



Margaret Lee, "Watermelon (that you have been saving for)", 2013, cowhide sling chair, plaster and acrylic paint, 63.5 x 51 x 64.5 cm.; Courtesy of the artist and Team Gallery]

Parasitic Gaps

Group Exhibition

Team Gallery - Grand St

83 Grand St., New York, NY 10013

September 5, 2013 - October 6, 2013

The Mating of Separates

by Megan Liu Kincheloe

In "Parasitic Gaps," a group show curated by Miriam Katzeff, the artists Matthew Higgs, Margaret Lee, James Hoff, and Georgia Sagri explore a variety of ways that text can consolidate or destabilize meaning. Often playing with "the mating of separates," many of the works present disparate objects and elements together in a single piece, such as a paperback book with a minimalist painting and a watermelon with a De Stijl chair. The juxtaposition of different contexts becomes a strategy for illustrating complex statements. Functioning like expanded collage, the separate constituent components act on each other and take on an implicit grammar.

A carefully selected book is tethered to each of Mathew Higgs's shaped monochrome paintings. These books are pierced through and dangle by a wire that is stapled around the edges of Higgs's tidy canvases. The cantilever arrangements of solidly colored geometric forms suggest moments of Suprematist paintings extruded into three dimensions. The books can be handled and their loud content dominates the contemplative nature of the paintings above, which act as representatives for the kind of non-interactive, culturally specific aesthetic experience opposite of those given by the books. The hanging wire links the two objects in a linear arrangement like a concept map, inviting the viewer to use the "found Conceptual art" (as Higgs referred to his collected printed matter in an interview for *Frieze Magazine* in 2003) as material to read into the paintings and vice versa.

Higgs's texts serve as examples of high and low expression in examining and conflating the impulse to fandom and cultural appreciation. For example, *Reading Painting #22* (all works 2013) is a pastel pink monochrome paired with a published volume of selected Amazon reviews from poet, novelist, and critic Kevin Killian. Higgs's way of spinning this content into proposed schema of relations is a far more interesting proposition than any essayed specifics of how these texts might relate to painting, Minimalist art, or art production. Instead it is the careful selection and presentation that allow us to think all the way around these objects.



Matthew Hoas. "Reading Painting # 20 (Starlust)." acrylic on canvas, publication, wire, staples. 50 x 18 inches. 2013; Courtesy of the artist and Team Gallery.

Margaret Lee's work absorbs associations with kitsch décor and a banality that translates to a lexical absolute of "banana" or "lime." Lee places fake fruits and vegetables (virtuosically painted plaster casts) atop recognizable modernist furniture, via *Design Within Reach*. Both the fruit and the furniture call attention to each other's contrivance, while Lee's sensibility remains somehow inscrutable. (Perhaps, it's the simple handsomeness of watermelon rind against cowhide?) To meticulously fabricate the readily available—to fake the fake fruit—is a pleasing redundancy that pairs well with the works' tasteful evasiveness. Ersatz fruit tries to represent a superlative of what fruit looks like, but, in every way, falls short of being any sort of ideal fruit—quickly getting to something essential about the operations of taste. Installed side by side, Lee's pieces live together and resemble a single room-like tableau, fleshing out a scene where absurd Platonic ideals stand in or lay in wait.

James Hoff puts outdated office supplies to imaginative use. In each of his four *Data Slabs* floppy disks are stacked into vertical towers on the gallery floor. The edges of standardized, color-coded, office stick-on labels plate the sides of the mini-monoliths in striated primaries. The original label texts on the top-most disks provide cryptic histories and the pithy names for each slab's title, such as *Data Slab [Amy - Try This Month For Size - Mark Fucked Up The Computer]*. The handwritten texts on the labels are halfway between document title, personal letter, command, and office memo. They outline a specific, un-relished form of marginalia and office banality that no longer exists. The whole gesture—like Hoff's nearby oil paintings—seems both absurd and Romantic.

All the works carry a sense of restraint and focus that can initially appear overly slick, but these well-crafted and well-edited works add up to a relevant set of case studies for mixing the terms of looking and reading. Instead of resolving into an integrated whole, the contrasting elements remain independent, which is what enables them to activate a dialectic potential and promote peculiar combinations.