

Tyler Wood Gallery

Rosen, Ariel. *Review*. San Francisco Arts Quarterly. October, 2013.

<http://www.sfaqonline.com/2013/11/review-chason-mattham-solo-exhibition-at-tyler-wood-gallery-san-francisco/>

Chason Matthams presents a group of tiny paintings – photorealistic, surreal and abstracted – in his solo exhibition at Tyler Wood Gallery, San Francisco. Without a linear narrative to connect them, the works have to speak for themselves. Visitors are confronted with disconnected pictures in the narrow, sunlit space on canvas and panel. Using images from photographs he takes himself or finds online, Matthams paints lonely, disheveled urban places, slices of pie in plastic to-go containers and video equipment set in a void.

It's hard to make sense of this world, but I question if that's what the artist intended. He asks, "Does the...contextualizing of my work lead the audience and me somewhere? Or do I kid myself that I can possibly make sense of it while in the experience?" Questioning whether the stories told through his art will lead to new possibilities or just learned truths, he creates an uncomfortable position for himself.

Exploring process, choice and storytelling, he uses the shorthand language of the internet and visual cues from digital photo editing. In "Disrupted Playback," Photoshop drag and drop mishaps share space with television static and an empty frame in which the subject has been removed. "You Must Never Tell" shows a pair of left- and right-eye images next to the stereoscope that transforms them into a three-dimensional scene.

"Model txtng w/ cropped background of Edmund Tarbell's 'Preparing for the Matinee'" is a work divided in two and edged by a thin, white line. One half shows a woman in profile, eyes focused on something hidden from the viewer; the other shows Tarbell's young subject adjusting her hat before going out. Tied to the bastardization of language in the age of Twitter and SMS, the title of the painting

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speaks to a life mediated by internet culture and visuals. Both women are shown in an abbreviated way, removed from their surroundings. Using a cropped composition and grid overlay in this disjointed pairing, Matthams references the experience of opening multiple windows on a computer screen.