

Sebastian Black
Completed Paintings
29. 4. – 4. 6. 2016

For this exhibition Sebastian Black thought it would be good to have an idea, some kind of concept to accompany the illustrious serifs of the press release. Black tells me that during the preceding months he frequently awoke in the middle of the night, trying to catch the dreamy contours of an arrow that he hoped to lodge into this inevitable page. That he never caught it is probably just as well. If we accept that an idea is somehow fundamentally of the medium which gives it form, an idea for an exhibition is likely best articulated not in writing but in exhibiting. An idea for a painting exhibition then should probably be formed in an overlap of real and symbolic space, that is, be comprised of paintings and their relationship to the decidedly un-dreamy contours of a particular architectural reality.

In this case Black has faced all the paintings towards the gallery's storefront windows. Maybe such a hanging makes oblique reference to the sustained facing-toward-windowliness of the rhetorical category *Painting*. If so this would explain the thin black X shapes which Black has painted into the works, forms that seem to allude to single point perspective, InDesign bounding boxes, and any of the myriad graphic schema which organize opaque surfaces into illusionistic transparencies.

Behind and around these X's Black returns to his favorite motif, a puppy face geometrically pared to the point of near total abstraction. In these new works the artist has rotated this motif in progressive 90° increments without shifting their corresponding substrates. A pleasing distribution of wall space is balanced *against* the interior coherence of any individual painting's pictorial gestalt. Inevitably some clipping occurs.

Something is also decidedly up with the work's titles which Black has elongated into meandering quasi-instructional narratives. This is a conceit that allows us to refer to the titles, and to the gallery information stickers which bear them, as tales (a hamfisted homophonic pun with tails). As such, in the same way that the literal face of the canvas is made into its symbolic face through the application of paint, the painting's back side is made into a backside through the application of language, of its tale. That this administrative gesture might be construed as the works finishing touch does not seem to really bother the artist. Through it a new kind of painterly wholeness is realized.

Finally Black has decided to mount this press release on a motor behind clear acrylic and a mat board with a 6.5 x 8.5 inch passé-partout. It dances around back there mimicking a show it ought to be explaining. Black tells me that this will be the only physical copy available to viewers in the gallery. In doing so he renders my communiqué both essential *and* useless, equal parts paperwork and work on paper.

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