

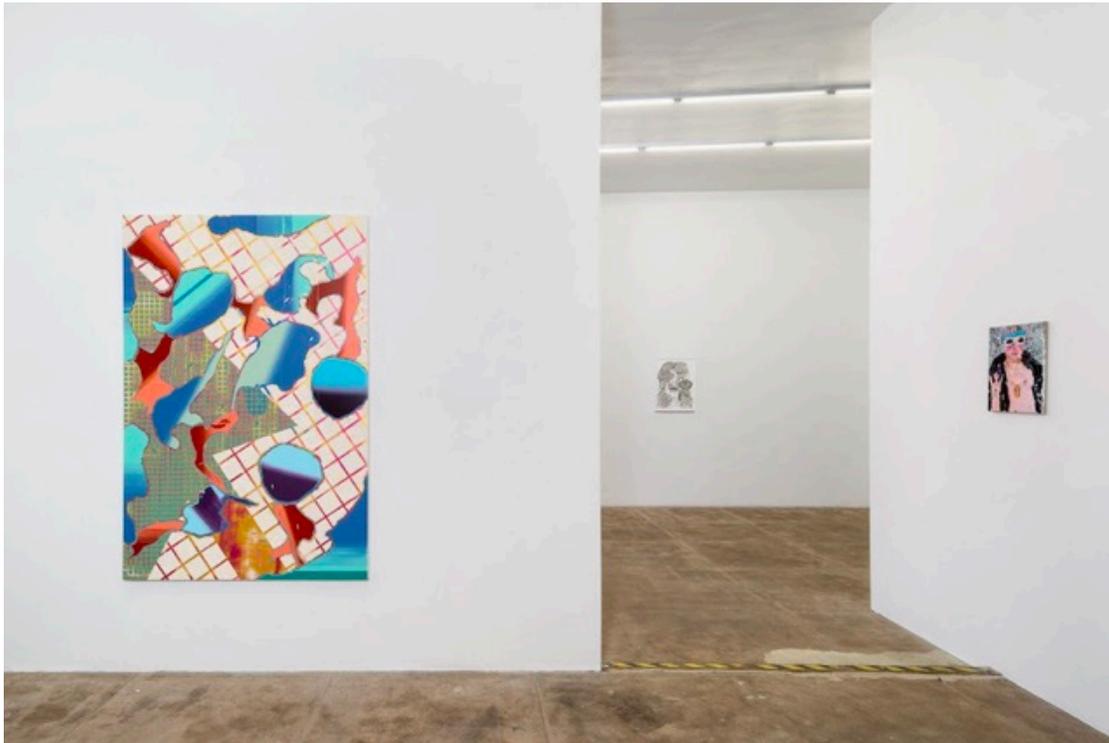
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Fake News at CES Gallery

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Text by Aaron Horst



Fake News (Installation View). Image courtesy of the artist and CES Gallery.

In the 21st-century media environment we might be tempted, or persuaded, to forget that real life still has tangible contours. Real life is often figured instead as that behind the mirage that we supposedly inhabit.

The artworks in *Fake News* at CES represent, as the press release would have it, the full flowering of art's historical slide from the attempt to "tell... the story as accurately as possible." Instead, the artists of today re-frame shifting, often vague impressions, or "distortions"—responses to media deluge, thereafter

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framed as the products of drenched minds. The handsomeness of many of the works shown suggests our reading needn't be so dire.

Ryan Travis Christian's hilarious *Poppin' Summer* (2017) pictures a cluster of cartoon chickens flocking towards a noseless pin-up, driven either by reverence or lust; Mark Posey's *Pink Saw* (2017) is primitive, lovingly rendered near-anthropomorphism. What one has to do with the other in the context of "fake news" is anyone's guess, aside from the fact of both being pleasurable to look at. In that regard, Adam Beris' *Peach* (2017) may be the show's lynchpin, if we are to divine intellectual heft from the breezy press release. Beris' gross little figures, calling to mind both icing and excrement, invoke our need to imbue objects with meaning—a stubborn, persistent animism in the human mind that seeks a knowable contour within even the most nebulous conditions.

Nebulousness is where *Fake News* leaves us, somewhere within the cleavage between truth and falsehood which the titular phrase willfully obscures. Speaking with a friend soon after the show—about real, sad events in our lives—left the distinct and palpable impression that real life is alive and well. "Fake news" after all, is mostly just drama, to which *Fake News* offers a thoughtful, mid-tempo antidote regardless of it's lapses in thematic coherence.

Fake News is on view May 5-28, 2017 at CES (711 Mateo Street, Los Angeles, CA 90021).



Hilary Pecis, *Sculpture Court*(2017). Acrylic on canvas, 40 x 30 inches. Image courtesy of the artist and CES Gallery.