

Smarts, Serious Fun in Painting Exhibitions

Mary Corse, Jesse Greenberg and Mi Ju in this week's Fine Art

By PETER PLAGENS
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Jesse Greenberg: Face Scan

Derek Eller

615 W. 27th St., (212) 206-6411

Through May 30



An informal rule of thumb says that the more complex the interior of an artist's work—and within his dominant choice of resin and pigments, Jesse Greenberg (b. 1982) throws in everything but that proverbial kitchen fixture—the more consistent on the walls and pared down the show should be. Mr. Greenberg manipulates his substances while they're in liquid form and lets them harden, on rectangles, into bulbous, painting-like objects that look either exotic and beautiful, like sea anemones nestling in geodes, or weird and slightly scary, like something hiding in a dumpster in Area 51.

The question with art such as Mr. Greenberg's—complex, technically inventive, demonstrating a real touch with difficult materials, visually energetic, and witty (nicely chosen titles such as “Body Scan 3” and “Power Supply 3”)

without being jokey—is what does he mean by it? If the show consisted of just the larger wall works, something other than “Look what I can do” might emanate from it. As it is, the inclusion of smaller works with a different, less organic feel (some with protruding tubes), and even a few fully three-dimensional sculptures, creates what they call in communication theory “noise.” A little less of Mr. Greenberg's edgily sumptuous aesthetic would probably amount to more.

(above) Jesse Greenberg, Body Scan 3, 2015

Photo: Adam Reich/Derek Eller Gallery, New York, NY