

VAS VISUAL ART eNEWSLETTER

April 20, 2024

PRESENTED BY VISUAL ART SOURCE, THE DEMOCRACY CHAIN and FABRIK

Paco Pomet, "Last Adventures in High Res"

by Jody Zellen

Richard Heller Gallery, Santa Monica, California

Continuing through May 4, 2024



Paco Pomet, "The Audition," 2024, oil on canvas, 51 1/4 x 59".

A sense of unease and disquiet envelops Paco Pomet's binary paintings. His mostly monochromatic works (in tones of sepia, blue and gray) have a timeless quality and appear to be sourced in appropriated photographs from another era. These muted and carefully painted scenes are juxtaposed with jarring full-color cartoon characters or gestures that disrupt the tenor of the images while moving them from the believable and real to the invented, an unsettling humor pervading his debased presentations of human beings who are "off" in uncanny ways.

In "The Audition," a suited man sits at a piano with his arms poised above the keys. But instead of hands, Pomet paints a twisting coil of fat orange "spaghetti" that extends from his wrists and globes all over the keys and up onto the piano like paint oozing out of a tube. Three elongated beads of white cartoony sweat outlined in black are flung some distance from the man's head against the sepia toned background.

Pomet draws from headline news and pop culture in a keenly critical way. The painting "Liberty Boy" juxtaposes an oversized rendition of the kitsch logo of Bob's Big Boy, painted in shades of blue, holding aloft the illuminated torch of the Statue of Liberty. In "The Pink Sea" parts of a bombed-out city are overpainted a bubblegum pink, all sticky and sweet.



Paco Pomet, "Embedding," 2024, oil on canvas, 51 1/4 x 59"

"Embedding" offers a similar sense of logic displaced. Set in what appears to be a 1950s or 1960s styled room, a woman pulls a Murphy bed down from the wall. Caught between the wall and the mattress is a Looney Toons depiction of a very surprised distraught man. There is a disconnect between the sketchy and impastoed brush strokes that define the woman and her surroundings in contrast to the more illustrative style of the entrapped man. The juxtaposition is hilarious and unsettling at the same time.



Paco Pomet, "Scenes from a Marriage," 2024, oil and marker on canvas, 28 3/4 x 23 5/8"



Paco Pomet, "La Caseta," 2024, oil and marker on canvas, 23 5/8 x 28 3/4"

Likewise, “Scenes from a Marriage” combines cartoon and realistic components. In this painting, a suited man fills an interior space. He lunges slightly forward as his oversized cartoon-rendered right hand leverages a fist that lands on the chin of the man’s flatly rendered cartoony face. A white star-like shape outlined in black anchors the composition. In the background Pommet includes an exasperated woman, who also has cartoon-lines surrounding her more carefully outlined figure.



Paco Pommet, “The Pink Sea,” 2024, oil on canvas, 51 1/4 x 59”

For movie aficionados, the works share an incongruous kinship with “Who Framed Roger Rabbit” (1988) — a film that merged noir and cartoon qualities. Pommet’s monochromatic palette also recalls Mark Tansey’s stylistic conceit, throwing artistic “seriousness” off base, clearly by intent, given the addition of humorous if jarring elements, be it alien light sources, cartoon characters, or emojis. These witty works delight in rendering the “real” as “surreal.” Pommet’s works render the ordinary strange with a light and ironic hand. In doing so the artist changes the way we regard everyday scenarios and social interactions.

Jody Zellen is a LA based writer and artist who creates interactive installations, mobile apps, net art, animations, drawings, paintings, photographs, public art, and artist’s books. Zellen received a BA from Wesleyan University (1983), a MFA from CalArts (1989) and a MPS from NYU’s Interactive Telecommunications Program (2009). She has exhibited nationally and internationally since 1989. For more information please visit www.jodyzellen.com.