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Melissa Gordon

ZOOOOOM

29 March - 10 May

The paintings on display in the exhibition ZOOOOOM illustrate their process: zooming in to find evidence, and finding evidence of the zoom. Paint splotches on studio surfaces inject the old punchline of the abject un-meaning of the abstract expressionist canvas with a homely, gendered wit. It is the performance of an interior, but not a performance of interiority. A blunt play with the index-to-icon transit can be observed here: the mark of paint (index) is turned into a painting (icon), compressing in that transfer a whole history of canvas as index of gesture which becomes the icon of artistic genius. But, asks this image, what about the contingencies of housekeeping in the studio? Is a paint drip on some kinds of studio surface—canvas—any more expressive than dripping on others (wall, table)? What is this material evidence of? We could say it is nothing more than process, but that creates a tautology that eclipses the impact of the move, or, what makes it funny. Gordon calls the pieces "intentionally ridiculous," their mixing-up of horizontals and verticals jinxing the immanence of the picture plane to its historically-certified content. If the expressive splotch was part of an *expressive causality* (it embodied the spirit of its time—the irreducible subject that was its maker), the *Material Evidence* series on display articulates a *structural causality*: it is produced by the woman artist, in her studio, dutifully, as an artwork - as proof of her right to be there. A reflexive or hysterical looking: evidence of absence may not be absence of evidence, but what it evidences might not be the object of inquiry. And the subject isn't there. Detached from its generic premise of authenticity, like a bad translation in a service script, it labors to bring us nothing but joy.

-Excerpt from "Structural and Expressive" by Marina Vishmidt, from the catalogue *Material Evidence*, published by Sternberg Press, 2014

Melissa Gordon is an American artist based in London. She has exhibited widely in Europe and America, including at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, Kunsthalle Dusseldorf, Kunstmuseum Bonn, Museum voor Moderne Kunst Arnhem, S1 Artspace, Sheffield, Marres Center for Contemporary Culture, Maastricht, Martin-Gropius Bau, Berlin, Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie Karlsruhe, the Prague Triennale, National Galerie, Prague, LAX Art, Los Angeles, Kunsthalle Oslo, The Aldrich Museum, Connecticut, Bonner Kunstverein, and most recently her first solo UK institutional show at Spike Island in Bristol. She was an artist-in-residence at De Ateliers in Amsterdam from 2003-2005 and was the recipient of the Dutch Royal Prize for Painting in 2005 and the ABN AMRO Kunstprijs in 2007. She has upcoming exhibitions this year at Cosar HMT, Dusseldorf, Wiels Contemporary Art Centre, Brussels, and Marianne Boesky Gallery, New York.