

The Painter of Modern Life

March 5 – April 11, 2015

Opening reception: Thursday, March 5, 6:00 – 8:00pm

"The Painter of Modern Life" brings together works by 21 artists, with the 19th century designation of the poet-critic Charles Baudelaire as its mantle¹, including:

Nathaniel Axel, Lisa Beck, Sadie Benning, Sascha Braunig, Alex Brown, Mathew Cerletty, Wayne Gonzales, Joanne Greenbaum, Daniel Hesidence, Mamie Holst, Cannon Hudson, Chip Hughes, Xylor Jane, Robert Janitz, Erik Lindman, Nikholis Planck, David Ratcliff, Nicolas Roggy, Ivan Seal, Richard Tinkler and Stanley Whitney.



The artists are represented by paintings, drawings, collages, prints, and hand-painted sculpture.

The exhibition may be thought to ask, what is modern life? Or rather, what has it become? In what ways do we translate and make sense of the world around us, our sense of place and displacement in the everyday? Manet was a painter of modern life in Baudelaire's time. On Kawara was a painter of modern life in ours. How do we navigate this not inconsiderable distance?

What is commonly referred to as today's art world is a far larger canvas, and even if one were to possess a crystal ball, our supposed clairvoyance would be a continuous squint of the eye, and in what would be closer to an ever-shaken snow globe.

Modern life is in no way opaque. It can be observed and seen through. And while our notion of beauty may change and distort, we remain dedicated to its pursuit. After all, don't we want to take pleasure in the visual landscape—even that which appears beyond aesthetic concerns or worthy of a higher level of poetics? But what of the drab canvas we accept as life today? Although detours are of the utmost necessity, they comprise our path without leading directly to our destination. And what is the modern life of painting?

As with spirit photography in the 19th century, one could say that the medium of painting is in fact a *medium*, the very means to communicate with the past, wholly within and expanding the contours of the present, pointing perhaps to a future it never intended to predict.

One is guided, as always, by the works that reflect the moment in which they have been made, as they register in their own voice, and at their own volume. The artists actively participate in and amplify the larger world of the imagination. A statement, if there is one, is made by the works themselves. All you can do is bring them together. But these days, an assembly does not in any way constitute a movement, since movements belong to the past, and surely for the best. History will not be rushed along. All contemporary art, then, with no reliable guarantors for posterity, is in a sense pre-historic. Let the works, one at a time, convince you that this visual realm remains a compelling place to explore, and that picture-making can't help but define our time. After all, the artists are both observers of and re-makers of reality.

This exhibition has been organized by the writer and curator Bob Nickas.

¹ Mantle, a loose sleeveless cloak; something that covers or conceals—'On a winter night ... a mantle of mist hangs above the city street'; the protruding shelf over a fireplace; the outer covering of a wall; a zone of hot gases around a flame; a sheaf around a gas lamp that gives off brilliant illumination when heated by the flame; anat.—the cerebral cortex; geol.—the layer of the earth between the crust and the core; the wings, shoulders, feathers and back of a bird when differently colored from the rest of the body.

The exhibition opens on Thursday, March 5 and will run through Saturday, April 11, 2015. The gallery is open Tuesday through Saturday, 10 am - 6 pm. For further information and images, please contact the gallery at (t) 212.367.9663, or email: jasmin@antonkerngallery.com.

Upcoming exhibition: David Shrigley (April 16 – May 23, 2015)

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