

Songs for Presidents presents

Drifters, Neveruses

Nov 7 - Dec 27, 2015

Reception: Sat Nov 7, 7pm - 10pm

Performances: Sat Nov 21, 2-6 pm (see below for more info)

Drifters, Neveruses: Painting as Difficult Object

“The main thing wrong with painting is that it is a rectangular plane placed flat against the wall.”—Donald Judd, *Specific Objects*

“To me, then, constructive artists are ... the constructors, builders of structure, of color, of space and of time, those who add new perspectives and modify the way we see and feel; those, therefore, who open up new directions in contemporary sensibility, those who aspire to the spiritual hierarchy of construction in art.”—Helio Oiticica, *The Transition of Color From the Painting into Space and the Meaning of Construction*

Songs for Presidents is pleased to present *Drifters, Neveruses*, an exhibition of new paintings by Josh Blackwell and Lizzie Scott that will run from November 7 through December 27, 2015. An opening reception for the artists will take place on Saturday, November 7, from 7-10pm. *Total Styrene—True Believer*, an afternoon of experimental performances by Alex Huberty, Michelle Jaffe, Padtech, Daniel Roberts, Jacob Robichaux, and Lizzie Scott with Elisa Lendvay is scheduled for Saturday November 21 from 2-6pm.

Josh Blackwell and Lizzie Scott make works that are simultaneously paintings and things. Repurposing materials such as plastic bags, fabric, yarn, paper, and stuffing, both artists build abstract surfaces that foreground color and texture. These “difficult objects” undermine the traditional authorial control inherent in painting, suggesting alternative permutations and orientations such as upside down, inside-out or back-to-front. This work aspires to create a democratic relationship between artist and object in which the object’s potential is activated through exhibition and performance.

Lizzie Scott sews hybrid textile-muslin object-paintings called *Drifters*, which are loosely based on the structure of sleeping bags. The *Drifters* reflect years of experimenting to create a form that truly functions as a painting, and can still move through the world as an object, adapting to sites and situations as needed. The *Drifters* don’t have a fixed or determined mode of display – each one can hang on the wall or lie on the floor (or sit on a table or lean in a corner). Any of these pieces can be opened flat or folded up, oriented vertically, horizontally, or askew. The *Drifters* get creased and a little beat up, and the rough patina of use becomes part of the surface. Their soft materials can take on an uncanny corporeality, or flatten into pure fields of color. They change with time and experience.

Josh Blackwell is a painter who makes lumpish objects that are neither useful nor redundant, though both are implied. These hybrid painting-objects, called *Neveruses*, are comprised of found plastic bags and yarn. The bags are stitched shut using heterogeneous methods that evoke embroidery, knitting, and weaving. The stitches act as mark and material, penetrating, distressing, and ornamenting the bag. As the yarn is applied to the surface of the bag, fiber gradually replaces plastic as structure. When finished, the piece coheres visually around the yarns. Only the dematerialized bag’s silhouette remains, distinguished by the handles at the top.

Lizzie Scott lives and works in New York. Her work has been shown at The Brooklyn Museum, NY; John Tevis Gallery, Paris, FR (solo); Klaus von Nichtssagend, New York, NY; Galerie Gris, Hudson, NY (solo); Kate MacGarry Gallery, London, UK; and LMak Projects, Brooklyn, NY (solo). She teaches sculpture at the School of Visual Arts. Josh Blackwell lives and works in New York and Bennington, Vermont. Recent exhibitions include: *Never Uses*, Kate MacGarry, London, UK (solo), *Soft Core*, Invisible Exports, New York, *More Material*, curated by Duro Olowu, Salon 94, New York, and *Purple States*, curated by Sam Gordon, Andrew Edlin Gallery, New York,. He teaches painting at Bennington College. Both artists received their MFA degrees at the California Institute of the Arts, where they first began talking to each other about “difficult objects.”

For more information, please refer to:

www.joshblackwell.com

www.lizziescott.net

The Total Styrene Experience is a sponsored project of the New York Foundation for the Arts.

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