

Steve DiBenedetto

Mile High Psychiatry

March 20 - April 18, 2015

Opening Reception: Friday, March 20, 6-8pm

“The authorities demand indifference regarding your participation in ignoring their request” is an elliptical non-declaration contained deep within a large canvas by Steve DiBenedetto.

Through scraps and globs and stabs and billows, those words have dissolved into a pre-linguistic slime. The actual, legible sentence has now been reduced into (or by) every conceivable strategy for paint application while maintaining the sentiment dripping from that once written ouroboros : “The authorities demand indifference regarding your participation in ignoring their request”

Elsewhere, the exhaust pipe from Wyatt’s choppered Harley a la *Easy Rider* spits the same CO2 fumes it feigns to be filtering away back onto the canvas. With more scrutiny, we see that those fumes are just being sucked back into bodies of the composition’s other passengers, including one octopus. This is not a basic octopus. Basic octopi are not socialized. They forgo language for body manipulation and alterations of skin color, communicating through a state Terrence McKenna describes as “both psychedelic and telepathic”. Not this guy, this octopus has a chalkboard and he’s learning how to make marks on it. He’s a socialized (or social-ish) octopus and with one tentacle coiled around a nub of chalk he communicates to us his intimate thoughts about the paranormal, modern architecture, and the subplots of *Apocalypse Now*, with scraps and globs and stabs and billows.

DiBenedetto paints while standing up. On his feet he develops a counterintuitive strategy towards abstraction. Instead of negating language and iconography, he looks to over-expand them through swarming gestures, reaching a point where they collapse under the pressure of their own weight, meaning, and paranoid history. Structurally speaking, DiBenedetto’s paintings have more in common with Thomas Pynchon than his art world peers. This enterprising sprawl of paint presents an unsolvable equation similar to the question of: how do I ignore the authorities demand for me to participate in ignoring their request?

Steve DiBenedetto (b. 1958) has exhibited extensively, including recent shows with Half Gallery, New York, David Nolan Gallery, New York, Daniel Weinberg Gallery, Los Angeles, a two person exhibition with Terry Winters at National Exemplar, New York, as well as a solo exhibition with Derek Eller Gallery in 2002. His work is included in public collections such as the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. He is participating in an exhibition at The American Academy of Arts and Letters, on view March 12 - April 12, 2015; and also has an upcoming solo show at The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum. This exhibition is presented in cooperation with David Nolan Gallery, New York.

Derek Eller Gallery is located at 615 West 27th Street, between 11th and 12th Avenues. Hours are Tuesday - Saturday, 11 am - 6 pm. For further information or images, please contact the gallery at 212-206-6411 or visit www.derekeller.com