

Ana Cristea Gallery

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SPOOL

Andrew Graves, Marco Palmieri, and Neil Rummig

Co-curated by Shaan Syed

February 14 – March 15, 2014

Reception Opening: Thursday, February 20, 2014, 6 – 8pm

Some Thoughts on Painting, by a Painter:

This might be labeled a show that witnesses smart painters being dumb, or dumb painters being smart. I'm more inclined to ask if there is such a thing as dumb intelligence? Painters are often outsmarting themselves and, as a result, begin a process of unraveling thought, a peeling back of the layers of an onion until all one's left with is fake tears. Christopher Wool's current ubiquity makes it painfully obvious that "gesture" - a motion intrinsic to painting through the very act of holding a brush laden with paint - has become filtered, mediated. Yet the desire to make or leave a gesture as sincere as a Franz Kline swathe or a Cy Twombly scratch is somehow still of vital importance to the painter. Or at least, the need to confront this desire is a concern. And I suspect it's not simply a boxing match with history that's happening here. Yes, painting may be dead, and I'm quite comfortable with this, but it's kicking out from under its own surface. The nature of making, of building, of putting paint to surface wouldn't be so much fun if it didn't require a kind of backwards trek (often made while facing forwards), stumbling over what the painter is "expected" to make. Taste, style and recognizability are anathema to the artist, yet balm to the collector. Beautiful paintings become ugly and ugly paintings become beautiful. If language is a system that names and describes, perhaps we can say that a painting that shows us what is *not* there is the most articulate kind of communication.

Anton Newcombe, the self-proselytizing front man of the notoriously dysfunctional west coast indie band, The Brian Jonestown Massacre, sings; *"There's a look on your face and it says you've been had"*. If there's any criticality left in looking now, I suspect this is where it may lie. Uncovering truths means also dealing with lies. But what exactly is "being had" if *having* (according to Lacan) is also about losing? How can loss be located if the nature of painting is such that one begins by applying paint rather than by taking it away? Other methods must be employed - methods that are perhaps attempts at getting behind, under or around painting's surface. If part of a painter's goal is to carve out an intimate visual language from painting's history, then what is a painter to make of this 20-year young relationship with touch, presence and place? Should we look *again* or is it a matter of seeing anew?

Shaan Syed, 2014

Ana Cristea Gallery is pleased to present "Spool" a group exhibition that brings together the work of Andrew Graves, Marco Palmieri, and Neil Rummig. Together, these works operate on a continuum, creating a new frame of reference for post-war attempts at attacking those "big" things like color, space