

Art Review:



Joe Reihsen: Clean Title, No Accidents

Anat Ebgi, Los Angeles, 13 April - 25 May

By Ed Schad



Joe Reihsen, Clean Title, No Accidents. Photo: Michael Underwood. Courtesy Anat Ebgi, Los Ange...

Joe Reihsen, in just a year, has not only quieted his work down but has developed a confidence that was sorely lacking in previous efforts. In 2012 at Anat Ebgi's former Chinatown space, Reihsen's work was a hodgepodge of not so clever devices -- paintings sitting atop other paintings, leaning objects, mirrors, paintings becoming sculpture, sprays, prints, heavy brushwork, collage -- a type of approach found often in today's painting climate, attempts to try anything to make a painting work, even if there is no rhyme or reason other than disarray and confusion. Thankfully, this sort of public experimentation is over. Reihsen has found his voice.

The new work is seamless, mature, and outright beautiful at times. The friction and discontinuity found in the old work, merely ramshackle and clumsy, is now a fundamental part of who Reihsen is rather than what, in the past, he was trying to become. A painting like *Made me feel Elated*, 2013 is awash in gently swirling layers of colors, caught and paused at times like a brief jam in a photocopier, and then released into veils of perceptual play. Reihsen is tempted, at times, to be a sort of machine/gesture printing geek in the manner of Christopher Wool and Wade Guyton, but his heart is in ethereal and fleeting moments of brilliant colour and passing joys.

Reihsen is strongest in smaller formats, between 10 and 20 inches square being a particular sweet spot. The larger paintings, though relatively fine, seem to lose the point of Reihsen's new approach -- the humble joys of simple transitions, unexpected circumstances, and surprising resonances. The small works are compressed pieces of fruit, sweet and courteous, sometimes coyly flirtatious. However, Reihsen seems at home in L.A. Light and space and slow gradients of sunsets appear a source, as do the soft topographical musings of Richard Diebenkorn. Perhaps there is ample room to achieve bigger paintings at some point, but at this time, we take pleasure in small things.