

Provisionals

Ana Bidart Martí Cormand Elena del Rivero Darío Escobar Sérgio Sister Adam Winner

August 7 – September 6, 2014

Opening reception: Thursday August 14, from 6-8pm

Finissage & Opening reception for Kerstin Persson in project space: Thursday September 4, from 6-8pm

Josée Bienvenu is pleased to present *Provisionals*, an exhibition of paintings by Ana Bidart, Martí Cormand, Elena del Rivero, Darío Escobar, Sérgio Sister and Adam Winner. The title refers to a term coined by Raphael Rubinstein* in 2009 to describe an ongoing trend: Provisional paintings, "look casual, dashed-off, tentative, unfinished, self-canceling". They "demolish their own iconic status before they ever attain such a thing." Their genealogy includes Robert Rauschenberg's "cardboards" of the 1970s, Raoul de Keyser, Christopher Wools, Mary Heilman and extends to a younger generation of artists who have been working across the map from Berlin to Bushwick and Mexico City, qualified as "the new casualists" by artist and critic Sharon L. Butler*. The exhibition connects three generations of artists whose work oppose to the monumental, the official, and the permanent to embrace the off-kilter and the awkward in a playful combination of deliberation and indecision.

Dario Escobar's Blacksmith Paintings are based on two absences: the absence of the painted object and the absence of the subject who painted it. Part of a larger body of 'self-generated' or 'performative' works, the painting in the exhibition documents the back wall of a blacksmith workshop in Guatemala city. A blank canvas, stapled to the backdrop wall used to spray paint metal objects, accumulates layers and layers of paint residue. The painting is executed unknowingly by blacksmith workers without direct intervention of the artist's hand whose only decision is to pick-up the work after a certain time. The result is a condensed and effortless journey through the main painting movements of the last century - from 1960s color field painting, to Latin American geometric abstraction, minimalism, pop, and street art, depending on the day-to-day order of business at the shop.

Elena del Rivero's *Letter from Home in Cerulean* is a monument to domesticity and its monstrosity. It is a giant canvas hanging from one nail in the corner, just like a dishcloth in a kitchen. The process starts with the traditional blue pattern of a European dishcloth made with stitch-like brushstrokes, followed by staining and altering the surface with dirt from the studio floor, coffee from the breakfast table, or leftover paint smudged on the surface. Like in most of del Rivero's work, delicacy and a sense of loving attention coexist with a feeling of neglect and abandonment.

In *Pasaportes*, Mexico based conceptual artist Ana Bidart examines access and identity. The paintings are a record of her last two years working as an artist's assistant, her time spent packing and labeling the works of other artists. Incorporating the vocabulary of tracking numbers and of various discarded materials, the paintings allude to various techniques of mechanical reproduction to explore traces left of relationships. Silkscreening, xeroxing, and photoshopping are done here in a low-tech, low-key way, by directly applying objects to the canvas (bubble wrap, footprints) and rubbing the surface with solvents in large areas of grayish brushstrokes.

Martí Cormand's work is a testimony to the degradation of certainty. For the past two years, he has been investigating the notion of conviction by observing and rendering iconic works of the conceptual art movement "When no one has too many certitudes any more, processes become essential. I have nothing urgent to communicate, no absolute convictions. I investigate the certainties that others had in the 1960s and 1970s. My favorite subject is the study of conviction" (Martí Cormand). With no effort to hide its labor and adjustments, the work in the exhibition, a rendering of Yoko Ono's 1964 *Grapefruit*, dissects its own process by showing the three stages to a finished painting. As if scanned at three points during its making, it becomes a self-amused and unassuming work that does not invite any transcendental reading.

Most of Sérgio Sister's work stands at the edge between painting and sculpture. The small monochromatic paintings, from 1995 - 2010 included in the exhibition, convey a sense of calculated tentativeness. The individual paintings, made with an unflashy handling of paint can be re-positioned into distinct groups and assemblages, within a skillful game of subtle tonal variations.

Adam Winner's paintings are concerned with multiple forms of imperfection. Made with a palette knife, in layer upon layer of oil, gesso and linen, the paintings expose their own accidents and mistakes, laying bare the seams, showing ripped linen strips and frayed edges. Winner's paintings of imperfect gestures are imbued with a feeling of permanent self-doubt. They embrace a sense of their own failure yet reveal an intimate familiarity with the materials.

*Rubinstein, Raphael. (May 4, 2009). Provisional Painting. *Art in America*. Retrieved from www.artinamericamagazine.com/news-features/magazine/provisional-painting-raphael-rubinstein/.

*Butler, Sharon L. (June 3, 2011). ABSTRACT PAINTING: The New Casualists. *The Brooklyn Rail*. Retrieved from www.brooklynrail.org/2011/06/artseen/abstract-painting-the-new-casualists.