

Dress Rehearsal

Curated by Franklin Melendez

With N. Dash, Liam Everett, Dashiell Manley

10.10. – 16.11.2013

Opening: Thursday, 10. October 2013, 6.00 pm

In theater, the extensive rehearsal process of a given production usually culminates in a final run-through just before the opening. It is commonly referred to as a 'dress rehearsal' as it entails the full performance regalia (costumes, props and special effects) with the notable absence, of course, of an attending audience. The event calls for a strange type of stage presence, one that vacillates between the full commitment of a live show and a distanced criticality that constantly assesses (and sometimes undermines) the artifice at play.

Something of this split can be said to characterize the works gathered for this exhibition. Technically, none of the pieces on display are paintings (nor were they produced under a traditional 'painterly' rubric) but they can all be said to borrow and put on some of its historical accouterment. **This is a formal pantomime of sorts** that ranges from echoes of optic abstraction in Liam Everett's worked over fabrics (which are treated with corrosive agents to create luminous marks of erasure) to the persistence of the image plane which is transfigured into an enigmatic physicality by N. Dash's poetic wall reliefs. There are even traces of the gestural in Dashiell Manley's double-sized tablets, though these are quickly subsumed by the exigencies of the proto-cinematic event.

In this context, these works might be more accurately addressed as 'painterly props' that evoke and theatricalize historical idioms in order to rehearse and perform new forms of visual presence. It might be one way in which a younger generation of artists is thinking **through** rather than around painting, exploding its legacy until it is no longer recognizable as such.

In his 1967 polemic, Michael Fried derided the Minimalist enterprise for its contingency on an audience. 'It exists for one,' he noted, in a way that was anathema to the modernist project. And perhaps he was on to something—for formal solipsism is impossible when it is put on display as a series of rehearsed gestures. In this way, the works on view are at their most affecting when they consciously acknowledge their own performativity, their tenuousness and incompleteness. **It is a strange, but compelling type of poetry addressed to an audience not yet arrived.**

Franklin Melendez is a writer and independent curator **based in New York.**

The exhibition takes place in the context of "curated by_vienna 2013: Why Painting Now?". The project initiated by departure – The Creative Agency of the City of Vienna takes place in 20 leading Viennese galleries from October 10 through November 14., 2013.

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Franklin Melendez

Generalprobe Dress Rehearsal

N. Dash (*1980, l. in New York und and New Mexico), **Liam Everett** (*1973, l. in San Francisco), **Dashiell Manley** (*1983, l. in Los Angeles)

Galerie Andreas Huber » 04

Die lange Probenzeit eines Theaterstücks kulminiert in einer letzten Probe vor der Premiere. Sie wird gemeinhin „Generalprobe“ oder auf Englisch „dress rehearsal“ genannt, umfasst sie doch alles, was im Theater dazugehört – Kostüme, Requisiten, ja sogar technische Spezialeffekte. Nur das Publikum fehlt. Das Bühnengeschehen bekommt dadurch eine merkwürdige Anmutung, die zwischen dem vollen Einsatz einer echten Aufführung und dem distanziert-kritischen Blick schwankt, der das Geschehen permanent bewertet (und manchmal auch stört).

Etwas von diesem Zwittercharakter haben auch die in der Ausstellung gezeigten Werke. Technisch gesehen ist keines von ihnen ein Gemälde und sie entstanden auch nicht mit dem Anspruch, unter die Rubrik „Malerei“ zu fallen. Dennoch kann man sagen, dass sie sich Kostüme, die historisch zu diesem Genre gehören, ausborgen und anlegen. Es handelt sich um eine Art formale Pantomime. Sie zeigt sich zum Beispiel in Liam Everetts zu angedeuteten Abstraktionen umgearbeiteten Stoffen (die mit ätzenden Flüssigkeiten behandelt wurden) oder in der enigmatischen Materialität der poetischen Wandreliefs von N. Dash. Dashiell Manleys zweiseitige Bildtafeln wiederum haben etwas

Gestisches, obgleich sie schnell als zwangsläufiges Resultat eines profilmischen Ereignisses gelesen werden können.

So gesehen müsste man die ausgestellten Arbeiten genauer als „malerische Requisiten“ bezeichnen. Sie evozieren und inszenieren historische Idiome, um damit neue visuelle Formen zu erproben und aufzuführen. Vielleicht ist das ja die Art, wie die jüngere Künstlergeneration *durch* die Malerei und nicht *über* die Malerei nachdenkt. Die Erbmasse der Malerei wird so lange bearbeitet, bis sie als solche unkenntlich ist.

1967 verhöhnte Michael Fried die minimalistische Bewegung wegen ihrer Abhängigkeit vom Publikum. „Sie *existiert* überhaupt nur dafür“, bemerkte er – ein Gräuel für das modernistische Projekt. Doch vielleicht liegt darin ja ein Körnchen Wahrheit, denn der formale Solipsismus kann nur vermieden werden, wenn er als eine Reihe von einstudierten Gesten gezeigt wird. So betrachtet sind jene Werke in der Ausstellung die besten, die ihre eigene Performativität, ihre Durchsichtigkeit und Unvollkommenheit bewusst hervorkehren. Sie sprechen von einer seltsamen und dennoch bestechenden Poesie, deren Gesten einem Publikum gelten, das noch gar nicht da ist.

Franklin Melendez lebt als Autor und freier Kurator in New York.

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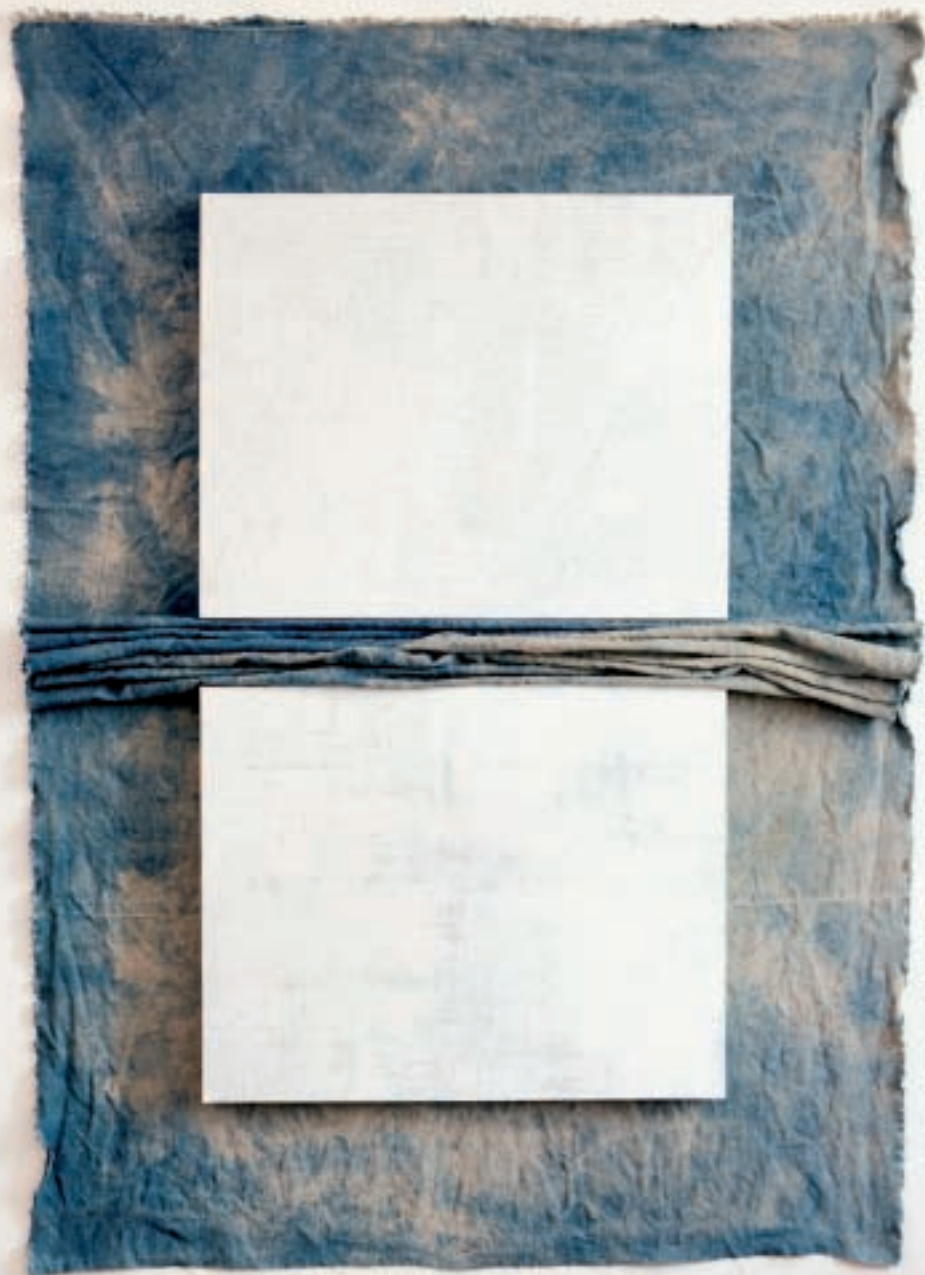
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N. Dash, *Untitled*, 2012

Digitales Dokument, Größe variabel digital file, variable dimensions

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N. Dash, *Untitled*, 2012

Indigo, Jute, Leinen, Gips und Holzaufbau, 182,9 × 127 cm

indigo, jute, linen, plaster, and wood support, 182.9 × 127 cm



↑

Dashiell Manley, *The Great Train Robbery (Scene 3 Version A)*, 2013
Mixed-Media-Installation, Installationsansicht mixed media installation, 170 × 290 cm
Installationsansicht installation view LAXART, Los Angeles, 2013

→

Liam Everett, *A report on the feasibility of establishing a language for the sake of which*, 2012
Tinte, Acryl, Meersalz, Holz auf Wolle und Leinen mit keramischen Dübeln,
243,84 × 71,12 × 58,42 cm ink, acrylic, sea salt, alcohol, wood on wool, and linen
with ceramic dowels, 243.84 × 71.12 × 58.42 cm
Foto photo Jay Jones

