

Tyler Vlahovich: The Cares of A Family Man

The subject matter of Tyler Vlahovich's work could very well be nothing. After all when describing a given painting, he often speaks of his hope or intention to paint it— nothing (which he usually, inevitably fails at). While such an ambition might seem aptly Beckettian, it is a 'nothing' more in the spirit of Vincent Fecteau's sculpture, in that he seeks to eschew any kind of sustainable representation. Or maybe it's something along the lines of the two-dimensional equivalent of Kafka's Odradek, the writer's notoriously indescribable creature/object which could almost be an allegory of art, viz., Kafka's description of Odradek as being "extraordinarily nimble and (...) never [able to] be laid hold of." But Kafka did not write allegories just as Vlahovich does not paint them. His ambitions lay elsewhere. One gets the feeling that he's trying to publicly formulate a very private question to which his paintings become provisional answers. Or maybe they are spur of the moment challenges to himself, and painting in general. Or finally, just riddles in reverse.

His imagery ostensibly dabbles with the origins of European abstraction and post war American modernism, but any resemblance to say, Kazimir Malevich, Odilon Redon or abstract expressionism is superficial or incidental. It is not about that. Vlahovich's work is blessedly devoid of any motivation to transmit the spiritual or the psychological, not to mention any will to heroically embody its zeitgeist. What with his non-noble penchant to paint on anything from used cardboard to pieces and panels of wood, as well as canvas, it is also far from heroic; if anything, it is much more of the order of the nerd, thanks to his all but solipsistic devotion to painting. His work is definitely not warped by any belief in the genius of the artistic gesture— which in Vlahovich's repertoire is more of a poke, daub or a stab.

Tyler Vlahovich paints seemingly casual, but richly sophisticated rapid meditations on form, composition, mark-making, and color, which seek to portray if not 'nothing,' then at the very least the painterly contours of thinking plastically and multifariously. It is for

these reasons that his global practice, although obviously animated by a singular sensibility, does not immediately cohere into a single identifiable style. This is also why his work has such a strange and unpredictable relationship with beauty (so much green and yellow!). Much more a byproduct of other concerns than a primary motivation, his paintings are nevertheless beautiful. The vivid, variously offbeat, playful and breathtaking pictorial events they contain surprise, perplex and delight, while their subtly textured surfaces, which are often due to a kind of encaustic technique, have a way of seducing the body as much as the eye. They are part and parcel of an idiosyncratic kind of painting that is increasingly hard to account for, and may even be inadmissible. Indeed, in today's art world, when so much art is obliged to make perfect sense, none of what Vlahovich makes does, if it ever did. And this is precisely why it refreshes, absolutely.

Tyler Vlahovich (b. 1967 Tacoma, WA) is a painter who lives and works in Los Angeles. A regular exhibitor at Feature Inc., New York from 2003 until its closure in 2014, Vlahovich has also had solos, most recently, at Feuilleton, Los Angeles (2020); Farbvision, Berlin (2018); Window Project, Richard Telles Fine Art, Los Angeles (2017); Twig Gallery, Brussels (2011); John Tevis Gallery, Paris (2006); Mary Goldman gallery (2003).

This exhibition is in cooperation with Lulu, Mexico City, where Tyler will also have a show running from November 21st, 2020 through January 30th, 2021.