

# M+B

## Artspace

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### 7 of the Most Absorbing Artworks at Art Los Angeles Contemporary

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By Andrew M. Goldstein

#### Matthew Brandt

M+B

\$8,000 - \$18,000

A breakout star who was featured in Forbes's "30 Under 30" list in 2011, Matthew Brandt has been conducting experiments with the photographic process at least since his 2010 "Lakes and Reservoirs" series, in which he developed photographs of water bodies by soaking the film in the same liquid captured in the image. (He later went on to develop other photos in some of the human body's less decorous fluids, and render images of the cosmos by strategically shaking out cocaine on black velvet.) Now his latest series takes his darkroom tinkering to a new technological realm: he's recreated images of crowds—concert-goers, armies on the march, etc.—by dropping clear resin on a plastic screen between two backlit LCD sheets of the kind that covers the screens of our computers and smartphones. Refracting light in the opalescent manner of polarized sunglasses, these piece shimmer and flash in unexpected ways as the viewer moves around them, only revealing the underlying image from certain angles. Previewed to select collectors with video and GIF promos in advance of the fair, the entire series of 11 works—including a few held back at the gallery—sold out after the opening day.



#### Peter Stichbury

Tracy Williams, LTD.

\$28,000 apiece

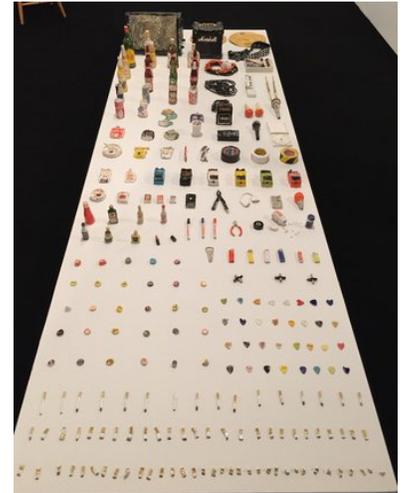
The New Zealand artist Peter Stichbury revels in the crossroads where portraiture meets the occult, and his portraits of women who have claimed to have had close encounters of the third kind possess an eerie, gripping power. Set down in flat oil in a manner that recalls early Lucian Freud, these paintings (of Barbara Robbins on the left and Mona Stafford, an abductee, on the right) are just off enough with their wide, askew almond eyes and catatonic affect to convince the viewer that a gulf of experience lies between them and the subjects. Previously shown in a solo show at the gallery in November, works from Stichbury's appealingly paranoid series are bound this year for a group show of alien-inspired paintings in Spain, where a talk will be delivered by the Bobby Fischer of Ufology, Jacques Vallée.

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**Rose Eken**  
**The Hole Gallery**

\$125 for the cigarette butts to a few thousand for the larger pieces

When the Copenhagen-based Danish artist Rose Eken had a one-off solo show at the Hole Gallery in November, she looked across the street to the former home of CBGBs (now a slick John Varvatos) for inspiration, creating glazed paper-clay ceramic artifacts that evoked the detritus of the legendary club after a particularly chaotic night. The sculptures in this excerpt from the original 550-piece show elegantly run the gamut with lovingly crafted versions of stamped-out cigarette butts, beer cans, liquor bottles, bottle caps, lighters, guitar pedals, power cords, Marshall amps, maracas, sunglasses, rolls of masking tape, magic markers, mixing boards, guitar picks, and bottles of Advil. Completely absorbing and increasingly hard to tear your eyes away from as you get pulled into a welter of minute, virtuosic details, the body of work was about half sold-out by the second day of the fair, and the gallery is hellbent on working with the artist more in the future.



**Michael Berryhill**  
**Kansas**

\$25,000

Ever since artists recently began rushing toward casual, wabi-sabi abstraction with the same alacrity that sped prospectors to the Yukon, one strain that has emerged has been a neo-Nabis style evoking the decorative interiors of Bonnard and Vuillard. Hailing from the West Texas town of El Paso and based in Brooklyn, the painter Michael Berryhill executes this aesthetic with special élan, creating enigmatic paintings that arise from drawings and allude to subjects (sometimes cowboys) without giving the game away. Often set on grids in a way that recalls the illusory 3-D pop of Laura Owens, the compositions crackle with an electric palette yet emit a subdued vibe.

**Nel Aerts**  
**Carl Freedman Gallery**

\$9,500

The Antwerp-based painter got his MFA from Ghent's Royal Academy of Fine Arts, and somewhere along the way he picked up a fun style that answers a pressing existential question: what would it look like if Philip Guston made a cartoon for Adult Swim? Totally weird, this painting presents an anxious confrontation between a Mr. Hankey-looking brown smear and a round-rumped mustachioed fellow. Make of it what you can, or will.



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**Zach Harris**  
**David Kordansky Gallery**

\$18,000 - \$32,000

David Kordansky is fêting Betty Woodman's fresh presence in his roster with a new show at his gallery, and the dealer decided to make his ALAC booth the launching pad for yet another new addition from a different generation: Zach Harris. A member of the fearsome Bard mafia, Harris is a pretty convincingly visionary artist who hand-carves wooden canvases into splendid abstract compositions which he paints in vibrant colors, often with a flat, ecstatic, landscape-esque passage at the center. He also carves his own ornate frames, and these puppies take a while to make.



**Ann Cathrin November Høibo**  
**Standard (Oslo)**

€8,000

With a name as long and memorable as the South Norwegian winter, Ann Cathrin November Høibo has dangled three industrial containers of wholesale ketchup, mustard, and "hamburger sauce" from the ceiling as a kind of found sculpture. Why? A gallery attendant declined to proffer a motive, citing the work's ineffability. (The artist has also made similar readymade sculptures of shoes, laundry sacks, and garbage bags.) Here, again, a winning formula that underlies the aesthetic gambit of much abstruse conceptual work reveals itself: weird = fun.