smart gespiegelt in der Gegenwart Griechenlands (2000 bis 5000 Euro; bis 27. Mai). Androulidaki richtet sich zwar international aus, hofft aber, einen anderen Weg zu finden als den über die Messen – selbst in aussichtslosen Zeiten. Hier und da tauchten schon einige junge Sammler bei ihr auf, erzählt die Galeristin zuversichtlich.

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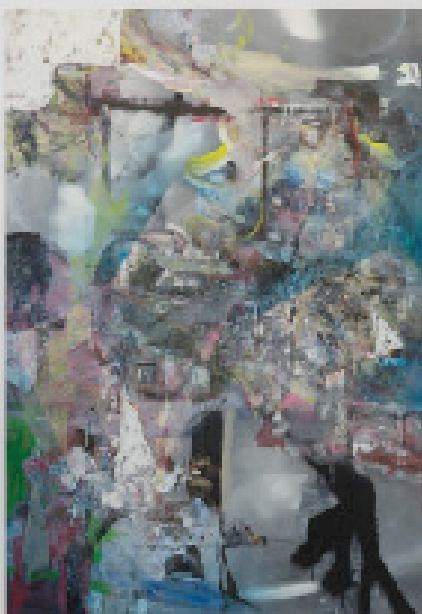
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## "My paintings are constructed forms that shift between light and dark..." - an interview with Liam Everett

By Dirk Vanduffel Sun, Mar 19, 2017



*During a January visit to Paris I had the unexpected pleasure of visiting the Kamel Mennour Gallery to view an exhibition of the works of Liam Everett. The gallery's warm hospitality combined with Liam's fantastic work made the entire experience unforgettable.*



During a January visit to Paris I had the unexpected pleasure of visiting the Kamel Mennour Gallery to view an exhibition of the works of Liam Everett. The gallery's warm hospitality combined with Liam's fantastic work made the entire experience unforgettable.

Sometimes, not often, you fall totally "in love" at first sight. Standing in front of Liam's work in Kamel Mennour Gallery, it happened all over me.

It had everything and nothing, the paintings were more realistic than any realist paintings I know and yet more abstract than the work of leading abstract artists. It was an intriguing experience. During my visit I had the privilege of speaking with Liam. I was struck by the passion and depth of his words, the clarity he used to explain something that feels almost unexplainable. I realised instantly: I need him in our magazine. I need to follow him.

I hope you will be as curious as me to follow the path of this great artist. Thanks Liam! "Tu autem vade".

***DV: Liam, I would like to start by asking where your interest in painting comes from. I understand you were not educated in an art school.***

LE: My interest in painting developed out of an early experience with the theatre. When I was a teenager, I landed a part in Samuel Beckett's play *Waiting for Godot*. It was during this time that I began drawing and building things, perhaps as a way to make sense of a play that, at the time, appeared completely abstract to me. A few years later I began painting. It appealed to me from the very beginning because of the immediacy and physicality involved. Many of the things I do today in the studio can be traced directly back to the methods of practice I learned in the theater.

***DV: I want to avoid asking you about the most important moments in your career, those that have defined you up to this point. What I would really like to know is what, if any, were the most difficult moments in your career?***

LE: The most challenging moments of my career came when I first moved to NYC. They are likely to be the same problems that most artists face at the beginning of their career: lack of financial stability, difficulty finding a proper studio, problems establishing a community in order to generate dialogue and critical support. Looking back, it seems that whenever I have been able to work through a challenging period with my practice, there is always another potential difficulty waiting around the corner. Over the years I've become more flexible with this, maybe even embracing the various forms of resistance as a method of growth.





Liam Everett, *Untitled (Eightercua)*, 2016. Huile, acrylique, sel, alcool sur vinyle enduit de gesso / Oil, acrylic, salt, alcohol on gessoed vinyl. 200,7 x 139,7 cm. Vue de l'exposition / View of the exhibition « panem et Circen », kamel mennour (47 rue Saint-André des arts), Paris, 2017. © Liam Everett. Photo. Julie Joubert & archives kamel mennour. Courtesy the artist and kamel mennour, Paris/London



Liam Everett, *Untitled (Cloghanmore)*, 2016. Huile, acrylique, sel, alcool sur vinyle enduit de gesso / Oil, acrylic, salt, alcohol on gessoed vinyl. 198,1 x 284,5 cm. Vue de l'exposition / View of the exhibition « panem et Circen », kamel mennour (47 rue Saint-André des arts), Paris, 2017. © Liam Everett. Photo. Julie Joubert & archives kamel mennour. Courtesy the artist and kamel mennour, Paris/London



Liam Everett. Untitled (Doghammore), 2016. Huile, scriptique, se, alcool sur vinyle enduit de gesso / Oil, acrylic, salt, alcohol on gessoed vinyl. 196,1 x 284,5 cm. Untitled (Fighiera), 2016. Huile, acrylique, se, alcool sur vinyle enduit de gesso / Oil, acrylic, salt, alcohol on gessoed vinyl. 200,7 x 199,7 cm. Vue de l'exposition / View of the exhibition « banam et Circen », kamel mennour (rue Saint-André des arts), Paris, 2017. © Liam Everett. Photo: Julie Joubert & archives kamel mennour. Courtesy the artist and kamel mennour, Paris/London

**DV: Looking at your impressive CV there are so many activities and exhibitions. How do you keep this organized?**

LE: Over the past few years I've been extremely fortunate to be working with galleries that are supportive and conscious of prioritizing projects in such a way that the practice is protected above all else.

**DV: Your work is being collected and shown by many museums around the world. Do you remember the first time a museum collected your work? And your first exhibition in a gallery? How did this change you? How did you feel?**



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LE: My first gallery show and museum acquisition brought an undeniable sense of affirmation, but what was most significant to me was that they provided the opportunity for the work to engage in a conversation with the work of other artists and viewers, thereby giving it a critical context. That couldn't have happened in the studio.

I recently had the pleasure of seeing one of my works (having been acquired by SFMoma) included in the exhibition "A slow succession with many interruptions", curated by Jenny Geith. The experience of seeing this earlier work within the context of the exhibition and the museum had an incredible effect on the way I view my present work, so much so that I have begun to change course and re-examine earlier questions that have now been abandoned.

**DV: I looked extensively at your work at Kamel Mennour Gallery in Paris. It is a fantastic exhibition. I've thought about it a lot in the past few weeks. In a way, your work is abstract, it is absolutely not realistic but yet, I was able to see figures in it. Would you allow me to say your work is abstract realism, or impressionist realism?**

LE: Abstract realism sounds relevant, although I don't really think of my paintings as images or visual documents. Instead, my experience is that the paintings are grounded entirely in the present and therefore completely derived from the immediate environment and/or original reality of the studio itself. They are constructed forms that shift between light and dark, hot and cold, fast and slow. Certainly there are figurative elements that appear and disappear, although this occurs more as a by-product of my actions and process.



Liam Everett, *Untitled (Eightercua)*, 2016. Huile, acrylique, sel, alcool sur vinyle enduit de gesso / Oil, acrylic, salt, alcohol on gessoed vinyl. 200,7 x 139,7 cm. Vue de l'exposition / View of the exhibition « panem et Circen », kamel mennour (47 rue Saint-André des arts), Paris, 2017. © Liam Everett. Photo. Julie Joubert & archives kamel mennour. Courtesy the artist and kamel mennour, Paris/London



Liam Everett, *Untitled (Bacchus)*, 2016. Huile, acrylique, sel, alcool sur vinyle monté sur panneau / Oil, acrylic, salt, alcohol on vinyl mounted on panel. 40,6 x 30,5 cm (panneau / panel). 43,8 x 33,7 cm (encadré / framed). *Untitled (Tizente)*, 2016. Huile, acrylique, sel, alcool sur vinyle monté sur panneau / Oil, acrylic, salt, alcohol on vinyl mounted on panel. 43,8 x 33,7 cm (panneau / panel). 43,8 x 33,7 cm (encadré / framed). *Untitled (Halvina)*, 2016. Huile, acrylique, sel, alcool sur vinyle monté sur panneau / Oil, acrylic, salt, alcohol on vinyl mounted on panel. 40,6 x 30,5 cm (panneau / panel). 43,8 x 33,7 cm (encadré / framed). *Vue de l'exposition / View of the exhibition - panem et Circus -, kamel mennour* (47 rue Saint-André des arts), Paris, 2017. © Liam Everett. Photo: Julie Joubert & archives kamel mennour. Courtesy the artist and kamel mennour, Paris/London

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**DV: At Kamel Mennour Gallery you described your painting process to me. It was a pretty "complicated" or "different" approach. Can you explain it to me again?**

LE: As a way of working without a true beginning or a proper idea, each painting is generated out of a series of initial layers in which I am simply place random objects that are native to the studio (buckets, sticks, string, wood scraps etc) on top of linen or whatever other substrate I am working with. After different arrangements, I spray ink and soak acrylic mediums around these objects, leaving the outlines and silhouette of their form. The result of these first layers is a kind of crude archive of all the objects present in my surroundings. Following this first phase I begin to apply paint, salt and raw clay in such a way that the marks are being guided by the first series of sprays and stains made from the studio objects. After several months of accumulation, during which each painting has upwards of 30-40 layers on the surface, the works reach a threshold. The linen itself begins to buckle and in some instances even collapses due to the accumulation of paint and debris. It is this 'threshold' that I'm always working towards. It is also at this point that I begin to subtract and remove, layer by layer, via sanding and various forms of abrasion, as well as sun bleaching, and salt/alcohol washes. This aspect of the practice is grounded in a desire to review or back track, to intimately re-discover how a painting becomes a painting and has the potential to remain a painting as opposed to a thing that has been painted.

**DV: How is working in New York different to working in Northern California?**

LE: The single biggest difference for me has been the physical space. Once I began working in Northern California my sense of scale was radically altered and things opened up dramatically. This was partially due to the dynamic landscape of my immediate surroundings - the ocean, mountains and tree line. Before moving here I had been living in New York City and working in a tiny studio in the heart of Chinatown. Intellectually there are also several differences, although I have found that these are dwarfed by the environmental shift.

**DV: What are your upcoming plans?**

LE: I'm now working on new paintings for a solo show at Eleni Koroneou gallery in Athens. It's set to open in April. Additionally I am developing an installation for the SECA exhibition that will open in July at SFMoma.



## GUIDE EXPOS

### L'ÉNIGMATIQUE LIAM EVERETT

L'ARTISTE AMÉRICAIN PRÉSENTE  
UNE BELLE SÉRIE DE TOILES REMPLIES  
DE MYSTÈRES À DÉCRYPTER.  
ENTRE ARCHÉOLOGIE ET HISTOIRES  
CONTEMPORAINES.

PAR SOPHIE DE SANTIS  
sdesantis@lefigaro.fr

Il faut s'y reprendre à plusieurs fois avant de pénétrer dans les toiles de Liam Everett. L'Américain, né en 1973 à Rochester et installé à San Francisco, réalise sur chaque tableau, tel un archéologue, un grand nombre de strates de lecture. On devine de-ci de-là un crâne, une silhouette, un animal, des formes qui pourraient être familières. Mais les pistes sont brouillées



**GALERIE KAMEL  
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47, rue Saint-André-  
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TÉL. :

01 56 24 03 63.  
**HORAIRES :**  
du mardi au samedi,  
de 11 h à 19 h.  
**JUSQU'AU :**  
4 mars.

par l'accumulation d'étranges cartographies, de paysages chaotiques et de fulgurances lumineuses. Le regard s'y perd, cherche un sens là où il n'y a peut-être rien à comprendre. Les superpositions d'huile et d'acrylique, de sel et d'alcool sur vinyle monté sur panneau, confèrent à la surface porosité et transparence. On a l'impression que plusieurs histoires ancestrales sont racontées les unes après les autres, dans une palette de couleurs plutôt éteintes, comme brûlées, effacées, consumées par le soleil et les produits abrasifs employés. « Je suis vraiment intéressé par la possibilité qu'une œuvre demeure toujours "au travail", plutôt qu'elle ait été définitivement "travaillée" », déclare l'artiste. Les screen-paintings de cette série *Panem* et *Circem* sont sous-titrés des noms de villages irlandais Annadorn, Ardgroom ou Cloghanmore, abritant tous un site néolithique. Une piste de lecture que nous donne l'artiste ? ■

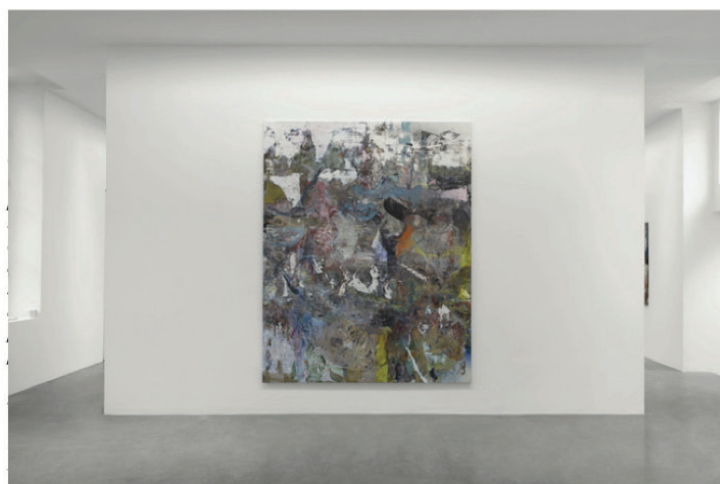


Cette semaine...

## L'agenda de la semaine

*On bâtit Paris au Pavillon de l'Arsenal – on découvre le travail de Liam Everett à la galerie Kamel Mennour – et on mise encore sur Prouvé à la Galerie Dorcentoren*

Publié le LUNDI, 06 FÉVRIER 2017  
par Oscar Dubey



© Julie Joubert

### **Sentir la vitalité de la peinture**

*Que reste-t-il des différentes couches de peinture que Liam Everett vient poser sur ses toiles ? Elles sont à peine perceptibles, malmenées par une série de violences que leur inflige l'artiste américain. Du sel, de l'alcool, des grilles, des coups de pinceau voire même des heures passées sous la lumière du soleil, rien ne leur est épargné. L'abstraction finale est le résultat de ce traitement volontairement expérimental et presque aléatoire qui traduit une sorte de frénésie créatrice palpable chez Everett. Il paraît que tous les éléments de son atelier sont placés sur des roulettes, comme si l'obsession de dynamiser le processus créatif était à l'image de ses toiles en plein mouvement. D'ailleurs, la dynamique tout entière de l'exposition a été étudiée de près par l'artiste qui a expressément demandé les plans de la galerie pour placer chacune de ses œuvres réalisées pour l'occasion. En traversant petit à petit les espaces, la symphonie peut se deviner, tourbillonnante, impulsive, parfois même volontairement arythmique... Liam Everett impose une véritable épreuve à ses toiles pour les faire vivre. De la vitalité justement, voici ce qui reste sous les couches de peintures.*

*Liam Everett, Panem et Circen, jusqu'au 4 mars 2017 à la galerie Kamel Mennour, 47, rue Saint-André-des-Arts, 75006 Paris ; [www.kamelmennour.com](http://www.kamelmennour.com)*

## Liam Everett, Panem et Circen



ARTS

## LA CHRONIQUE D'OLIVIER CENA

TTT

**Panem  
et Circen**  
Peinture

**Liam Everett**

| Jusqu'au 4 mars,  
galerie Kamel  
Mennour, 47, rue  
Saint-André-des-  
Arts, Paris 6<sup>e</sup>.  
Tél: 01 56 24 03 63.

« En fait, Liam Everett a voulu, à travers ces nouvelles séries d'œuvres, pousser dans ses retranchements le concept moderniste de bidimensionnalité », dit le texte que le courtois portier de la galerie tend à chaque visiteur qu'il accueille. Nous voilà donc revenus plus de cinquante ans en arrière, lorsque la critique d'art américain (états-unien) Clement Greenberg (1909-1994) invente ce concept. Défendant l'abstraction géométrique, Greenberg impose alors l'idée que l'illusion de la tridimensionnalité donnée par la perspective et héritée de la Renaissance a fait son temps. Une pure peinture de la surface lui succède, sans tromperie, conforme à la réalité bidimensionnelle du tableau.

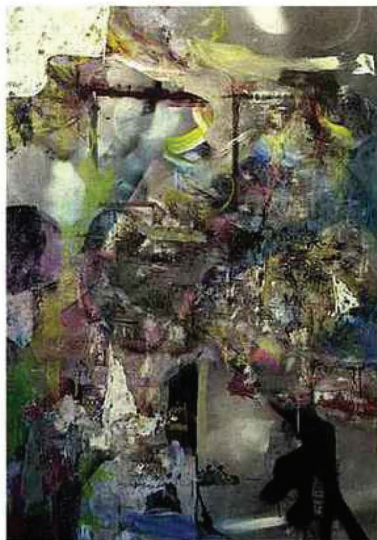
Le « concept de bidimensionnalité » a donc une histoire. Elle commence en Russie au début du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle avec le pionnier de l'abstraction Kazimir Malevitch (1878-1935), qui le premier parle de la « planéité » du tableau. Elle se poursuit aux Etats-Unis à la fin des années 1940 lorsque Jackson Pollock met au point pour ses drippings ce que Clement Greenberg appellera le *all over* (en français : le partout, l'uniforme). Il s'agit pour le peintre de couvrir uniformément la toile de telle sorte qu'il n'y ait ni motif abstrait centré, ni bord abandonné, ni partie privilégiée, ni temps fort, ni profondeur de champ. Il n'y a que de la peinture organisée sur l'ensemble d'une surface où, comme l'affirmera plus tard un autre artiste américain, Frank Stella, « ce que l'on

voit est ce que l'on voit ». Et, comme la plupart des peintures abstraites actuelles, celle de Liam Everett obéit à la règle du *all over*.

Mais la règle n'est pas sans danger. La tentation du papier peint décoratif guette. C'est un obstacle difficile à franchir auquel se heurtent tant d'artistes contemporains. C'est pourquoi l'abstraction actuelle ressemble souvent au concours Lépine de la peinture : obsédés par l'invention d'une forme inédite, beaucoup de peintres fabriquent l'originalité à coups de petites trouvailles plus ou moins épatantes et de processus de création (de dispositifs) plus ou moins extravagants. C'est l'une des caractéristiques de l'art de notre époque : on ne trouve plus, on invente. Le procédé ressemble à ceux de la mode, de la publicité et du design. Il a l'avantage d'offrir des bases objectives à la construction de discours esthétiques. Liam Everett, par exemple, soumet sa peinture « à l'action abrasive des éléments naturels (soleil, vent), du sel et de l'alcool qui perturbent la structure interne du tableau ».

C'est le procédé actuel. Il y a cinq ans, la peinture de cet artiste de 42 ans était beaucoup plus minimaliste et tendait vers la monochromie. L'année d'après, elle devenait conceptuelle et affectée – des toiles peintes façon batik, détachées du châssis et retenues entre deux longues barres de bois. Puis, à partir de 2014, date d'apparition du procédé actuel, la palette s'est peu à peu enrichie. Bien qu'ils soient abstraits, les derniers tableaux empruntent, entre autres, à ceux de ses aînés Robert Rauschenberg – la composition (le chaos organisé) et les empreintes ou pochoirs (raies, grillage, etc.) – et Willem de Kooning – le geste tortueux. Ils échappent à la tendance kitsch que les œuvres passées laissaient entrevoir, mais flirtent avec le décoratif. Certains d'entre eux ont une élégance et une harmonie séduisantes, mais leur qualité est inégale – les petits formats conviennent mal à ce genre d'abstraction. Mais au fait : de quel genre d'abstraction s'agit-il ? A sa manière, l'œuvre de Liam Everett condense une histoire récente de la peinture américaine. C'est une figure de style, une sorte d'oxymore : du pop expressionniste abstrait ●

**Untitled**  
(*Eightercua*), 2016,  
huile, acrylique, sel,  
alcool sur vinyle  
enduit de gesso,  
200,7 × 139,7 cm.



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# art ltd.

Lutz, Laura, "Liam Everett: 'The Elephant Call' at Altman Siegel," *Art ltd.*, May 2016

Archeology can loosely be defined as the study of civilizations and the history of people through the examination of excavated geological sites. In contrast, architecture is the process of designing and constructing habitats. Reminiscent of both architecture and archeology, artist Liam Everett approaches his new series of paintings through a rigorous process akin to building and excavation. Like an historical documenter, he works on all the canvases at once—each individual piece becomes complete in its own time as if stopping at that moment when sacred ground has been discovered. Everett's new large-scale paintings are on view at Altman Siegel gallery in an exhibition titled "The Elephant Call," after Bertolt Brecht's 1926 play of the same name. The play was originally presented as an appendix to a longer play "Man Equals Man," a surrealist farce. Brecht envisioned the smaller play presented in the foyer of the longer play; a "play within a play." As such, Everett approaches his art practice as "play/farce" with materials and process, foregrounded by the context of a larger whole: life and our surroundings. His indoor/outdoor studio in Sebastopol is the perfect habitat to use discarded pieces of the suburbs as tools for his expeditions that take place on the canvas.

Techniques such as pressing painted plastics and peeling them away, using grates or pieces of construction sites as stencils, and applying industrial spray paint as well as thick brushstrokes all form his lexicon of gesture. Throughout the blasts of color, white shows through after vigorous sanding, creating a texture that causes the eye to jump around the canvas. In this way, there is no focal point but instead a pulsating rhythm that creeps forward and recedes at each gaze, on par with the Mark Rothko's contemplative near-monochromes or Helen Frankenthaler's energetic color fields. All of the work is untitled, with subtitles referencing Native North and South American tribal lands, seemingly linked to abstract ideas of place and

identity with a nod to the concept of archeology. *Uxóólní (Nokóy)* (2016) is the most stunning piece, particularly poetic as it is bold, with vivid blue and purple tones dominating a field scattered with glints of white where the paint has been sanded all the way down to the primer. It is as if digging to unearth buried treasure only reveals solid marble at the bottom to be the most beautiful discovery of all.

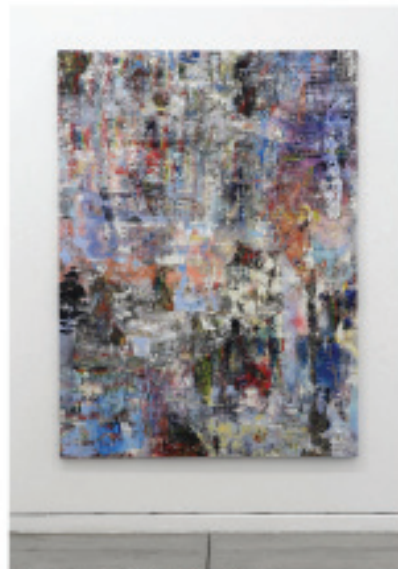


Image: *Uxóólní (Nokóy)*, 2016, Liam Everett  
Acrylic, enamel, alcohol, and oil on oil primed linen  
77" x 501.7"



# Art: Elephant in the Room

By **Jonathan Curiel**

Wednesday, Mar 16 2016

Liam Everett jokes about all the behind-the-scenes "neuroses" that go into making his otherworldly paintings. During the many months it takes to complete a series of works, Everett never sits down — there's no place to sit in his studio, anyway — as he puts things on wheels, and prods, chafes, scrapes, sands, and dabs his linen canvases over and over again. When the process is complete, Everett has someone else stretch his canvases into the finished versions that show up in galleries — which deliberately distorts the paintings in ways that will shock Everett.

Then there are the paintings' names, like *Untitled (Tikal)* and *Untitled (Mitla)*, that suggest tangible connections to historic geographies but are chosen randomly and designed to play with art-goers' imaginations — and with Everett's. What you think you see with Liam Everett's painting is not quite what you get. The works are both complete and *incomplete* — inhabiting a state of existential limbo that borrows from Everett's theater background, which includes a childhood stint where he performed in Samuel Beckett's most famous play, *Waiting for Godot*.

"I'm very interested in the possibility of a work that's always working, instead of a work that's been worked," says Everett, who's also a playwright, and whose father produced theater in Ireland and in the United States. "My studio looks like a theater set, with everything in motion. The performance and the painting are completely integrated — one leads to the other, in this kind of self-generative form of practice."

Everett's latest exhibit at Altman Siegel gallery, "The Elephant Calf," which references an absurdist Bertolt Brecht play about law, features some nine large-scale paintings, each one a multitude of overlapping, crisscrossing layers that let you peer into the tiniest recesses and come away with something enthralling: blotches, fragments, lines that fade here and there, particles that circle each other. None of the paintings has a recognizable center. And that's exactly what Everett wants.

"A lot of 'The Elephant Calf' paintings spent time with mini-stages that I built in front of the paintings," he says. "I put contents from my studio, like buckets and sticks and lamps and stools, on top of these mini-stages, as props — really crude, agitprop theater sets. And then I'd reflect light on these objects, and they'd cast shadows on the paintings. And then I'd use these shadows to direct my gestures — another elaborate, neurotic way so I don't allow myself to make a gestural, emotional mark. They're led by the content of the space."



LIAM EVERETT

Liam Everett: The Elephant Calf Through April 23 at Altman Siegel, 49 Geary St., San Francisco. Free; 415-576-9300 or [altmansiegel.com](http://altmansiegel.com). Robert Arneson: Guardians of the Secret II Through May 7 at Brian Gross Fine Art, 248 Utah St., San Francisco. Free; 415-788-1050 or [briangrossfineart.com](http://briangrossfineart.com).

Each canvas in Everett's new exhibit has what he describes as "movement" that can take the eye in any direction, and which "implicates" the art-goer in a kind of participatory experience.

This involvement also borrows from the theater works Everett loves, where actors speak directly to audiences and break down the barrier between stage and seating. One of Everett's most recent performance works, *On the Wall*, showcases an actor (sometimes Everett) who drags himself by his forearms on a public street before entering the art space and the waiting audience. He admits his methods are unusual, as with having a framer-carpenter stretch his canvases into shape.

"They show up foreign, and it's very unsettling," Everett says. "It's not this kind of self-flagellation or self-destructive force. As idealistic as it sounds, I grow from this experience — that there is this deeper evolution that occurs in the practice when I'm confronted. That's really what it is — especially with this group called 'The Elephant Calf.' They went straight to the gallery, and to see them in this presentable condition, I found really intimidating. I was very anxious. I had a few weeks of high anxiety. I'm *still* having trouble reading them and figuring them out. When I see a painting, things like velocity and direction are the first things I think about. What is the pace at which the painting is moving? Which direction is it moving? Is it right to left? Is it a diagonal or vertical? Every time I've gone back to the gallery, they present themselves in a different condition."

Then, chuckling, Everett adds: "I probably spend a little too much time looking at paintings."

Next year marks the 25th anniversary of Robert Arneson's death — a quarter-century since the Bay Area artist made the last of his large sculptures which, typical of Arneson, were unconventionally funny. To say that Arneson was obsessed with his own balding, bearded visage is an understatement, given all the selfie-like works that he made. But in the last decade or so of his life, Arneson was also fixated on another hair-challenged artist: Jackson Pollock.

Arneson created a series of Pollock busts and drawings, and he created a gigantic tribute sculpture to *Guardians of the Secret*, Pollock's 1943 painting that's in SFMOMA's collection.

Arneson's *Guardians of the Secret II*, made between 1989 and 1990, is on display for the first time on the West Coast, at Brian Gross Fine Art, and its resurrection here is a reminder of just how funny and unconventional Arneson could be. Measuring seven by 12 feet, Arneson's version is a wild interpretation of an already-wild original that delved into everything from primitivism to Native American symbols. In Arneson's redoing, which is comprised of 18 pieces, the center is a lighter version of Pollock's center, except that Arneson has scribbled his own phone number, and such KPFA radio announcements as "Coming to You Live." And in his take, there is a backside with a reliquary that contains a sculptured version of Pollock's head, a small penis sculpture, and boots. At the base, instead of a single dog that could be stand-in for the ancient Egyptian god Anubis, there is a monkey who looks to be having intercourse "doggie-style" with the Anubis figure. Sacrilegious?

With Arneson, nothing was off limits. The art world has always known that, though Arneson caused controversy in 1981 when he sculpted a ceramic bust of assassinated San Francisco Mayor George Moscone, with bullet holes, faux blood, the words "Bang, Bang, Bang," and a Twinkle image that referenced Moscone's 1978 murder by Supervisor Dan White. The San Francisco Arts Commission, which commissioned Arneson to do the sculpture, rejected *Portrait of George (Moscone)* after a public outcry. The work disappeared from public view for 30 years, until SFMOMA purchased the work and devoted a gallery to Arneson's work in 2012. Brian Gross Fine Art is exhibiting *Guardians of the Secret II* in a similar way, with many Arneson companion pieces — including the sculpture's gigantic 1990 working drawing, and several Pollock heads — sharing the space. At the exhibit's recent opening, art-goers crowded into the gallery, drinks in hand, to see the work first-hand and to laugh and smile in a way that Arneson would have absolutely loved.



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# ARTFORUM

Brian Karl, "Reviews: 'Nacht und Träume at Altman Siegel," Artforum, November 2015, pp. 311

SAN FRANCISCO

## "Nacht und Träume"

ALTMAN SIEGEL

Liam Everett, *Untitled (Limnos)*, 2015, acrylic, enamel, alcohol, and salt on oil-primed linen, 77 x 60". From "Nacht und Träume."



The way in which creative expression is achieved in an era of often extreme ironic self-positioning was an implicit subtext of this summer group show, albeit one uncertainly realized. Zarouhie Abdalian's *a caveat, a decoy*, 2014, a site-specific installation whose sound track looped Schubert's "Nacht und Träume"—a lied celebrating the (irrational) unconscious and mourning the loss of dreams that comes with waking—lent the exhibition its title and set its tone. Significantly, *a caveat*'s sound element was forced to compete with the cacophonous street

noise blaring through one (pointedly) open window in the fourth-floor gallery. Anchored by a plastic owl perched on the open window's sill, Abdalian's bare-bones work mustered its affect chiefly via its orchestration of this inside/outside aural blur. The ingenuous, inward-looking Romanticism of the Schubert lied contrasted not only with the harsh soundscape of the external world but with the caveat suggested by the "knowing" owl decoy, and hinted at the exhibition's theme of un(self)conscious expression in tension with ironic self-consciousness.

Paintings by the three other artists included in the show grappled with issues of gesture and representation while demonstrating the limitations of ironic modes. The loose but not-quite-convincingly free-wheeling paintings of Johnny Bicos and Laeh Glenn undercut



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these artists' efforts at expression, at the same time generating questions about the challenges of undertaking representation itself. Two of Glenn's small oil paintings, both dated 2015, feature sets of simply outlined marks representing eyes, nose, and hands (and, in one case, a mouth), floating on vague, nonrepresentational fields—black-on-white in one work, white-on-black in the other. The works, titled with emoji-like glyphs ('v' #1 and 'v' #2, respectively) that echo the facial-feature-like marks, veer toward the coy, and almost cute. Glenn's third piece, *Night Birds*, 2015, is similarly provisional in appearance, if less brushy, portraying indistinct avian forms on tree branches. (The echo with the owl in Abdalian's piece was a nice coincidence.) Bicos's rudimentary figures in oil on linen—*Untitled (Duck Soup)*, *Untitled (Egg Salad)*, and *Untitled* (all 2015)—half merged with their hazy patchwork backgrounds, giving the works an air of being still in-process, not yet fully committed to their respective assertions.

In contrast, Liam Everett's two large-scale paintings—*Untitled (Limnos)* and *Untitled (Lakshmiapur)*, both 2015—are extraordinarily worked. These abstract pieces are both rich and restless, yet the compositions and materials are cohesive. Everett uses acrylic and enamel, along with solvent agents such as alcohol and salt, to create a variety of effects on oil-primed linen. The signs of taking away—sanding, scraping, and rubbing, sometimes to the point of puncturing the canvas—are as significant as the marks themselves, the techniques together yielding a surprisingly well-integrated sense of pentimento. Everett's work has developed significantly over recent years, and even while here defaulting to more conventionally stretched wall-hung canvases—as opposed to his earlier experiments with free-flowing fabrics and extended paintings draped over frames and racks—it feels accomplished, thoughtful, and continuously inventive. Beyond the lush seduction and busy dynamism of his visual presentations, which further suggest a strong investment of both psychic and intellectual energy in their laboredness, these pieces integrate self-awareness and an uninhibited bravura of physically embodied, if at times tortured, jouissance. If the idealized "dreams" of the show's title might be applied as gloss to any creative process or product, it is in this pair of probing paintings that the often-fraught interplay between the studied and the uninhibited is most fully realized.

—Brian Karl

# LIAM EVERETT GETS BOUND

Q&A | OCT 2015 | BY TALI JAFFE



Like many artists, Liam Everett finds liberation through his creative practice. Represented by [Qn Stellar Rays](#) in New York, and [Altman Siegel](#) in San Francisco, Everett's work—most notably his stunning canvases treated with salt and alcohol (sometimes a sander)—are additive paintings that find their completion through subtraction. His most recent work, though, is bound in a book and captures his exploration of an aged shed and the long forgotten tools held within it. Here, the artist shares the liberating process of “purposefully making that which is useless,” and the graceful presence of the mundane.





**"INUTILE" is a beautiful artist edition book capturing a series you created with materials you happened upon in Toulouse. Can you tell us what brought you there in the first place?** My wife is from Toulouse and we have been visiting there on a regular basis for the past 15 years.

**And when you uncovered this trove of tools and materials—watercolor from the 1940s, ink from the 50s, tools that were a century or more old—did you have an immediate desire to create with them?** My immediate desire was to familiarize myself with them and to become intimate with their uselessness.



**You described the process of creation as being led by the objects—the content of your surroundings articulated the direction of the practice. Sounds almost spiritual. This is the same approach/practice that I have been consumed with for the past several years. In fact I am just repeating myself. Different materials, different context, although always the same practice.**

**This process of exploration and creation was especially personal through the presence of your father in law. Can you tell us about the dialogue that ensued?** The gifts of experience that my father in law has shared with me over the years are layered in the everyday. He has the rare talent of lifting ideas, objects and memories out of the flat lands of the quotidian and throwing them into the open. An old key, a tattered manuscript, a broken hammer... whatever it is, he relishes the history that it holds or signals. It is with grace that he exposes their presence.



*Everett's Unfinished (his College), 2014*

**Author Rabih Alameddine wrote the introduction to the book. How did that collaboration come about?** After I returned from France last year, I explained to Rabih that I was making a book of drawings that had been inspired by a series of conversations I had with my father in law. I asked Rabih if he would write an introduction that could give context to the impetus behind the project. Instead, he wrote a short work of fiction, which turned out to be the perfect solution as it accomplished much more than I had imagined.

*"INUTILE" co-published by RITE Editions, Altman-Siegel Gallery, and On Stellar Rays, is available in a limited edition of 45 and 5 APs that are signed, dated and numbered; \$850 and can be purchased from [Rite Editions](#).*

## LIAM EVERETT

Interviewed by JEFF MCMILLAN

Liam Everett lives and works in San Francisco. He is currently represented by Alison Segal and is also Visiting Faculty at San Francisco Art Institute. I met with him at Art Headquarters Center for the Arts studio in March 2014 to discuss his most recent paintings and a set of new prints he recently completed at Peulson Dart Press.

**I wanted to start off with your painting practice. When I last visited your studio you were working on several large canvases that you said some people called "burning" paintings. Tell me about these paintings and how you create them?**

This is a very primitive way of talking about them, but I keep doing this so I'll just say that they start out additive. Even before I'm adding paint on them, they're primed, which was so essentially the work that I have to dig into when I'm subtracting. So after I have the three, four or five layers of primes, I'll start to add. If I just say I start adding paint, it's not really true—I'm adding it very intentionally. I'm drawing with the paint and I'm building up these grids that are between hot and cold color schemes—building up three or four columns of cold and then I intersperse those columns with warmer colors. In many ways, I feel more than ever that I'm building paintings rather than painting paintings. And eventually I begin to subtract but the reason why I mention this now is because I'm not adding just to have this surface to subtract. I'm trying to build a painting that is conclusive—that at some point arrives at this resolved state where I can recognize why it's doing what it's doing and I'm excited by it. It's really at that point when there's comfort that I begin to subtract the paint, and that's why they get referred to as the "burned" paintings because to subtract I said like I'll use many different ways—alcohol, salt, sand, wool, a power sander. I use different gradations of the sanding paper, some are on blocks, some are wrapped around foam and the reason why I have several different ways of removing the paint is because some are much more aggressive than others and I don't want to strip more than one layer at a time. I want to take off one painting and then take off another because there are maybe four or five of these different paintings on each painting. So as I'm subtracting, I don't want them to show up as repetitive marks—they're more kind of occasional. And as you cut into a spot—I'm thinking geologically—I want to be able to cut into the landscape of paint and see what led to what. What I'm discovering when I finally exit these paintings is that they show up completely different than how I imagined them to be.

**So previously you've mentioned the word "foreign" when you are getting to the end of that subtractive process. Can you talk a little bit more about that?**

It's probably the wrong word. The other word I was using was "otherly" but that just sounds too boring. There's always this question—I think everyone who makes a painting at some point gets asked this question, "How do you know the work is finished?" It is actually a very strange question for me, because I don't think of these as finished. It's probably the reason—the motivation—that has sent me into this way of working—to avoid a finish or a problem of finishing. So it's a long way to say it but essentially "otherly" or "foreign" is what I'm looking for. I'm looking for this to appear, first show up but to appear and I make a differentiation between showing up and appearing—for me to show up happens much faster. For a painting to appear is something that's very gradual. It's like the Greek term *metempsychosis*—it's something that but essentially it's "becoming," arriving at. When the painting stands in front of me after all this addition and subtraction, if and when it arrives at this point, I barely don't recognize it. I can tell you I did this and this and this, but I can't make it happen again.

**I think when many people look at your work they would call it abstraction. But you said in an interview with Planted Projects, "I don't think of my paintings as abstractions. Inside the studio they are only work to me. I mean that literally. Work as labor." I was wondering if you could talk a little more about that?**

Maybe this sounds like it's motivated by an idea or a concept, but it isn't. I would say none of this is born out of idea or concept. It's born out of practice and for lack of a better term, labor. How I do that, how I avoid the idea, is through these restrictions in the practice, in these limitations that I set up. For example, I don't allow myself to stand back from the painting while I'm working on it. I pull the table up about three feet away from the wall and then I get out the paint and start at the top and move to the bottom, always the same way. What I do is limit my art from sociobiographical expression, emotion, or for lack of a better word, self. And so in doing this, what is left is practice—put paint on surface, take paint off, put paint on—it's very primitive. For me, why these are not abstract is because they are very much of the reality—the studio. They are born out of this reality of practice and process and addition and subtraction. And so what they look like to me, if and when they appear, are that which they are—practice.

**So when I was here last time you also mentioned that when you're done with the work you send off the canvases to the fabricator and then a few times you don't actually see the stretched canvases until it's in the gallery. I was wondering if you could talk a bit more about your relationship to the work after it leaves your studio?**

Almost 90% of the time I don't see the paintings until they arrive in the gallery. And this is the final restriction for me because if I stretch them myself I lose control somehow. I lose what I think of as "the finish." When you are watching a painting, you are really cropping an image. By divorcing myself of this very conclusive act, I essentially pull the rug out from under myself. I essentially take away this control. And I create the possibility of being disturbed when I finally meet the painting in its stretched form.

**Let's talk about your prints that you did at Peulson Dart Press. When were you there?**

Maybe about three months ago. I've been there at two different short residencies and I'm actually going back in a few weeks to finish the group. I am in thinking we'll make one or two editions and we ended up making several. What's amazing about Peulson and Dart is that they came out a few times to the studio—they tried to get a sense of the way I work—and basically we set up the same system as the press, an environment where everything is moving and there is a constant state of flux and possibility. That was the atmosphere we created at Peulson.

**Is was the process that you went through—did it still entail an addition and subtraction like your paintings?**

I'm probably doing the same and misreading you because when I say "subtractive," for me it's actually very positive. As soon as you start to take away an area of paint you lose the paint but you gain many other things—you gain volume, you gain light sources, you gain depth, you gain all these other kinds and subtle modes of information. So you can erase an entire painting—quote-unquote "erase"—but what you have is content. If I was Dan, I would say something like this is the content of absence. But I'm not Dan so I can't say this. But this is essentially what it is. How they are similar is that everything I do in the creative process I find two poles—you can call it between A and B. To establish this is a foundation. It's the two pillars that hold up a space or a support that holds a painting. What I love these two poles then my job is just to move from one to the other, back and forth. And if you do this fast enough and for long enough with rigor and intention, then every now and then you have combustion. Viscosity makes sparks, heat makes energy. And this is what I'm trying to hold in the work. The heat or whatever you want to call it—the energy that arrives because of this friction. So it's the same process—different tools, different environments, same process.



## Liam Everett's ghostly fabrics at Altman Siegel

GALLERIES

By **Kenneth Baker** Updated 7:11 pm, Friday, December 7, 2012

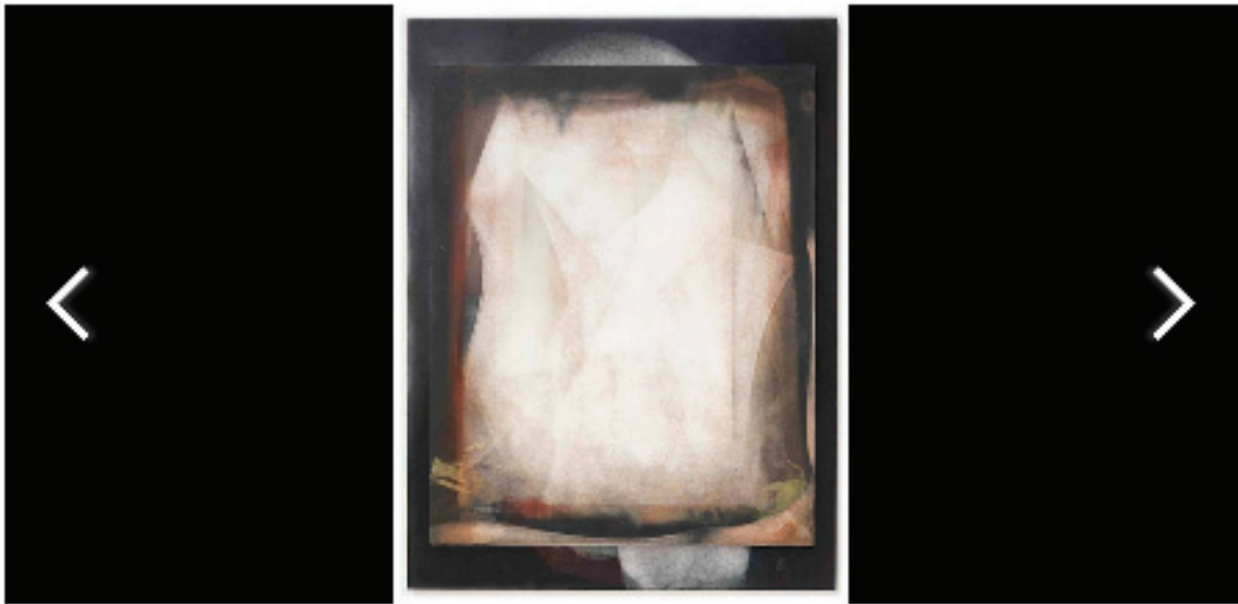


Photo: Jay Jones



IMAGE 1 OF 2

"Unified" (2012) Ink, acrylic, alcohol and oil on Mexican panels by Liam Everett

**Liam Everett** summons references to art other than his own with a touch so light as to appear unintended.

Consider the large fabric pieces in the Bay Area artist's show at Altman Siegel. Each one has swathes of organza or wool slung between slender vertical timbers whose residue of stains suggest that they also served as supports during the works' making. An apparently related work in the adjacent room, spanning a pair of sawhorses, hints ambiguously at Everett's studio practice.

Even from a distance, these pieces stir memories of **Robert Rauschenberg's** "Hoarfrost" series of the mid-'70s. Their faint suggestion of battlefield



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stretchers brings to mind the use of similar forms by **Salvatore Scarpitta** (1919-2007) and the self-mythologizing **Joseph Beuys** (1921-1986).

Ghostly imprints of folds and overlays in Everett's pieces might even recall the Shroud of Turin that, Christian lore has it, captured the image of the crucified Jesus. But if Everett would own that association at all, it would probably be as an example of the projection of desire. Meanwhile, his working process, which involves ink, acrylic, alcohol and salt, remains mysterious, as do the objects hanging veiled in a couple of pieces.

Untitled works on Masonite hint that they also might have originated as by-products of other studio output. They have peculiar internal auras - of light seemingly creased with shadow - dimly reminiscent of early 20th century modernism.

Everett undermines his art's air of lightly borne **education** by attaching wordy titles that, whether he has written or borrowed them, feel like lyric frosting on well-cooked fare that does not want it.

**Abstraction's descendants:** Until about 50 years ago, the terrain of abstract painting remained a battleground, where skirmishes could occur over the nature of art content, over creative commitment and art's potential to illuminate or chasten an audience. Pop art - think of **Andy Warhol's** camouflage paintings or **Roy Lichtenstein's** "mirrors" - changed all that. They made of the battleground a playground. So did the concurrent explosion of the art market, with its cynical reverberations, and a growing abundance of art-school-educated painters.

**New Yorker Patrick Brennan** and Bay Area painter **Daniel Tierney**, paired in a diverting show at Romer Young, have grown up in the post-post-Pop climate where strategic thinking surpassed all the other pressures impinging on the making of pictures. Consequently their works embody heightened self-consciousness trying to avoid paralysis. They anticipate a public - the hards of contemporary art fair followers - that believes it has seen and grasped all the possible aesthetic and conceptual moves already. The only potential novelty under these conditions resides in displays of relaxation within them, exactly what Brennan and Tierney provide.

In "Pink and Grey" (2012), Tierney set a listless black line looping through the unevenly tinted ground of a small canvas. His artifice here consisted in avoiding at every point both the expressive whiplash of **Jackson Pollock** (1912-1956) and the studied meander of Brice Marden's line-laced paintings.

Tierney's search for a middle way has its own low-key suspense, a kind of poise between doing and not doing that may strike only viewers who have engaged in some parallel discipline for reasons of their own.

His other paintings here, on corrugated cardboard, have a zany but muted freedom of invention that consciously makes no big claims for itself, though it builds in references to yet other antic artistic spirits: **Richard Tuttle's** redemptive scavenging and the slapstick nihilism of **Martin Kippenberger** (1953-1997).

**Abstraction's descendants:** Until about 50 years ago, the terrain of abstract painting remained a battleground, where skirmishes could occur over the nature of art content, over creative commitment and art's potential to illuminate or chasten an audience. Pop art - think of **Andy Warhol's** camouflage paintings or **Roy Lichtenstein's** "mirrors" - changed all that. They made of the battleground a playground. So did the concurrent explosion of the art market, with its cynical reverberations, and a growing abundance of art-school-educated painters.

**New Yorker Patrick Brennan** and Bay Area painter **Daniel Tierney**, paired in a diverting show at Romer Young, have grown up in the post-post-Pop climate where strategic thinking surpassed all the other pressures impinging on the making of pictures. Consequently their works embody heightened self-consciousness trying to avoid paralysis. They anticipate a public - the horde of contemporary art fair followers - that believes it has seen and grasped all the possible aesthetic and conceptual moves already. The only potential novelty under these conditions resides in displays of relaxation within them, exactly what Brennan and Tierney provide.

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Brennan also keeps things lightly goofy.

"K-z wider - e-z rider" (2012), like his others here, looks cheap as wrapping paper, yet that cheapness seems to disguise carefully pondered decisions. Brennan claims to work far longer on his pictures than their glamourless materials - pre-stretched canvases, big spangles of cut-up Mylar - suggest.

Brennan evokes the sort of double take we experience when something cheesy tricks us for an instant into seeing it as swank. The point is not trickery or delation but to let us feel the softening of judgment and liberation of taste that such moments sometimes promise.

**Liam Everett: If I could sleep I might make love. I'd go into the woods. My eyes would see ... the sky, the earth. I'd run, run, they wouldn't catch me:** Paintings on fabric and panels. Through Jan. 5. **Altman Siegel Gallery**, 49 Geary St., S.F. (415) 576-9300. [www.altmansiegel.com](http://www.altmansiegel.com).

**Patrick Brennan and Daniel Tierney: Days of Thunder:** Paintings. Through Dec. 22. Romer Young Gallery, 1240 22nd St., S.F. (415) 550-7483. [www.romeryounggallery.com](http://www.romeryounggallery.com).

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## San Francisco

### Liam Everett

ALTMAN SIEGEL

1150 25th Street

November 1, 2012–December 22, 2012

There is something solemn, if not almost funerary, about Liam Everett's solo debut at Altman Siegel, which might be appropriate given its subject matter. The show features a series of paintings on Masonite, wool, cotton, and organza that have been stained with ink and acrylic, and then meticulously worked over with various corrosive agents like alcohol, lemon, and salt to create luminous abstractions that also depict the residue of erasure. The most emotive of these are draped loosely onto wooden supports and propped against the wall, where they resemble a lineup of four richly hued ambulance stretchers.

If not quite a requiem for the medium, Everett's thoughtful intervention is certainly aware of the mortality of that legendarily stubborn artistic idiom: four stretcher bars and a canvas, a formal limitation the artist attempts to think through rather than around. There is something of this driving a piece like *Killing Floor (or a proposed action plan)*, 2012, an expanse of mottled olive wool draped horizontally on bars and supported by wooden horses. Upon sustained viewing, the elegant depression of the fabric comes to evoke the imprint of a reclining body.

Through these simple and decisive gestures, Everett resists the allure of the purely optical or abstract. Instead, he offers something much more honest (for lack of a better word). His surfaces remain as afterimages—not records of a vain search for a zero degree of painting, but simply marks of labor. The literal imprints of the artist's work animate these pieces, the drips and stains underscoring the phantasmatic presence of a body repeatedly working through a singular idea into multiple iterations. Perhaps this impulse best accounts for the protean nature of the exhibition, from the panels and the draped paintings to the triangular supports—all of which achieve a stubborn, if enigmatic, physicality. It is a strange sort of poetry, made all the more effective by its rigorous logic.



View of "If I could sleep I might make love. I'd go into the woods. My eyes would see... the sky, the earth. I'd run, run, they wouldn't catch me," 2012.

— *Franklin Melendez*



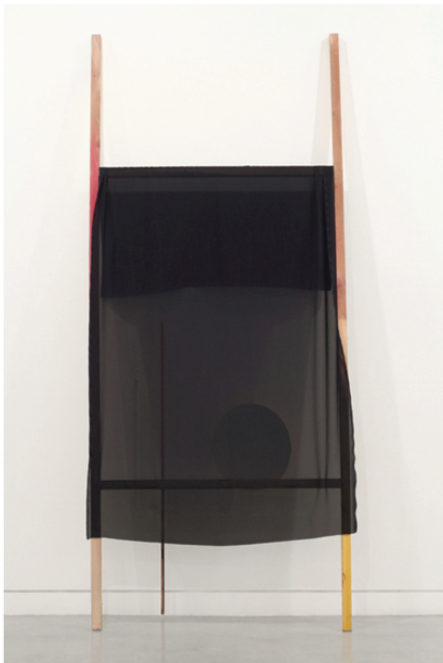
ALTMAN SIEGEL

//// 49 GEARY STREET, [4th floor] SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94108 //////////////////////////////////////

//// tel: 415.576.9300 fax: 415.373.4471 ////////////////////////////////////// altmansiegel.com ///

## frieze

**Liam Everett**  
 Altman Siegel, San Francisco, USA



*Always inside a world where the light discloses the structure that shows us the 'movement' of always falling, 2012, mixed media, 244 x 97 cm*

Liam Everett's art stands, first and foremost, as testament to the processes of its making. In spite of their rich optical pleasures, his art works claim a solemn dignity as battered survivors of previous punishments. It is fun to imagine just what these wild, intense forces might have entailed.

Sun evidently plays a major role in Everett's work: the dyes of the fabric of his baggy constructions (not quite paintings, but too painting-like to be sculptures) are unevenly but expressively faded. Wind, too, seems to have been involved. Some, such as *The way we slip over from one to the other, there and no where* (all works 2012), appear to bear the gridded impressions of wire fences; you can picture them flapping in the breeze as they dried. Elsewhere, crusts of salt crystals imply that heat has also had a hand in their making, causing quantities of seawater to evaporate, perhaps, until sweaty white tidelines build up across the fabric. These works, though they make reference to the indoorsy, post-Minimal assemblages of Richard Tuttle as well as artists such as Sergej Jensen and Gedi Sibony, are infused with the landscape of northern California.

In the main gallery five of these large fabric works are lined up against one wall. The extended wooden frames on which the panels of wool and organza hang remind us that the word 'stretcher' is more commonly associated not with paintings but with hospitals. A dynamic of unabashed romanticism emerges: the battered pieces of fabric are invalids, victims or survivors of the artistic process, recuperated only by their unwitting beauty.

A sculpture in the adjacent space, titled *Killing floor (or a proposed action plan)*, hints at how these paintings may have been made: a woollen blanket is slung between two long planks resting on sawhorses. It is a pragmatic, workaday arrangement – a far less picturesque process than one might have imagined from the works next door. They may look effortless, even lazy, but there is clearly plenty of elbow grease involved. They do not make themselves, nor are they formed naturally by the wild Californian landscape. It is Everett himself who controls them, even if he goes out of his way to make it look like he does not.

A series of untitled smaller paintings more openly derive from the artist's labour. Everett has applied dark ink and acrylic paint to Masonite boards, and then rubbed them clean with alcohol and salt until they are almost – but not quite – returned to their original white. Again, however, the process is far from arbitrary, and distinct areas of white or residual colour reveal the works to be subtle abstract paintings made in reverse.

Throughout this exhibition there is a tussle between what is revealed and what is hidden; what is left on the surface and what is discarded along the way. Everett titles his works as if hoping to lose the reader halfway through; one sagging panel of crimson wool is titled *The threshold question that arises in connection with the concept of establishing a language without the problem of speaking*. I've read these words a dozen times and I can still make no sense of them. Two of the organza panels have mysterious objects – a piece of dowel, a ceramic disk – dangling, half-glimpsed, behind them. As to their significance, we are left in the dark. As if to acknowledge this game of interpretive hide and seek, the exhibition is called 'If I could sleep I might make love. I'd go into the woods. My eyes would see... the sky, the earth. I'd run, run, they wouldn't catch me.'

**Jonathan Griffin**

Last accessed 12/13/2012:  
<http://www.frieze.com/shows/review/liam-everett/>