

LUHRING AUGUSTINE

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Josh Smith

Currents

February 14 – March 14, 2009

Luhring Augustine is proud to present *Currents*, an exhibition of new work by Josh Smith. Smith's second solo show with the gallery, this exhibition features large paintings and collages. While many of the paintings are figurative in nature, they eschew precise representation in favor of an exploration of abstraction. Much like the manipulation of the letters of his name for which Smith gained an early reputation, a fish or leaf motif exists as a point of departure here. The subject is rendered in dots, zigzags, and waves to create an energetic composition of gestural brushstrokes and vibrant colors.

In another new series of paintings, Smith avoids the gestural entirely in pursuit of pure abstraction. They are inspired in part by his ongoing series of palette paintings: small canvases which serve as actual palettes for larger works and result in abstract compositions created by chance. These canvases are more deliberate than the palette paintings and recall monotypes in their process, a nod to the artist's background in printmaking. With subtly nuanced coloration and texture, they exude a quietude that serves as a counterpoint to the dynamism of the first group of paintings.

In his mixed media collages, subway maps, newspapers and street posters are combined with mechanical reproductions of Smith's own paintings as well as silk-screened text and original abstract painting. Following in the tradition of artists such as Robert Rauschenberg and Dieter Roth, he intersperses the manufactured with the handmade and elevates lowly materials by virtue of inclusion. More recently, 1:1 reproductions of entire paintings are affixed to the support in the form of a composite grid of color copies. Slightly pixellated and high in contrast, these reproductions are uncannily tactile in spite of the absolute flatness of the surface. In constantly blurring the boundaries between high and low, authentic and manufactured, the graphic and the painterly, Smith continues to test the rules of artistic convention and break new ground.

Born in 1976, Josh Smith is from Knoxville, Tennessee and currently lives and works in New York. He has had numerous solo exhibitions in the United States and abroad, most notably *Hidden Darts* at Museum Moderner Kunst in Vienna. Solo shows at both the Centre d'Art Contemporain in Geneva and the Frans Hals Museum in the Netherlands are forthcoming. He has also participated in several important group exhibitions, including *Book/Shelf* at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the 2007 Lyon Biennial, *USA Today* at Saatchi Gallery and *Uncertain States of America* at the Serpentine Gallery in London.

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