

ARTFORUM

Mark Flood

ZACH FEUER GALLERY (LFL)

530 West 24th Street

May 22–July 10

Mark Flood's work is difficult to judge, largely because he mocks the entire context surrounding it. In this exhibition, for instance, pieces of cardboard are blithely spray-painted with phrases such as ANOTHER PAINTING, and the installation *WART SCENE USA*, 2009, offers a map of the United States that highlights New York, Los Angeles, and Marfa as AMERICA'S COOLEST WARTSCENES. The confrontationally adolescent yet cleverly self-aware humor displayed here characterizes Flood's work, which relies on abject comedy to interrogate the condition and evolution of the art world.

The more surprising part of Flood's exhibition is, somewhat ironically, his series of large-scale "lace" paintings, the latest installment of a project on which the artist has focused for close to a decade. Although undoubtedly decorative, they explore the parameters of painting and its process by using acrylic paint to vividly evoke the texture of found fabric. One work, *Duchess*, 2009, consists of a smudged rainbow of paint that simulates ripped lace. Flood's process provides a sense of both entropy and aesthetic appeal, the former of which is enhanced by the fatalistic titles of some works in the series, including *Shallow Grave*, 2009, and *Emotional Scar*, 2009. The artist's seemingly irreconcilable agendas—a lowest-common-denominator sense of humor and revisionist exploration of painting—are joined in the painting *Warm*, 2005, which depicts a distorted and faceless female body posed provocatively in a gesture that could as easily be intended to insult as to seduce. In contrast to Flood's overtly incendiary text-based work, this figure features the same evocation of delicately textured fabric that is found in his lace paintings, a combination that simultaneously disparages and expresses faith in the genre.



Mark Flood, *Warm*, 2005, acrylic on canvas, 90 x 72".

— Britany Salsbury