

HYPERALLERGIC

Sensitive to Art & its Discontents

February 8, 2014

Points of Contact: Small Works, Giant Steps

by Thomas Michelli



Ted Gahl, "The Relentless Pursuit of Perfection (Drawing of House Painting)," "The Cultured House Painter" and "860/203 (House Painter)," all 2013, acrylic and graphite on unprimed canvas, artist frame, 48 x 24 in

Sundays (Like the Brightest Light in the Theatre Shining on an Empty Stage), is on view in Dodge Gallery's lower level. Gahl takes images of his own, such as drawings from his childhood, as well as those of other artists and remakes them into multipart paintings, altering colors and changing shapes in the process.

His works, often done on unprimed canvas, are engaging, collage-like mismatches of style and media that recall early Rauschenberg but are distilled entirely into acrylic and graphite. In some cases he veers too obviously into art-about-art, such as "Blinky/Walking Away" (2013), which features several faux-Blinky Palermo panels fastened to a built-out 2 x 4, so that they face away from the viewer and toward a large, near-monochromatic canvas.

But most of the pieces (despite the artist's penchant for presenting them in frames made out of house paint mixing sticks) function as layered memories, distorted and fading, through a conflation of old-school painting and conceptual mediation — an uneasy balance, but one with a peculiarly satisfying feel.

Ted Gahl: *Sundays (Like the Brightest Light in the Theatre Shining on an Empty Stage)* continues at Dodge Gallery (15 Rivington Street, Lower East Side, Manhattan) through February 23.