

SHARON BUTLER
TWO COATS OF PAINT

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By Any Other Name: Casualism at DODGE

Guest contributor: Jonathan Stevenson / Casualism – the explicit basis for Garis & Hahn’s group show “Dying on Stage” this past summer – is merely the implicit one for two intriguing exhibitions at Dodge Gallery around the corner on Rivington.

Jane Fox Hipple’s solo “Corresponding Selves” tugs the strand of Casualism keyed to the shambolic nature of everyday life into the household. Contrasting conventional rectangular space with foreign objects like sheets and screws self-consciously affixed to sloppily stretched – even ripped – canvases, she invests her pieces with the shifting emotions that might arise as one tours a house and pauses to reflect on each of its rooms. The gallery’s statement lists Duchamp, Bourgeois, and Eva Hesse as well as Walt Whitman as influences; I might presume to add Rauschenberg, Tracy Emin, and painters like Claude Viallat and the cohort of Support-Surface artists working in 1970s France. Contemporary artists Lauren Luloff, David Hammons, Lael Marshall, and Gedy Sibony are probably on Hipple’s radar as well.



Jane Fox Hipple, *holder/held*, 2013, acrylic on cotton and canvas, 49 x 29 x 5 inches.

If Hipple is concerned with the feelings visited by life as we live it, the group show, styled “A Pinch of Saffron, Dash of Vermouth” and curated by Ted Gahl, focuses on the limits that artists impose on process and materials – and how artists exploit skill and technique to transcend those limits – another Casualist theme.



Robert Davis, *The Mall*, 2013, beer and cigarette ash on canvas, 48 x 48 inches

Robert Davis used beer and cigarette ash on his four-by-four canvas and produced *The Mall*, a wonderfully snide picture that you can’t, strictly speaking, call a painting or a collage. The same goes for Josh Smith’s gnawingly cryptic mixed-media panels.

Even those pieces that qualify as paintings bring something new to the canvas – in Angel Otero’s case, oilskins, which affect a tactility comparable to that wrought by densely applied paint. While not all of the work itself is truly Casualist – Meghan Petras’s woolen piece, for instance, is unambiguously finished and refined – all of the pieces broadly share a quality of improvisation, reflecting the artist’s determination to do the most with whatever materials he or she may have at hand. It’s a quietly inspiring show.

“Corresponding Selves: Jane Fox Hipple,” Dodge Gallery, Rivington Street, LES, New York, NY. Through October 27, 2013.

“A Pinch of Saffron, Dash of Vermouth,” curated by Ted Gahl. Dodge Gallery, Rivington Street, LES, New York, NY. Through October 27, 2013. Artists include Jonathan Allmaier, Ned Colclough, Robert Davis, Joanne Greenbaum, Angel Otero, Meghan Petras, Josh Smith, Johannes VanDerBeek,