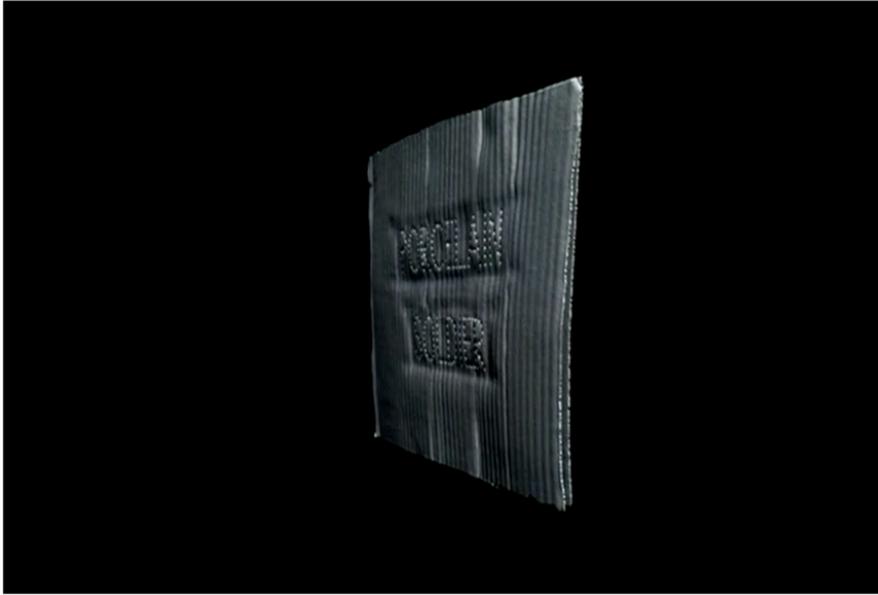


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Paul Sietsema at Matthew Marks Gallery
By Jody Zellen



Paul Sietsema, *Abstract Composition* (2014)

Paul Sietsema's works have an aesthetic and intellectual dimensionality and the path through his exhibition is an invitation to put together the pieces of a sophisticated puzzle that juxtaposes the digital and the handmade with a semi-nostalgic nod toward objects from bygone eras.

The exhibit spans two separate gallery buildings and includes the short films *Abstract Composition*, 2014 and *At the hour of tea*, 2013 in addition to numerous paintings and works on paper. Both films ask viewers to imagine artworks described but not depicted. In the black and white, *Abstract Composition* a computer-rendered corrugated sign slowly rotates in a blank space. Sietsema has indented words and short phrases describing objects culled from online auction catalogues (such as Porcelain Soldier or Rosewood Game Table) into the surface and for each rotation they appear from the front as well as the back. In *At the hour of tea*, Sietsema's camera pans across tableaus of objects honing in on the color, texture and details before cutting to an envelope and then a blank piece of old fashioned writing paper onto which fragmented descriptions of a painting that is not shown in the film, appear. His inclusion of reversed text and appropriated descriptive language suggests that reading is different from looking and imagining.



Paul Sietsema, *At the hour of tea* (2013)

Complementing the films are meticulously rendered monochromatic paintings of a dial telephone (in white) and a spill of green paint as well as enlarged hand crafted replicas of *New York Times* pages. In *Vertical newspaper (thin green line)*, *Figure ground study (50/50)*, and *Painted coins (Ukrainian avant-garde)* (all 2016) Sietsema has depicted the newspaper pages as flat grounds dotted with strategically placed coins and a paint can and stirrer with Trompe l'oeil precision. Though much of these carefully chosen pages are smeared and obscured, Sietsema leaves some visible content. By choosing to juxtapose pages with advertisements about art and money with actual coins, Sietsema overtly alludes to commerce while acknowledging his complicity in this exchange. Sietsema uses tropes from art history and media culture to explore both the making of art and the marking of time in works that resonate on multiple levels.

Paul Sietsema, September 24 – December 23, 2016 at Matthew Marks Gallery, 1062 North Orange Grove and 7818 Santa Monica Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA, www.matthewmarks.com