

OK Tablet Computer

Michael Groth | February 21, 2014



Austin Lee at Postmasters Gallery (all photographs by the author for Hyperallergic)

Austin Lee's OK at Postmasters Gallery consists of eccentric, archetypal figures represented in both painting and sculpture.

In the large-scale "Excremental," a painted male figure sits on a toilet reading a book. His facial expression indicates the viewer has inadvertently interrupted a solitary moment. The strokes are hurried and frantic, the colors fluorescent and discrete, further evoking the fleeting memory and lingering awkwardness of the moment. The superficial playfulness of the forms and the subject matter elicit a disconcerting feeling in the viewer, as in, "*this has happened to me ...*"

“Displaced” and “Mortido,” two of the sculptural works on display, are haphazardly placed, the first barely hanging from an old brick fireplace and the latter leaned against one of two columns in the gallery. The wavy shading on these flat canvas forms further flattens the figures. They appear to wobble and flutter in their two dimensions, as if caught in a state of despair under the weight of higher dimensional space.

This is, overall, a confident show from a promising young artist. (Lee completed his MFA last year; this is his first solo exhibition since.) Postmasters’ Kerry Doran writes that Lee often begins his process by sketching with a tablet (an iPad), and this digital interface shows through in the finished works. The sfumato technique present in many of the works visually resembles a “Gaussian blur,” and the depth created by the stark contrast in sharpness and line weight, as seen in “Taboo,” also evokes digital tools. Yet the end-products are thoroughly analog art objects, and these digital techniques are instrumental, rather than essential, to their formal and emotive power.



Austin Lee, “Excremental” (2013)



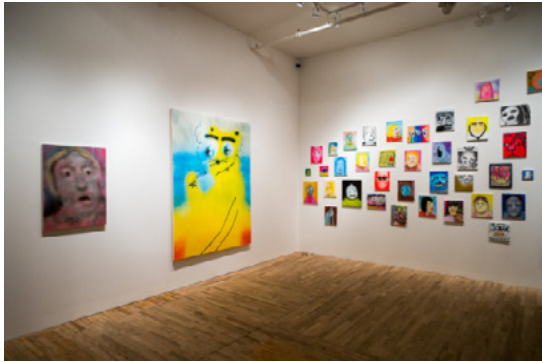
Austin Lee, “Displaced” (2013)



Austin Lee, "Drople" (2013)



Installation view, Austin Lee at Postmasters Gallery



Installation view, Austin Lee at Postmasters Gallery



Installation detail, Austin Lee at Postmasters Gallery



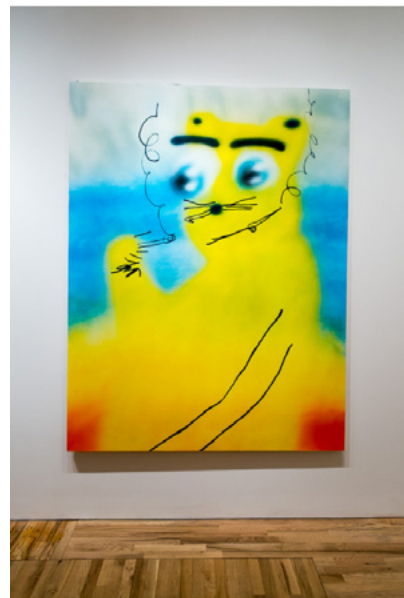
Installation view, Austin Lee at Postmasters Gallery



Austin Lee, "MD" (2013)



Installation detail, Austin Lee at Postmasters Gallery



Austin Lee, "Taboo" (2013)