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ARTFORUM

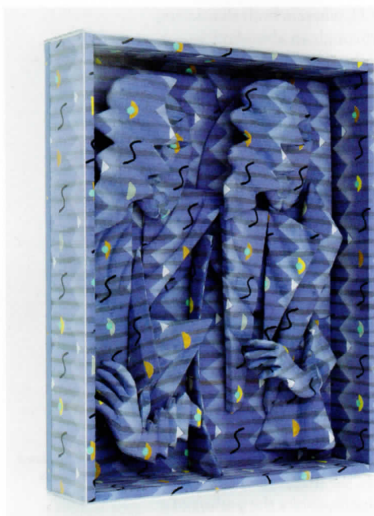
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“L’IM_MAGE_N”

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“L’IM_MAGE_N,” curated by artist Timothy Hull, was a strong grouping of six coolly sovereign works. The show’s title—“a play on the word *image*” (*limn*, *mage*, *imagine*, etc.)—parses the mutable alchemy of artmaking and its many registers, touching on, to paraphrase the curator’s words, artistic wizardry and “the sacredness of the object.” And why not? Life has been fraught with political chaos and crucial eclipses the past few years—let us look beyond the dark firmament and embrace mutation.

Mathew Cerletty’s painting, *Neocoon*, 2005, almost read as an anodyne portrait of a striking man. But up close the subject’s face, maquilled in stagy, ghoulish grays, asserts a cadaveric gloom. This image is an oil-and-modeling-paste-makeup tutorial *don’t*, with a



Anya Kielar, *Talk Talk*, 2019, paint, linen, foam, aqua-resin, wood, Plexiglas, 38 1/2 x 30 1/2 x 7 1/2." From "L’IM_MAGE_N."

pallid forehead crisscrossed by the woes of the world or some occult rune of vexation. *Neocoon*’s pasty changeling shared a wall with the effervescent confab of Chason Matthams’s *Study of Jean-Jacques Lequeu’s “Satyr Cock” with Various Spectrums* (Crockett Johnson’s “Homothetic Triangles,” Anton Stankowski inspiration, Rhys Coren’s “Lizzy’s Hard-boiled Babe,” and Derek Dunlop’s “Eternal Return” inspiration), 2017. Using oil and acrylic on canvas panels structured as three conjoined rectangles, Matthams deftly bends light between past and present as if doing so is merely a matter of storyboarding (and maybe it is). He’s not afraid to drop names to establish lineage, and includes references to the illustrator of *Harold and the Purple Crayon*, Crockett Johnson (who also made geomet-

ric abstractions), and the eighteenth-century architect-draftsman Jean-Jacques Lequeu, whose erotic renderings of buildings and genitalia went unappreciated in his time. Lequeu’s satyr cock is a mythical interloper—the flasher in a candy store—but lends softness to a color-obsessed coterie of imagemakers. Referentiality is chunky in Gina Beavers’s sculptural and fetishistic *Plein air palette*, 2018, a painting of painting that frames bright globs of acrylic, a palette knife, and a swoop of studied gray. On the one hand, it reads as the key on a map for a cartoony art tourist; on the other, it’s a loving tribute to a time-honored practice.

On a quiet note, the neutral marriage of chromatic grays (enlivened by orange lines and arrows) became a shadow play in Gregory Edwards’s oil *Pedestrian Painting 1*, 2018. A rectangle contains the familiar shadow of a street sign cast on a sidewalk—this image is overlaid on another of pavement mottled with tree shade. Looking down at flat rectangles within rectangles, one is reminded somewhat of staring at a picture on a phone while walking—the experience is pedestrian also in the sense of ordinary, but engenders reverence nonetheless. Edwards’s work summons lambent daylight like a mirage in the confines of this extremely well-lit and windowless gallery.

Graham Anderson feigned detachment and commanded attention with his oil-on-canvas *The Coming Tower*, 2016, a mysterious and seemingly coded relic of surveillance that takes a cue from periscopes and submarines. The umber silhouette of a sturdy male torso assumes a militaristic posture in profile, but ironclad masculinity this is not. The effect is dreamy and floaty, the work’s opacity softened by a stippled emanation that promises otherness. The dotted field flanks a gunmetal-gray rectangle that looks water stained, while a tilted blank page hovers at the center of it all. Rippling and zigzagging with an ’80s attitude was *Talk Talk*, 2019, an origamic object of pure pleasure by Anya Kielar. Whether or not the title refers to the band (RIP Mark Hollis), the work sings with the dancy graphics of the Reagan years and Pop-diluted Art Deco spinoffs. Two stylized figures are formed of painted linen fabric, foam, and aqua-resin; they are positioned like iconic dolls in a deep frame covered in Plexiglas. The work was materially a departure from the painting-centric works in the show, but its squish and dizzying levity were welcome.

—Charity Coleman

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