

Wallscrawler

This is The Cake

Sunday, December 11, 2016



Sarah Faux, Swells, 2016, Oil on Canvas

Exhibition Review

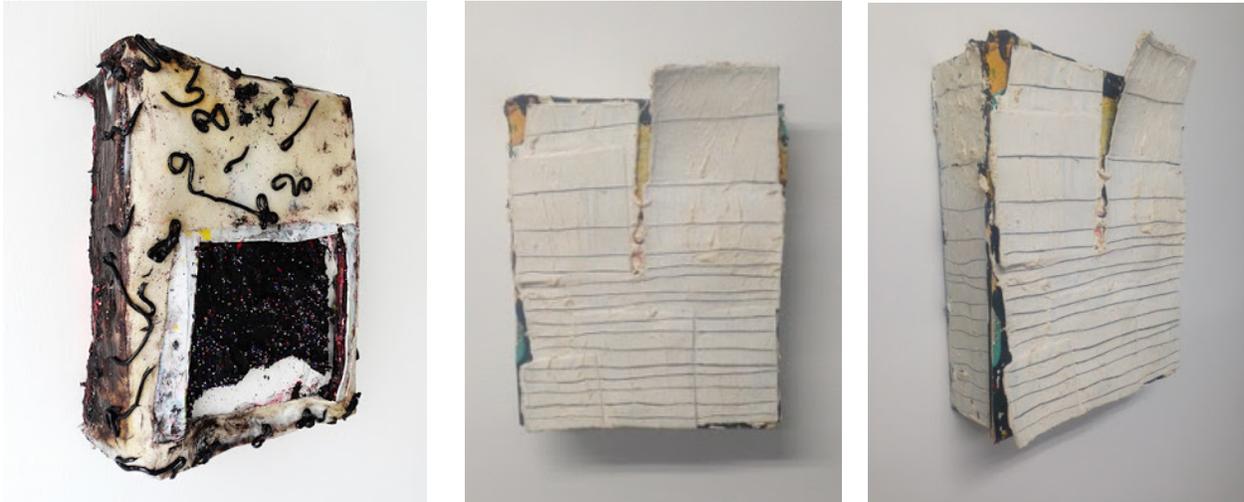
Mandy Lyn Ford and Sarah Faux, "Touching in the Dark"
yours mine and ours Gallery
54 Eldridge Street (Lower East Side, NYC)
October 21 – December 11, 2016

Mandy Lyn Ford and Sarah Faux have a sharp, raucous show together. Their work is smartly hung and impressive in its carnality, with strong optical and thematic elements to match. The sensory logic of both artists' work is as compelling as any you are likely to see.

Sarah Faux's painting falls comfortably into the sensualist lineage of Tracey Emin, Cecily Brown and Rita Ackermann, but her work isn't as lofty or removed. Swells features a pair sexually engaged, one participant's point of view replaceable with our own. Both hover in space and are pressed forward in the picture, engaged in awkward self-display. Their strange, imperfect, impeccably painted bodies offer an immediately accessible version of paint as naked flesh and process as hedonistic event. The pair's greedy hands are lined in electric colors; one seeks and invites while another (the other's) works at

arousal. The piece comes on with a rich mixture of tightly packed forms and heaped-on paint, suggesting open and familiar intimacy. A fullness and specificity accords with the work's simplicity, making it feel like an actual memory, a "this looks like someone I know" report that surprises by being both pointed and personal.

Ford's work is, like Faux's, exceptional in its density. While less overtly erotic, Ford's pieces have sensual



(left) Mandy Lyn Ford, 666, 2016, oil paint, acrylic, sparkles, and canvas on wood panel (center and right) Mandy Lyn Ford, New Wave, 2014, Oil paint, acrylic, sparkle foam and canvas on wood panel

appeal like a fantastic dessert. The work's conceptual vehicle is a loose but deliberate placement of screens in screens, and paintings on paintings. Ford unleashes the power of these self-referential meta-devices without letting it overwhelm her difficult improvisations in tactile variety: quick, easily circulable images get met with the indisputable immediacy of anthropomorphic embodiment. The work is chaotic and sometimes garish, but it speaks clearly, foregrounding the peculiar dynamics of its material world.

In *New Wave*, panel, paint, canvas, foam and pen come together in an amorphous object that is as likely sculpture as it is painting. Its jagged edges are paired with regular, horizontal lines etched into its face, referencing its pulpy substrate and also accentuating the full form and subtle turns of its torn, rolling surface(s). There is a strange muscularity in its minutiae and you find yourself exploring corners and crevices with deep, impressed focus – an experience that attests to the artist's uncommon attention, risk, and hard-won reward. Ford sees to the whole and manages the tiniest bits equally.

Works like these are supported by a history of art that invites materials to perform in certain ways. Both Faux and Ford accept these rich histories, but their works move beyond easy citation. They make leaps from reflection to revelation with persistent insistence and undeniable freshness. The exhibition has gravity, and is as intelligent as it is audacious.

—Michael Woody