

# LIAM EVERETT

SELECTED PRESS

# artnet

## Editors' Picks: 11 Events for Your Art Calendar This Week

OCTOBER 11, 2021  
NEHA JAMBHEKAR



“Liam Everett: On Meeting Again” at Kasmin, New York City

Kasmin presents Liam Everett’s second solo show with the gallery upon his recent addition to their roster. The show consists of eleven large-scale abstract paintings, made upon his recent move to Northern-California. The artist draws inspiration from the natural environment and different approaches to agriculture, as well as Nietzsche’s philosophical ideas about the quest for knowledge in order to “painstakingly develop layers of paint and composition.”

# Liam Everett Steel Your Face Right Off Your Head

Liam Everett's embodied and martially driven relationship to abstraction results in paintings that oscillate between their indexical and autonomous tendencies.

MÉLANIE GOUSSARD  
JULY 3, 2020



"Liam Everett, Untitled (Ameles potamos), 2019" All rights reserved.

In this abstract, mixed-media paintings and sculptures, Everett explores the process of art making through the movement of his body as he shapes raw materials into finished pieces. Inspired by dance and theater, his work abounds with human traces, gestural smears and smudges, lines, and creases. By erasing layers of pigment with caustic everyday substances like salt, lemon juice, and alcohol, he foregrounds painting's earthiness while highlighting its kinship with the practice of alchemy.





“Liam Everett, Untitled (Iethe-aletheia), 2019”  
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“Liam Everett, Untitled (Titan and Rhea), 2018”  
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“Liam Everett, Untitled (Eightercua), 2016”  
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“Liam Everett, Untitled (Choreus), 2018”  
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# San Francisco Chronicle

## Solid exhibition of unstable art at SFMOMA

CHARLES DESMARAIS  
JULY 14, 2017



Liam Everett, "Untitled (creature of his house, of his garden, of his few poor possessions)" (2017), acrylic paint, enamel paint, salt, alcohol on linen, 78 x 147 inches. Altman Siegel Gallery

I never quite got artist Liam Everett's undisciplined abstract paintings until one day this week, when I previewed the 2017 SECA Art Award exhibition at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. Everett is one of five awardees in the 50th anniversary edition of the show sponsored by the museum's Society for the Encouragement of Contemporary Art, which runs Saturday, July 15, through Sept. 17.

All five artists were given discrete galleries this year. Everett used his particularly efficiently. In addition to canvases hung on the walls, he has installed a plywood floor, painted and stained in his studio as part of the daily process of art-making. The floor and a few other items — a wooden stool to the side, a drape of color-stained silk across two leaning standards — give the entire room the feel of a place where things are in the midst of happening.

A museum label quotes Everett on the ad hoc sense his work conveys, and it is clear that he has chosen his words carefully. He does not talk about finished objects; he says he is “(releasing) work that is still working.” The label goes on to say that modern dancers will “rehearse” (not perform) in the gallery at scheduled times.

As a group show of prize winners, the exhibition is not deliberately organized around a central theme. But that feeling of instability, of ideas less complete than frozen in the process of formation, runs throughout.

The icy metaphor might better fit the work of K.R.M. Mooney if it were not too arid, really, to freeze. But it is as indeterminate as the rest. I think of it as in the tradition of the post-minimalist Richard Tuttle in its deliberate but frustrating lack of affect: in Mooney’s case, lengths of industrial materials laid side by side, coils of steel cable, bits and pieces freighted with the suggestion that some machine out there is crippled without just that fastener or flange.

In our Age of the Fake, Sean McFarland accepts new meanings for concepts we once thought eternal. Like “landscape,” “nature” and “photography.”



Part of the painted floor in the Liam Everett gallery at the SECA exhibition on Thursday, July 13, 2017 in San Francisco, Calif. Liz Hafalia/The Chronicle

Lindsey White, through her sculptures and photographs, takes us to a spot in the universe that can only be some cosmic Backstage, from where we can see that it is the comedian and the magician who are running the show. I’m sure the curators, Jenny Gheith and Erin O’Toole, had their reasons not to organize the exhibition and catalog alphabetically, but I didn’t ask. I think it is genius to open with a grand, vibrant work by Alicia McCarthy, an artist who is widely respected and has been at the center of art in the Bay Area for two decades, yet is only now receiving her due.

A huge “weave” painting — product of McCarthy’s signature abstract technique of laying down stripes of color in a warp-and-weft pattern — was created on site. It was done with spray paint on sheets of Plexiglas, rather than on the artist’s usual wood-panel support, and then turned around to put the painted surface against the wall. The glassy, kaleidoscopic object — the first thing we see as we enter the exhibition — is a window onto mists and contrails of color, interrupted by scrawled and scratched-in autographs (the museum workers who helped build it). Like the entire show, it is both solid and interim, as if the art were not the hard object in front of us, but something suspended within.



# Context and Meaning: Looking at Art through a Post-Election Lens

CRAIG CORPORA  
APRIL 2017

“Every meaning requires a support, or a vehicle, or a holder. These are the bearers of meaning, and without them no meaning would cross from me to you, or from you to me, or indeed from any part of nature to any other part.”  
—George Kubler, *The Shape of Time*

In his 1962 book *The Shape of Time: Remarks on the History of Things*, art historian George Kubler describes the interconnectedness of objects through shared ideas across time and examines how the past can influence the creation of new “things.” He explains that meaning requires a physical form for content to be expressed; without its representational object — or in the case of language, words and sounds — meaning would not exist. Artists often use physical forms and formal elements as a “support, vehicle, or holder” to express the content of their works, which can be linked to larger cultural or political ideas. But meaning is not static; it continues to evolve over time in relation to the historical context in which the work is viewed.

Taking its name from a passage in Kubler’s seminal book, the exhibition *A Slow Succession with Many Interruptions*, organized by assistant curator Jenny Gheith, considers artworks created in the twenty-first century from this perspective, looking at how they embody time and how they have been shaped by cultural and personal events from the recent or distant past. I worked closely with Jenny on the exhibition and have found my understanding of the works on view shifting since we began preparing the show — more specifically, since the presidential election last November and the emergence of widespread resistance against the new administration’s policies. Two works in particular stand out.

Liz Larner’s gangly seven-foot-tall sculpture *RWBs* (2005) is composed of countless aluminum tubes that the artist found in a Los Angeles salvage yard.

Larner has said, “There’s a direct relationship between the material I chose to make the form of the sculpture and the aluminum-tube story that brought us to war.” The story she refers to is the claim by the Bush Administration in 2001–2 that the purchase of aluminum tubes by the Iraqi government provided “irrefutable evidence” that Saddam Hussein was gathering materials to enrich uranium for a nuclear bomb. This false information was used to justify the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003. Larner’s twisted, tangled mass of tubes reflects both the contortions of the truth that led to the war and the chaos that followed Hussein’s overthrow, while the outstretched tentacles, reaching beyond the confines of the work’s monstrous form, suggests the U.S. government’s interventionist tendencies in the world.



Liz Larner, *RWBs*, 2005; collection SFMOMA, Accessions Committee Fund purchase; © Liz Larner

Larner outfitted each of the tubes with a hand-sewn red, white, and blue fabric sleeve — a reference, she has explained, to flag-draped coffins, cheerleading outfits, gas-station banners, and other aspects of our everyday lives that are imbued with concepts of patriotism, nationalistic fervor, and American hegemony.

Installed near *RWBs* is Liam Everett's *Untitled* (2012), consisting of three swatches of ink-dyed fabric that are delicately fastened to a poplar pole. Everett used salt to bleach color from the textiles and then hung them on this support to dry. The colors aren't fixed; they are fugitive, staining the wood. The artist has stated that his work is guided by practice, not ideas, and the resulting object can be thought of as an indexical record of its own making. However, with its loosely draped forms adhered to an angled pole, its relationship to a flag is undeniable.



Liam Everett, *Untitled*, 2012; collection SFMOMA, Accessions Committee Fund purchase; © Liam Everett

But signs are slippery, meaning is mutable, and content is intrinsically connected to context. Since Donald Trump's election, he and his administration have promised increased military spending, threatened another nuclear arms race with Russia, and hinted at a war with Iran, which has ushered in a new wave of domestic and global anxiety. Concurrently, there has been an unprecedented wave of protests against Trump and his policies. An estimated five million people in more than eighty countries took to the streets for the Women's March in January. Large demonstrations erupted in airports all over the United States the day after Trump signed an executive order banning travel and immigration from seven Muslim-majority countries. Banners, handmade signs, and flags have become an increasingly visible symbol of resistance. In this context, Everett's *Untitled* and Larner's *RWBs* take on new meaning, particularly as they relate to each other within the exhibition.



Women's March on Washington, January 21, 2017; photo: David Atkinson

Like Trump's America, *RWBs* clumsily makes its presence known. We are confronted by the sculpture's gargantuan size, out of proportion to its surroundings, hinting at the perception of the United States elsewhere in the world. Like our new president, *RWBs* appears threatening, dangerous, and unpredictable. (Presciently, Larner included a few red power ties among the tubes' sleeves.) In direct opposition to the sculpture, Everett's *Untitled* becomes a flag — not of a specific country, ethnicity, or religion, but one that represents the unrepresented, a flag of defiance and dissent. The gauzy material looks distressed and worn, and its colors have bled. It has been to battle but is still standing strong. Though pinned against the gallery wall, *Untitled* is positioned in direct resistance to the oversize, tangled mess of American imperialism and aggression.



# "My paintings are constructed forms that shift between light and dark..." – an interview with Liam Everett

DIRK VANDUFFEL  
MARCH 19, 2017



During a January visit to Paris I had the unexpected pleasure of visiting the Kamel Mennour Gallery to view an exhibition of the works of Liam Everett. The gallery's warm hospitality combined with Liam's fantastic work made the entire experience unforgettable.

Sometimes, not often, you fall totally "in love" at first sight. Standing in front of Liam's work in Kamel Mennour Gallery, it happened all over me.

It had everything and nothing, the paintings were more realistic than any realist paintings I know and yet more abstract than the work of leading abstract artists. It was an intriguing experience. During my visit I had the privilege of speaking with Liam. I was struck by the passion and depth of his words, the clarity he used to explain something that feels almost unexplainable. I realised instantly: I need him in our magazine. I need to follow him. I hope you will be as curious as me to follow the path of this great artist. Thanks Liam! "Tu autem vade".

**DV:** Liam, I would like to start by asking where your interest in painting comes from. I understand you were not educated in an art school.

**LE:** My interest in painting developed out of an early experience with the theatre. When I was a teenager, I landed a part in Samuel Beckett's play *Waiting for Godot*. It was during this time that I began drawing and building things, perhaps as a way to make sense of a play that, at the time, appeared completely abstract to me. A few years later I began painting. It appealed to me from the very beginning because of the immediacy and physicality involved. Many of the things I do today in the studio can be traced directly back to the methods of practice I learned in the theater.



**DV:** I want to avoid asking you about the most important moments in your career, those that have defined you up to this point. What I would really like to know is what, if any, were the most difficult moments in your career?

**LE:** The most challenging moments of my career came when I first moved to NYC. They are likely to be the same problems that most artists face at the beginning of their career: lack of financial stability, difficulty finding a proper studio, problems establishing a community in order to generate dialogue and critical support. Looking back, it seems that whenever I have been able to work through a challenging period with my practice, there is always another potential difficulty waiting around the corner. Over the years I've become more flexible with this, maybe even embracing the various forms of resistance as a method of growth.

Liam Everett, *Untitled (Eightercua)*, 2016. Oil, acrylic, salt, alcohol on gessoed vinyl. 200,7 x 139,7 cm. View of the exhibition © Liam Everett. Photo. Julie Joubert & archives kamel mennour. Courtesy the artist and kamel mennour, Paris/London





Liam Everett. *Untitled (Cloghanmore)*, 2016. Oil, acrylic, salt, alcohol on gessoed vinyl.  
198,1 x 284,5 cm. View of the exhibition © Liam Everett. Photo. Julie Joubert  
& archives kamel mennour. Courtesy the artist and kamel mennour, Paris/London

**DV:** At Kamel Mennour Gallery you described your painting process to me. It was a pretty "complicated" or "different" approach. Can you explain it to me again?

**LE:** As a way of working without a true beginning or a proper idea, each painting is generated out of a series of initial layers in which I simply place random objects that are native to the studio (buckets, sticks, string, wood scraps etc) on top of linen or whatever other substrate I am working with. After different arrangements, I spray ink and soak acrylic mediums around these objects, leaving the outlines and silhouette of their form. The result of these first layers is a kind of crude archive of all the objects present in my surroundings. Following this first phase I begin to apply paint, salt and raw clay in such a way that the marks are being guided by the first series of sprays and stains made from the studio objects. After several months of accumulation, during which each painting has upwards of 30-40 layers on the surface, the works reach a threshold. The linen itself begins to buckle and in some instances even collapses due to the accumulation of paint and debris. It is this 'threshold' that I'm always working towards. It is also at this point that I begin to subtract and remove, layer by layer, via sanding and various forms of abrasion, as well as sun bleaching, and salt/alcohol washes. This aspect of the practice is grounded in a desire to review or back track, to intimately re-discover how a painting becomes a painting and has the potential to remain a painting as opposed to a thing that has been painted.



**DV:** How is working in New York different to working in Northern California?

**LE:** The single biggest difference for me has been the physical space. Once I began working in Northern California my sense of scale was radically altered and things opened up dramatically. This was partially due to the dynamic landscape of my immediate surroundings - the ocean, mountains and tree line. Before moving here I had been living in New York City and working in a tiny studio in the heart of Chinatown. Intellectually there are also several differences, although I have found that these are dwarfed by the environmental shift.

**DV:** What are your upcoming plans?

**LE:** I'm now working on new paintings for a solo show at Eleni Koroneou gallery in Athens. It's set to open in April. Additionally I am developing an installation for the SECA exhibition that will open in July at SFMoma.



Liam Everett, *Untitled (Baotite)*, 2016.  
Oil, acrylic, salt, alcohol on vinyl mounted on panel. 40,6 x 30,5 cm.

## Art: Elephant in the Room

JONATHAN CURIEL  
MARCH 16, 2016



Liam Everett, *Untitled (Tikal)*, 2016  
Acrylic, enamel, alcohol, and salt on oil primed linen  
222.3 x 186.7 cm; 87 1/2 x 73 1/2 in

Liam Everett jokes about all the behind-the-scenes “neuroses” that go into making his otherworldly paintings. During the many months it takes to complete a series of works, Everett never sits down — there’s no place to sit in his studio, anyway — as he puts things on wheels, and prods, chafes, scrapes, sands, and dabs his linen canvases over and over again. When the process is complete, Everett has someone else stretch his canvases into the finished versions that show up in galleries — which deliberately distorts the paintings in ways that will shock Everett.

Then there are the paintings’ names, like *Untitled (Tikal)* and *Untitled (Mitla)*, that suggest tangible connections to historic geographies but are chosen randomly and designed to play with art-goers’ imaginations — and with Everett’s. What you think you see with Liam Everett’s painting is not quite what you get. The works are both complete and incomplete — inhabiting a state of existential limbo that borrows from Everett’s theater background, which includes a childhood stint where he performed in Samuel Beckett’s most famous play, *Waiting for Godot*.

“I’m very interested in the possibility of a work that’s always working, instead of a work that’s been worked,” says Everett, who’s also a playwright, and whose father produced theater in Ireland and in the United States. “My studio looks like a theater set, with everything in motion. The performance and the painting are completely integrated — one leads to the other, in this kind of self-generative form of practice.”

Everett’s latest exhibit at Altman Siegel gallery, “The Elephant Calf,” which references an absurdist Bertolt Brecht play about law, features some nine large-scale paintings, each one a multitude of overlapping, crisscrossing layers that let you peer into the tiniest recesses and come away with something enthralling: blotches, fragments, lines that

fade here and there, particles that circle each other. None of the paintings has a recognizable center. And that's exactly what Everett wants.

“A lot of 'The Elephant Calf' paintings spent time with mini-stages that I built in front of the paintings,” he says. “I put contents from my studio, like buckets and sticks and lamps and stools, on top of these mini-stages, as props — really crude, agitprop theater sets. And then I'd reflect light on these objects, and they'd cast shadows on the paintings. And then I'd use these shadows to direct my gestures — another elaborate, neurotic way so I don't allow myself to make a gestural, emotional mark. They're led by the content of the space.”

Each canvas in Everett's new exhibit has what he describes as “movement” that can take the eye in any direction, and which “implicates” the art-goer in a kind of participatory experience.

This involvement also borrows from the theater works Everett loves, where actors speak directly to audiences and break down the barrier between stage and seating. One of Everett's most recent performance works, *On the Wall*, showcases an actor (sometimes Everett) who drags himself by his forearms on a public street before entering the art space and the waiting audience. He admits his methods are unusual, as with having a framer-carpenter stretch his canvases into shape.

“They show up foreign, and it's very unsettling,” Everett says. “It's not this kind of self-flagellation or self-destructive force. As idealistic as it sounds, I grow from this experience — that there is this deeper evolution that occurs in the practice when I'm confronted. That's really what it is — especially with this group called 'The Elephant Calf.' They went straight to the gallery, and to see them in this presentable condition, I found really intimidating. I was very anxious. I had a few weeks of high anxiety. I'm *still* having trouble reading them and figuring them out. When I see a painting, things like velocity and direction are the first things I think about. What is the pace at which the painting is moving? Which direction is it moving? Is it right to left? Is it a diagonal or vertical? Every time I've gone back to the gallery, they present themselves in a different condition.”

Then, chuckling, Everett adds: “I probably spend a little too much time looking at paintings.”

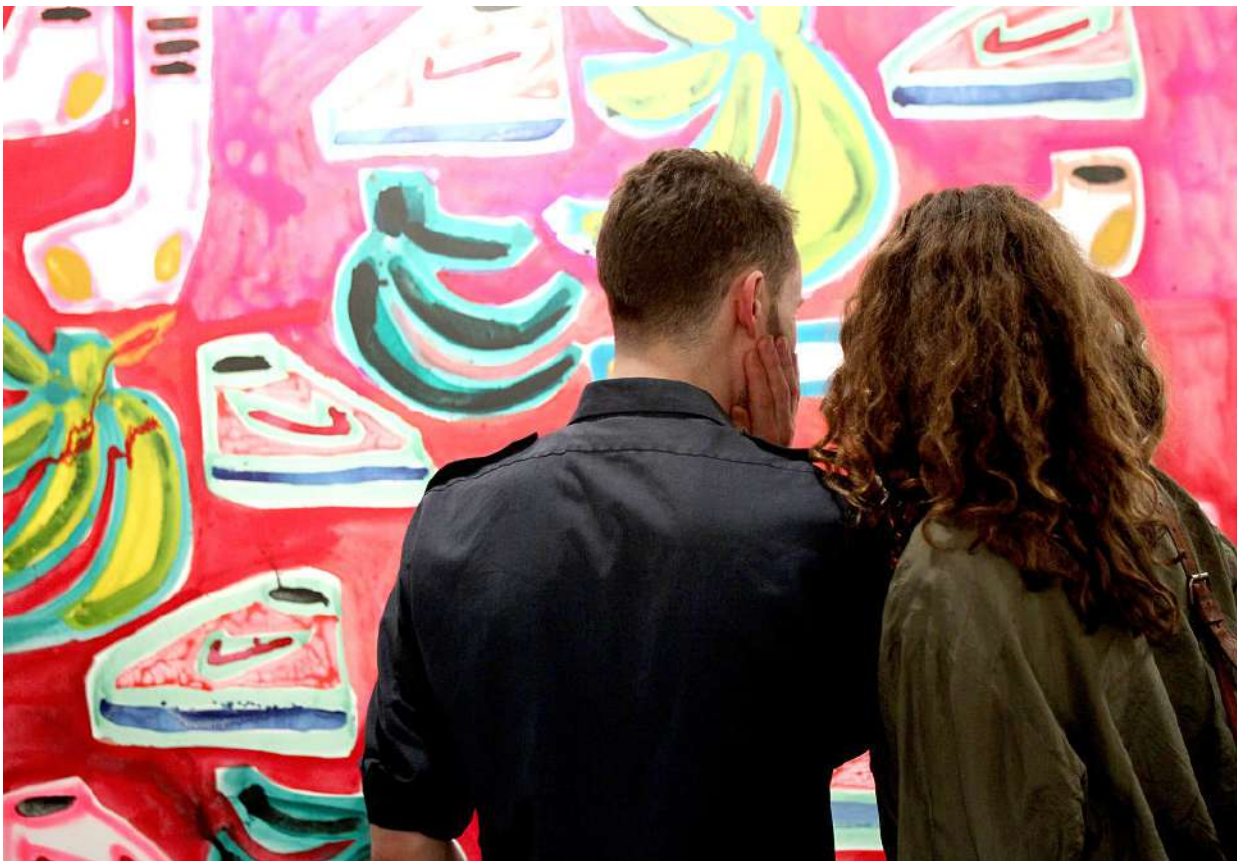


# artnet

## See Inside Art Los Angeles Contemporary's Packed VIP Opening Night

All of Los Angeles is on display.

EILEEN KINSELLA  
JANUARY 29, 2016



Art Los Angeles Contemporary 2016. Photo: Tommaso Boddi/Getty Images for Art Los Angeles Contemporary.

Notwithstanding a preponderance of vibrantly-colored abstract works that are custom-designed for West Coast walls, everything about the seventh edition of Art Los Angeles Contemporary feels like the right fit, from the volume of work shown, to an easily navigable open floor plan, to the alluring mix of US and international dealers with a range on material on view.



SANTA MONICA, CA – JANUARY 28: A dog poses during the Art Los Angeles Contemporary 2016 Opening Night at Barker Hangar on January 28, 2016 in Santa Monica, California. Photo by Angela Weiss/Getty Images for Art Los Angeles Contemporary.

Just a few hours into the VIP preview January 28, the Santa Monica Airport’s Barker Hangar was filled with a vibrant and eclectic crowd.

The fair is undeniably heavy on cutting-edge names and artworks—and that is not a bad thing. But it also includes a healthy dose of historical material and artworks.

“It’s our hometown fair,” Kurt Mueller, director of David Kordansky Gallery, told artnet News. “It’s a unique platform to support solo projects and a new body of work. All of LA comes at once. It’s a nice moment.”

The Kordansky Gallery’s booth was given over to a solo presentation of new works by Matthew Brannon that was clearly creating buzz and was admittedly one of our top picks of the night. Brannon has used his distinctive “mid-century graphic design,” as Mueller described it, to delve into the era of the Vietnam War, specifically through the lens of the four presidents who held office during the lead-up to and exit from the protracted conflict.

Another standout was the booth of San Francisco’s Altman Siegel Gallery, which had a tightly curated display of works including Liam Everett’s multi-layered and heavily worked paintings, Nate Boyce’s prints (die sublimation on aluminum) showing mash-ups of imagined environments with inexplicable sculptural elements, and Trevor Paglen’s *Color Study Pelican Bay State Prison* (2015), which suggests a vivid and mesmerizing sunset but is actually a study of the light above the Crescent City prison in California.



Matthew Brannon *Chipped Teeth* (2016)  
Image: Courtesy of the artist and David Kordansky Gallery.



Since Altman Siegel opened in 2009, there has been a pronounced emphasis on California artists as well as building relationships with Los Angeles collectors, according to director Daelyn Farnham. This fair is “an opportunity to present the gallery program as a whole, but also the freedom to do something less curated,” she said.

London gallerist Josh Lilley, who handles a number of LA-based artists, also had an eye-catching booth which featured large-scale works by Nicholas Hatfull, a delightful series of ink and acrylic works by Christof Mascher that shows the influence of Hieronymus Bosch and Pieter Breughel, and sculptures by Kathleen Ryan, including an arresting, semi-abstract cluster of green glazed ceramic birds on steel perches.



Liam Everett *Untitled (Montpelier)* (2015)

Image: Courtesy of the artist and Altman Siegel, San Francisco.



# San Francisco Chronicle

## Hand tools lead to Liam Everett limited- edition book

ANH-MINH LE  
NOVEMBER 25, 2015



Drawings by Liam Everett trace and layer the forms of outdated hand tools, found by the artist in a studio outside Toulouse, France. Rust marks mix and stain the brittle sheets of a 60 year-old watercolor block found amongst the tools, leaving indexical fragments of now-obsolete utility, pushed to the point of abstraction. Images are presented alongside texts by Bruno Tollon—describing the history and purpose of the tools—and prose by Rabih Alameddine. Co-published by RITE Editions, San Francisco, Altman-Siegel Gallery, San Francisco and On Stellar Rays, New York City. 2015. Special edition artist's book. Full color, clay pigment printed. Hard cover. Stitch bound. Limited edition of 45 and 5 APs. Signed, dated and numbered. Text by Bruno Tollon and an essay by Rabih Alameddine. 11 ?— 9". \$850.

Acquiring one of Liam Everett's paintings can set a collector back tens of thousands of dollars. But there's good news for admirers of his work whose budgets are a bit leaner: As part of the Rite Editions series, the San Francisco artist has created a limited-edition book (just 45 were produced) priced at \$850.

An assortment of tools that Everett found in a studio in Toulouse, France, that belonged to his father-in-law, Bruno Tollon, served as the subject matter for "Inutile." The drawings (see right) were made with ink, alcohol, salt and graphite. The 11-by-9-inch hardcover book also includes text by Tollon and an essay by Rabih Alameddine. "The images were generated by laying down random groups of tools and various discarded instruments of labor such as rusted nails, paper clips, magnets, clamps or rulers, and then applying ink washes either by hand or spray," says Everett. He says the tools included some that had not been used in over 100 years as well as others that date back to the 16th century.



Drawings by Liam Everett. Co-published by RITE Editions, San Francisco, Altman-Siegel Gallery, San Francisco and On Stellar Rays, New York City. 2015. Special edition artist's book. Full color, clay pigment printed. Hard cover. Stitch bound.

Limited edition of 45 and 5 APs. Signed, dated and numbered.

Text by Bruno Tollon and an essay by Rabih Alameddine. 11 1/2" x 9". \$850.



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Text by Bruno Tollon and an essay by Rabih Alameddine. 11 1/2" x 9". \$850.

Everett's labor-intensive process resulted in vibrant forms on watercolor paper. And, in the end, those previously obsolete objects proved useful once more — beautifully so.

“Inutile” by Liam Everett, \$850. Co-published by Rite Editions, Altman Siegel Gallery and On Stellar Rays. Limited edition of 45, signed, dated and numbered.



# ARTFORUM

## “Nacht und Träume”

Altman Siegel

BRIAN KARL  
NOVEMBER, 2015



Liam Everett, *Untitled (Limnos)*, 2015, acrylic, enamel, alcohol, and salt on oil-primed linen, 77 × 60". From “*Nacht und Träume*.”

The way in which creative expression is achieved in an era of often extreme ironic self-positioning was an implicit subtext of this summer group show, albeit one uncertainly realized. Zarouhie Abdalian’s *a caveat, a decoy*, 2014, a site-specific installation whose sound track looped Schubert’s “*Nacht und Träume*”—a lied celebrating the (irrational) unconscious and mourning the loss of dreams that comes with waking—lent the exhibition its title and set its tone. Significantly, *a caveat’s* sound element was forced to compete with the cacophonous street noise blaring through one (pointedly) open window in the fourth-floor gallery. Anchored by a plastic owl perched on the open window’s sill, Abdalian’s bare-bones work mustered its affect chiefly via its orchestration of this inside/outside aural blur. The ingenuous, inward-looking Romanticism of the Schubert lied contrasted not only with the harsh soundscape of the external world but with the caveat suggested by the “knowing” owl decoy, and hinted at the exhibition’s theme of un(self)conscious expression in tension with ironic self-consciousness.

Paintings by the three other artists included in the show grappled with issues of gesture and representation while demonstrating the limitations of ironic modes. The loose but not-quite-convincingly freewheeling paintings of Johnny Bicos and Laeh Glenn undercut these artists’ efforts at expression, at the same time generating questions about the challenges of undertaking representation itself. Two of Glenn’s small oil paintings, both dated 2015, feature sets of simply outlined marks representing eyes, nose, and hands (and, in one case, a mouth), floating on vague, nonrepresentational fields—black-on-white in one work, white-on-black in the other. The works, titled with emoji-like glyphs (‘v` #1 and ‘v` #2, respectively) that echo the facial-feature-like marks, veer toward the coy, and almost

cute. Glenn's third piece, *Night Birds*, 2015, is similarly provisional in appearance, if less brushy, portraying indistinct avian forms on tree branches. (The echo with the owl in Abdalian's piece was a nice coincidence.) Bicos's rudimentary figures in oil on linen—*Untitled (Duck Soup)*, *Untitled (Egg Salad)*, and *Untitled* (all 2015)—half merged with their hazy patchwork backgrounds, giving the works an air of being still in-process, not yet fully committed to their respective assertions.

In contrast, Liam Everett's two large-scale paintings—*Untitled (Limnos)* and *Untitled (Lakshmipur)*, both 2015—are extraordinarily worked. These abstract pieces are both rich and restless, yet the compositions and materials are cohesive. Everett uses acrylic and enamel, along with solvent agents such as alcohol and salt, to create a variety of effects on oil-primed linen. The signs of taking away—sanding, scraping, and rubbing, sometimes to the point of puncturing the canvas—are as significant as the marks themselves, the techniques together yielding a surprisingly well-integrated sense of pentimento. Everett's work has developed significantly over recent years, and even while here defaulting to more conventionally stretched wall-hung canvases—as opposed to his earlier experiments with free-flowing fabrics and extended paintings draped over frames and racks—it feels accomplished, thoughtful, and continuously inventive. Beyond the lush seduction and busy dynamism of his visual presentations, which further suggest a strong investment of both psychic and intellectual energy in their laboredness, these pieces integrate self-awareness and an uninhibited bravura of physically embodied, if at times tortured, *jouissance*. If the idealized “dreams” of the show's title might be applied as gloss to any creative process or product, it is in this pair of probing paintings that the often-fraught interplay between the studied and the uninhibited is most fully realized.

# P O R T

## Tools of the trade: Liam Everett

US artist Liam Everett takes PORT through the process behind his latest work, a book inspired by his father-in-law's collection of broken hammers and rusted chisels

GEORGE UPTON  
OCTOBER 28, 2015



Bruno Tollon taught History of Art at the University of Toulouse for 50 years and was known as an avid collector of tools. Rusting in the haphazardly stacked boxes in the professor's garage in France are broken hammers, roofing chisels and keys for doors that no longer exist. Some have been repurposed by Tollon, serving as paperweights or containers for paper clips, and some have been mended, but many lie dormant. It is an impressive collection, with some tools dating back over 300 years. But for abstract painter Liam Everett – Tollon's son-in-law, who had set-up a studio in the garage – their significance was not immediately apparent.

"I had known about this collection for almost 15 years," Everett tells me on the phone from his current home in rural California. "I began pulling them together, creating a catalogue of probably about 13 different tools, not with any other intention than other than to familiarise myself with them. It's very much the way I work in painting, beginning to work without an idea."





Everett's paintings are typically large-scale works, the product of alternately accretive and reductive processes that, in their gestural mark-making, evoke the movements of the artist. But for *UTILE/INUTILE*, published by RITE EDITIONS, Everett decided to work in a more intimate medium.

"I usually try and avoid narrative, I'd rather that rises up from the work itself," explains Everett when asked why he felt the book was the best format for the work. "But Bruno started visiting my studio space every morning. He would pick up one of the tools on my desk and tell me the story, the memory that they evoked. Whether I liked it or not the project began to have a narrative."



While in France, Everett delved further into Tollon's collection and found a block of watercolour paper and ink that was over half a century old. After cracking open the jars of ink with vice grips and heating up the solidified ink (a process that Everett compared to painting), he soaked the tools in a mixture of alcohol, ink and salt to stabilise the metal and speed up the oxidation process so they would deposit rust. Then he simply laid them on the paper and left them in the direct Mediterranean sun.

"After about two or three hours I would shift them on the paper and spray the same ink solution from above. At this point they just looked like cyanotypes," he tells me. "You're just getting the outline of the form like a primitive photocopy, but I repeated the process 20 to 25 times. I wanted the outlines of the tools to dissolve into a kind of static... I didn't want the thing to be so literal."

Although the images that result – half-realised, half-translucent forms in vibrant purples and blues and greens – are both compelling and beautiful, it was, for Everett, the act of producing the work that held the most importance, rather than the finished product. “For me the process wasn’t so much to make an image, but rather to handle the tools,” he explains. “To have a kind of influence with these objects, these things that were made only to have one purpose.”



By reminding us that tools like this that have been made redundant by new technology and lost techniques, Everett continues the themes of his large scale painting – of work done and of physical activity – into the book format. But *UTILE/INUTILE* goes further than this. The impressions of the tool, first on Tollon’s memory and then later on the watercolour paper, speak universally, while quietly evoking life’s aggregate of time and experience.

## Liam Everett

FRANKLIN MELENDEZ  
NOVEMBER 1–DECEMBER 22, 2012



View of "If I could sleep I might make love. I'd go into the woods. My eyes would see... the sky, the earth. I'd run, run, they wouldn't catch me," 2012.

There is something of this driving a piece like *Killing Floor (or a proposed action plan)*, 2012, an expanse of mottled olive wool draped horizontally on bars and supported by wooden horses. Upon sustained viewing, the elegant depression of the fabric comes to evoke the imprint of a reclining body.

Through these simple and decisive gestures, Everett resists the allure of the purely optical or abstract. Instead, he offers something much more honest (for lack of a better word). His surfaces remain as afterimages—not records of a vain search for a zero degree of painting, but simply marks of labor. The literal imprints of the artist's work animate these pieces, the drips and stains underscoring the phantasmatic presence of a body repeatedly working through a singular idea into multiple iterations. Perhaps this impulse best accounts for the protean nature of the exhibition, from the panels and the draped paintings to the triangular supports—all of which achieve a stubborn, if enigmatic, physicality. It is a strange sort of poetry, made all the more effective by its rigorous logic.

There is something solemn, if not almost funerary, about Liam Everett's solo debut at Altman Siegel, which might be appropriate given its subject matter. The show features a series of paintings on Masonite, wool, cotton, and organza that have been stained with ink and acrylic, and then meticulously worked over with various corrosive agents like alcohol, lemon, and salt to create luminous abstractions that also depict the residue of erasure. The most emotive of these are draped loosely onto wooden supports and propped against the wall, where they resemble a lineup of four richly hued ambulance stretchers.

If not quite a requiem for the medium, Everett's thoughtful intervention is certainly aware of the mortality of that legendarily stubborn artistic idiom: four stretcher bars and a canvas, a formal limitation the artist attempts to think through rather than around.



# FRIEZE

## Liam Everett

Altman Siegel, San Francisco, USA

JONATHAN GRIFFIN  
DECEMBER 13 2012



*Always inside a world where the light discloses the structure that shows us the 'movement' of always falling, 2012, mixed media, 244 x 97 cm*

A sculpture in the adjacent space, titled *Killing floor (or a proposed action plan)*, hints at how these paintings may have been made: a woollen blanket is slung between two long planks resting on sawhorses. It is a pragmatic, workaday arrangement – a far less picturesque process than one might have imagined from the works next door. They may look effortless, even lazy, but there is clearly plenty of elbow grease involved. They do not make themselves, nor are they formed naturally by the wild Californian landscape. It is Everett himself who controls them, even if he goes out of his way to make it look like he does not.

Liam Everett's art stands, first and foremost, as testament to the processes of its making. In spite of their rich optical pleasures, his art works claim a solemn dignity as battered survivors of previous punishments. It is fun to imagine just what these wild, intense forces might have entailed.

Sun evidently plays a major role in Everett's work: the dyes of the fabric of his baggy constructions (not quite paintings, but too painting-like to be sculptures) are unevenly but expressively faded. Wind, too, seems to have been involved. Some, such as *The way we slip over from one to the other, there and no where* (all works 2012), appear to bear the gridded impressions of wire fences; you can picture them flapping in the breeze as they dried. Elsewhere, crusts of salt crystals imply that heat has also had a hand in their making, causing quantities of seawater to evaporate, perhaps, until sweaty white tidelines build up across the fabric. These works, though they make reference to the indoorsy, post-Minimal assemblages of Richard Tuttle as well as artists such as Sergej Jensen and Gedi Sibony, are infused with the landscape of northern California.

A dynamic of unabashed romanticism emerges: the battered pieces of fabric are invalids, victims or survivors of the artistic process, recuperated only by their unwitting beauty.

A series of untitled smaller paintings more openly derive from the artist's labour. Everett has applied dark ink and acrylic paint to Masonite boards, and then rubbed them clean with alcohol and salt until they are almost – but not quite – returned to their original white. Again, however, the process is far from arbitrary, and distinct areas of white or residual colour reveal the works to be subtle abstract paintings made in reverse.

Throughout this exhibition there is a tussle between what is revealed and what is hidden; what is left on the surface and what is discarded along the way. Everett titles his works as if hoping to lose the reader halfway through; one sagging panel of crimson wool is titled *The threshold question that arises in connection with the concept of establishing a language without the problem of speaking*. I've read these words a dozen times and I can still make no sense of them. Two of the organza panels have mysterious objects – a piece of dowel, a ceramic disk – dangling, half-glimpsed, behind them. As to their significance, we are left in the dark. As if to acknowledge this game of interpretive hide and seek, the exhibition is called 'If I could sleep I might make love. I'd go into the woods. My eyes would see... the sky, the earth. I'd run, run, they wouldn't catch me.'

## Liam Everett's ghostly fabrics at Altman Siegel

KENNETH BARKER  
DECEMBER 7, 2012



"Untitled" (2012) Ink, acrylic, alcohol and salt on Masonite panels by Liam Everett. jay jones

Liam Everett summons references to art other than his own with a touch so light as to appear unintended.

Consider the large fabric pieces in the Bay Area artist's show at Altman Siegel. Each one has swathes of organza or wool slung between slender vertical timbers whose residue of stains suggest that they also served as supports during the works' making. An apparently related work in the adjacent room, spanning a pair of sawhorses, hints ambiguously at Everett's studio practice. Even from a distance, these pieces stir memories of Robert Rauschenberg's "Hoarfrost" series of the mid-'70s. Their faint suggestion of battlefield stretchers brings to mind the use of similar forms by Salvatore Scarpitta (1919-2007) and the self-mythologizing Joseph Beuys (1921-1986).

Ghostly imprints of folds and overlays in Everett's pieces might even recall the Shroud of Turin that, Christian lore has it, captured the image of the crucified Jesus. But if Everett would own that association at all, it would probably be as an example of the projection of desire. Meanwhile, his working process, which involves ink, acrylic, alcohol and salt, remains mysterious, as do the objects hanging veiled in a couple of pieces.

Untitled works on Masonite hint that they also might have originated as by-products of other studio output. They have peculiar internal auras - of light seemingly creased with shadow - dimly reminiscent of early 20th century modernism.



Everett undermines his art's air of lightly borne education by attaching wordy titles that, whether he has written or borrowed them, feel like lyric frosting on well-cooked fare that does not want it.

Abstraction's descendants: Until about 50 years ago, the terrain of abstract painting remained a battleground, where skirmishes could occur over the nature of art content, over creative commitment and art's potential to illuminate or chasten an audience. Pop art - think of Andy Warhol's camouflage paintings or Roy Lichtenstein's "mirrors" - changed all that. They made of the battleground a playground. So did the concurrent explosion of the art market, with its cynical reverberations, and a growing abundance of art-school-educated painters.

## Liam Everett: Confident solo debut at Romer Young

KENNETH BARKER  
JUNE 11, 2011



"Untitled [LE 5035-1]" (2011) acrylic, salt, alcohol, silk and polyester on wood stretcher by Liam Everett/unknown/romer young gallery, s.f.

Liam Everett's solo show at Romer Young Gallery introduces an artist of notable promise and confidence. He appears more interested in thinking about abstract painting than in advancing it, but all his work presumes some familiarity with its issues.

"Untitled [LE5035-1]" (2011) drapes swaths of blotched translucent fabric over stretcher bars. It looks like something scavenged from a crime scene, yet has a peculiar dark lyricism also. It and lighter-toned fabric pieces might bring to mind brighter works with gauzy material by Robert Rauschenberg or post-minimalist episodes in the art of Richard Tuttle or Dorothea Rockburne. But Everett's piece has enough character to measure up to any inkling of its possible sources.

Everything he presents balances Everett's interests in fugitive color and in light and shadow's fluctuating suggestions of virtual space.

A sheet of silver-gray organza, its surface subtly abused, loosely covers stretcher bars, hinting at the thought of more conventional abstract painting as a sort of costume design for a support.

Spare abstract patterns on the rough sides of Masonite panels look as much like by-products of studio processes involved in other works as they do like products of discrete creative intention. This cool obliqueness, combined with internal geometry faintly evocative of Cubism and Futurism, gives an impression of authorial detachment. We might read it as sophistication, as indifference or as potentially self-defeating calculation - an uncertainty germane to the art world's present moment of cynicism and confusion about what remains worth doing and why.

Everett has miscalculated in titling his show "Being-with." He wants it to stress the weight of viewers' attention to all the circumstances enfolding his work. But "being-with" has a specific, quite different technical meaning in the early philosophy of Martin Heidegger. Everett's use of it will grate on the ears of anyone who knows that. So ignore his title and look.



# Haberdashery Anyone?

MARY COOK

JUNE 5, 2009



179 Canal Street, 2nd Floor. Peeper Place, Dani Leventhal, May 16, 2009.  
Photo by Margaret Lee on Flickr (<http://www.flickr.com/photos/margaret-lee>)

Artists staging their own shows is nothing new. The French Impressionists did it in with the creation of their organization of Cooperative and Anonymous Association of Painters, Sculptors, and Engravers, as did many members of the Ashcan School, as well as William Blake, who held one of his first exhibitions in his brother's haberdashery!

To all you artists out there, whether you are frustrated now because the gallery that formerly represented you closed, the sales of your work are just overall in a dwindle, or the file of your rejection letters outweigh those of acceptance—whatever you do, it is important to keep up the pace of continual artmaking and participation in the conversation of contemporary art in your community. Do it yourself!

I had the pleasure of interviewing Margaret Lee, director of a 4-week series of exhibitions called the Month of May at a former office building located at 179 Canal Street in New York City, as well as with Liam Everett, an artist who curated the third weekend of this month-long program. While neither sought to collaborate on this endeavor as a

direct form of protest, Margaret and Liam took it upon themselves to show put together a show with the intention of being able to challenge their own ways of seeing. Here is a peek into their story.

## Part 2: Talking with with Liam Everett

**Mary Clark:** *What originally inspired you curate a program at this space at this office space on Canal Street? What do you find most important about exhibiting and curating work outside of more traditional venues, such as museums or galleries?*

**Liam Everett:** I was anxiously looking for a non-gallery space that could offer an unpredictable condition for my performance. Initially I was drawn to the space at 179 Canal as an anonymous place and/or its potential as a non-space. The content of absence is a central theme to both my painting and performance. The space had an air of hasty abandonment as if the previous tenants had vacated in the course of a day or maybe even hours. Although in this speedy disappearance the eerie residue of labor and the quotidian doldrums were left behind.

**MC:** *What brought you to choosing Dani Leventhal's work for this exhibition?*

**LE:** As for the choices I make in my own studio practice—I'm deeply concerned with what is both intimate and emotional. I've known Dani Leventhal for over 15 years. We have collaborated on various projects in the past and her work and ideas have had a profound effect on my own aesthetic development. Her work, as well as Ling-wen's—for lack of better words—moves me in a way that questions my own ideas of behavior and/or humanness...I was convinced that their approach to this empty Canal Street space would become personal, and that the works they would create would be bold enough to invoke the "intimate" in such a potentially vulnerable environment.

**MC:** *So you are an artist and curator as well.*

**LE:** With both my studio practice, performance, writing, and curating, I am committed to engaging in what I refer to as the urgency of being. The emphasis is on the preciousness of the immediate and how the body and psyche evolve in direct relation to their ever-changing and highly complex and variable environments. It is important that the work addresses these conditions in a visual language does not dictate.

Because the first act of (the performance) *On the Wall* occurs on the street, therefore entertaining an involuntary audience, my hope was that some of these viewers might be inclined to view the second act, which happens inside the performance space and includes an invited audience. The intention was to blur the line between performer and viewer, as well as the space in which they collide.

# The Neon Forest Is My Home

WILLIAM POWHIDA  
MARCH 2004

The title of this amusing if not slight group show at \*sixtyseven refers to thematic use of nature in the works of twelve emerging artists. The often funny and playful works aren't based on observation but on imagination. The thematic use of flora and fauna is merely a point of departure for the artists to explore a range of ideas.

While Ben Grasso's series of thickly painted landscapes are fairly traditional, the rest of the works distance themselves from the genre. Even in Grasso's paintings the landscape itself isn't really the subject. In two canvases, Grasso exaggerates and builds up stretches of brown earth into a sculptural relief. The smear becomes the central character in two of the paintings, with its materiality shattering the illusion of depth and space. The physicality of the paint adds a scatological dimension to the otherwise staid landscapes.

Francesca DiMattio's "Bird Wreck" (2003) offers a stylistically familiar abstraction of a bird in a forest. DiMattio applies dark tones of paint in thick, lush strokes that explosively render the subject. DiMattio's style and subject matter seem problematically derivative of Dana Schutz, although her painting seems far more serious and devoid of the comic figuration that marks Schutz's work.

Sari Carel and Jeana Baumgardner offer up paintings that are more idiosyncratic in their exploration of space and narrative. Carel's "Rider" (2003) is a strange proposition, as several horses inhabit a fractured space that flattens out perspective. Two of the animals don't quite fit the landscape that itself is masked with areas of striped color. The pastel hued mountains and horses are contrasted with the hard-edged bars of color. Nothing about the painting makes any conventional sense, but the blank expressions of the animals express a kind of sadness that is affecting. Baumgardner's paintings "The Expedition" and "The Event" operate in a similarly discontinuous space where the illusion of depth is flattened out by shapes and patterns that hover in the foreground. In the former, an arctic landscape of pale blues hovers behind a graffiti covered cube and an A-shaped form patterned with bricks. The narrative elements in the work don't quite add up to anything making the paintings seem formal and stiff. What works successfully for Carel, a strange internal logic, doesn't quite work as successfully in Baumgardner's paintings. Existing more as drawing than painting, Anke Sievers's and Liam Everett's works on paper are less concerned with formal values than cryptic and ironic narratives. Sievers works in acrylic in four feathery, elemental landscapes. The pictures evoke a self-conscious naiveté that frames the religious texts hovering above the natural "world." The centered compositions of the elements, fire, rock, air, and water are stubbornly present giving them a certainty that defies their scale and immateriality. Everett doesn't strive to evoke anything so metaphysical as God, but his simple ink and pencil drawings on paper are surreal collisions between nature and technology. In the first untitled drawing, a one-armed ape stands defiantly on the wing of a prop plane and in the second a Lamborghini springs from the ear of a doe. The drawings display a wry humor with thorough comedic irony.



Chris Caccamise is a stand out with his enamel-coated toy-like paper sculptures. Beyond the immediate cheeriness of the objects, his subjects hint at the conflict between nature and progress. A bright yellow backhoe, "Excavator" (2003) sits amidst rainbows, clouds, and mountains. Caccamise easily has the most playful work in the show, but it is tempered by a sense of loss. His "Tall Grave" (2003) and "Night Tree" (2003) add a feeling of mortality to the toy-like world. Yuh-Shioh Wong, Craig Hein, and Saturo Eguchi also present sculptures that are less substantial versions of Caccamise's gamesmanship.

While not totally out of place, eteam presents the lone photograph in the exhibit. In "Doddy & Crystal—an Effort to Stimulate Their Partnership, Grizedale, England" (2003) a woman in an ugly baseball mask seems to be urging a pair of sheep to mate. The absurdity of the scenario seems to express a deeper anxiety about scientific progress giving the fluffy show a hint of criticality. It's not eteam's medium that differentiates them, but the conceptual process and performance that the photograph begins to reveal. The show may have been better without it, simply to keep the emphasis on the simplicity and playfulness of the rest of the art.