

# Painting

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## PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Detail of *Poppy* by Jon Campbell

June 3 – July 29, 2016

Opening: June 2, 2016 from 6 to 8pm

**On Painting** is an invitational group exhibition featuring multi-generational contemporary artists exploring the human figure, female equality, anxiety, mythologies, fear, absence, and landscape through painting. This will be the first time that many of these painters have exhibited in Chelsea.

*This project addresses an emerging trend in painting that is conceptually based and materially lush. Partially as a reaction against "Zombie Formalism," these six established and emerging artists utilize their voices and life experiences to create a resurgence in figurative and landscape painting.*

— Katrina Neumann, Curator

**Eve Ackroyd** (b. 1984, United Kingdom)

Buried heads and dismembered bodies mingle with anonymous seance-like female marches in the works by Eve Ackroyd. Her source materials range from newspaper articles of current events to 1970s/80s horror films and surrealist drama cinema. According to Ackroyd, "the films of Chick Strand and Chantal Ackerman are a great inspiration to me, because of their unnerving and remarkable way of exploring desire and the female body within domestic and psychological landscapes." Ackroyd cultivates a sense of mysticism and ghostlike whispers in her compositions, which leaves the viewer with an ambivalent sense of something they cannot describe.

**Jon Campbell** (b. 1982, Kingston, New York)

The paintings by Jon Campbell are like subliminal poems or stream-of-conscious diary entries. To look at the works by Campbell allows the viewer's mind to unravel with looming dark narratives and thousands of questions. Wherever that may lead his audience, his imagery remains powerfully captivating and humorously deep in thought. Abstraction shapeshifts into figuration and figures morph back into abstraction. Ambiguity is a big theme in his works. Campbell is interested in his figures becoming paired down symbols to allow ambiguity to infiltrate and anonymity to sustain the curiosity of his viewers.



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*Buried Head* by Eve Ackroyd



Detail of *I Take Care of Myself, Piece by Piece* by Heidi Hahn

## Heidi Hahn (b. 1982, Los Angeles, California)

Heidi Hahn traps her audience in a seducing Tango with the use of lush paint and a saturated palette. Once trapped, Hahn twists her stories through the psychology of color from something happy to what is actually sad, isolated, and banal. A huge focus of Hahn's is the portrayal of women and engaging with the female gaze. Hahn's influences come from contemporary pop culture sources like *The Real Housewives'* vapid portrayal of women to personal stories about her mother during the height of female equality protests. Hahn paints faces and figures that are simple symbols, which give enough hints to the viewer to understand easy notions of gender and emotions. It is important for Hahn to paint her female figures clothed and still spark a dialogue around feminism and human equality. With all their nuance, Hahn consciously inserts marks or moments that remind the viewer that these are just paintings — nothing more or less.

## Janice Nowinski (b. New York, New York)

In the search for femininity, Janice Nowinski found raw and human characteristics that defined prettiness in her works. Nowinski was overshadowed by well-known figure painters, John Currin and Lisa Yuskavage, while she attended Yale University; they were one year ahead of her in school. For Nowinski, they profited from this mocking depiction of the female figure. In turn, Nowinski sees the figure differently. Not as a highly defined realistic form, but as something on the borderline of finished and unfinished. She reminds herself that it can be a figure if the hands and face aren't fully rendered. If asked what she hopes people receive from her paintings, she responds, "I hope they see humanity." Her studio is scattered with snapshots that she uses as her source material. These snapshots range from images of a long-gone ex-boyfriend to reclining odalisque women or photographs that were once used by other artists like Manet. Often, Nowinski's figures stand alone, waiting for someone — or, missing someone — who was once in the picture. Now, only their ghost remains as an unspoken presence and absence.



*Bound Figure* by Janice Nowinski



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Detail of Pandora's Box by Kyle Staver



Untitled by Stefan Pehl

## **Stefan Pehl** (b. 1982, Eutin, Germany)

It's easy for many to pass off the works of Stefan Pehl's as mere abstraction. However, it would be dismissive to say that he is only working with a formal conversation in art and art history through his painting. Pehl's works demand your time to sit, think, and engage with them to eventually see what he sees in this world. New locations and long periods of time spent in nature inform Pehl's paintings. He says his images are the effect you get when being in nature for that amount of time. For him, several months a year he dedicates to road trips and camping in America's National Parks like the Smokey Mountains or Bar Harbor to countless years spent on the islands of Greece. His works transport you to a place of anti-gravity and a blurred vision on what is and isn't real.

## **Kyle Staver** (b. Virginia, Minnesota)

"In the last few years, I have been working with subject matter that has been used by painters throughout time. Myths and large stories conceived to explain aspects of life that are rooted in the inexplicable; unfair death, abduction, cruel and random mayhem – no fault, no reprieve, and no warning," explains Kyle Staver about her recent body of paintings. Staver's myths are large dramas contained in smaller canvas universes mixed with subtle nuances in figurative gestures. At the height of the drama – not the calm before or after – but, at the height of drama is where Staver's audience lands. It is the drama in the glance between two lovers (post-coital) with a subtle touch on the thigh or the last gasp of air before Daphne becomes a tree. Moments full of tension and no release. It's undeniable the narrative captivation and childlike wonder that Staver produces for her audience in these large-scale paintings.