

DEC 23, 2015 @ 02:19 PM

## Review: 'Unreasonable Sized Paintings' at SVA Chelsea Gallery

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What makes a great art show? Surely, the formula of great curator + great artist(s) + great concept is necessary, all elements "Unreasonable Sized Paintings" and "Reasonable Size Paintings" can check off. Phong Bui, known for his 15 year helm at the Brooklyn Rail, brings together Lois Dodd, Alex Katz, Joanne Pousette-Dart, Tal R, Terry Winters, Lisa Yuskavage, and others to consider the psychological condition of scale that can provide a space for both intimacy and monumentality in a two-part show at SVA's Chelsea Gallery and Mana Contemporary. Its conceptual impetus comes from Jackson Pollock's admiration of Albert Pinkham Ryder and Thomas Nozkowski's standout line that identified "reasonable sized" in a 2007 John Yau-moderated panel discussion at the magazine's headquarters in Greenpoint. But there's something else, some sleights of mind, that makes a show stand out in this Gotham city, a bed of "greats" canoodling with one another. And this show has it. Perhaps what makes it great is the rejection of the trend for oversized, overbearing works by artists desperately trying to stand apart by being the loudest in the room. So, we encourage you to head over to the 15th floor gallery at Chelsea's Starrett Lehigh building to get a taste of what is essentially a magical showing of works, some of which we're sure you have never seen, all of which are neither studies nor serial, and most of which you could fit under your arm. Bui shared what he dubs as "haiku descriptions" of three artists in the show.



Robert Feintuch, "Fat Hercules," 2011, polymer emulsion on honeycomb panel. Courtesy of the artist, SVA, New York and Mana Contemporary, New Jersey.

*"Robert Feintuch's treatment of figure is a precarious representation of human movement that reveals as much vulnerability and caustic humor as it does affection for such a condition. By constructing a singular image that refers to himself (self-portraiture) as well as an imaginary person, he never fails to maximize his liberty to create forms that lie between modeling and flatness, a result of his equal investment in abstraction and representation. Ultimately, purity and impurity of form, spirituality and laity, humor and restraint, strength and weakness, among other opposites, all co-exist simultaneously."*



Mark Greenwold, "Never the Same Love Twice," 2006 – 2007, oil on wood. Courtesy of the artist, SVA, New York and Mana Contemporary, New Jersey.

*"Mark Greenwold, in a similar confluence of the self and un-self, creates poignant self-portrayals in the midst of psychodrama: aptly constructing uncanny episodes positioned between the imaginary world and the real one. The obsessive nature of Greenwold is revealed in his deliberate yet subtle construction of figures that at once belong to a specific space and yet seem alien to it. The figures are of that particular space, yet are not grounded in it whatsoever. However deep and ambivalent Mark's questions about human purpose, his vulnerable yet comic figures essentially amplify aspects of human compassion and dignity as a whole."*



Thomas Nozkowski, "Untitled (9-7)," 2011, oil on linen on panel. Photograph by Kerry Ryan McFate, courtesy Pace Gallery, © Thomas Nozkowski.

*"Tom (Thomas) Nozkowski's reasonable sized canvases form congenial fields of vision from which his images migrate fluidly, as if each was a letter in an alphabet being assembled in order to form words. They seem to resemble familiar objects that we have seen and touched, utilized, yet they are also abstract. In Tom's hand, no two shapes, forms, or marks are alike. His body of work suggests no conformity, save for the two sizes he has chosen to work within as testament of both restraint and freedom. Finally, Tom's orchestration of repetition and irregularity is the key to the democratic coherence of form and content in his work. Each painting yields a rare synthesis of poetic and musical rhythm that creates a unique image of an indescribable word."*

Unreasonable Sized Paintings was on view at School of Visual Arts Chelsea Gallery from November 21-December 22, 2015. Reasonable Sized Paintings was on view at Mana Contemporary Gallery from October 18-December 22, 2015.