

# rachel uffner

ARTslant **New York**

## Sensational

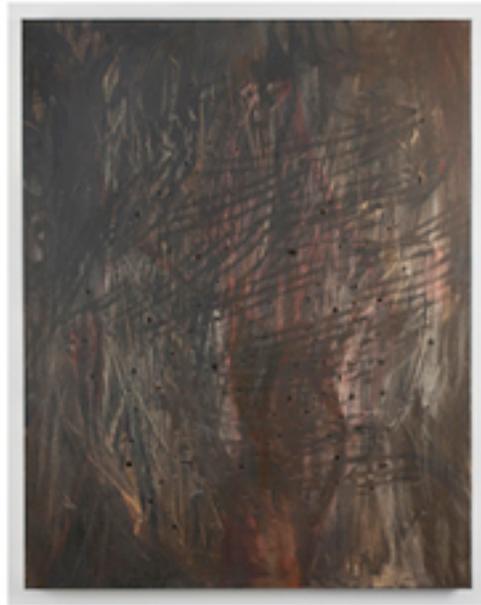
by Emily Nathan

### I Live My Thoughts

#### Anonymous Americans, BIANCA BECK, Josh Brand

Laurel Gitten (Small A Projects)  
261 Broome Street, New York, NY 10002  
September 12, 2010 - October 17, 2010

*I Live My Thoughts*, an exhibition currently on view at Small A Projects, is, as the title might suggest, a study in synesthesia. The included artists—Bianca Beck and Joshua Brand, as well as a number of “anonymous artists”—have contributed works that feel cozy, human, holistic, and that suggest the inexorability of form and content, of positive and negative space, of subject and context. Described in the Press Release as “recording devices,” these paintings, photographs and “memory jugs” do indeed feel like archival material, though what they seem to document is not an isolated event or idea but rather a negotiation of everything at once. They declare that the object and the subject, the product and the artist, the index and the sign, are mutually affective, reciprocally inflecting forces, that one cannot exist unshaped by the other.



Such a grand, theoretical concept can be understood on a more digestible scale—we as human beings do not exist in a vacuum and are products at every moment of a number of intersecting forces, for example—and the distinctly *visceral* tone of this exhibition encourages such a paring down of message. Beck’s paintings suggest with a bristly scumble or a smudge or a stroke of ochre, or sienna, or fleshy pink, the undulating derma of a limb or the glossy sea of a lip; her pigment creases, folds and stretches in conversation with the canvas in the manner of skin on bone, sinew, hair. It is impossible to recognize in her work a specific object or a particular body part, and this is the point. These paintings are reminiscent of the after-effect of synesthesia: they provoke the sensation of feeling what you see and hearing what you taste, a conflation of atmosphere, interior, smell, desire, thought.

What we as viewers witness in her work is not a representation of something, but, rather, the capturing of a moment and all that it consists of: light, space, time, feeling, color—senses converge, categories dissolve, distinctions melt into an *impression* which is, though less organized, somehow more accurate, more human. An *impression*, which negotiates every element involved in the recording of an experience without attempting to define each, is perhaps the most honest way to express what it is like to exist.

This three-dimensionality of experience is personified by the endearingly, irresistibly human “memory jugs” which constitute one-third of the exhibition. Sitting atop their pedestals like round little bodies, they reference a vernacular American tradition generally associated with the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century rural South. The jugs, crafted by affixing sentimental objects to an earthen vessel, historically served as nostalgic reminders of mortality, commemorating the deceased or a time gone-by. They stand-in for experiences, offer a collage of moments which are symbolized and conjured by a variety of sensory associations.

Joshua Brand’s photographs are created by way of a veritable pastiche of photographic processes, as light is projected through a variety of materials, including through photographic negatives; they are at once self-referential and refer to everything outside of themselves—a quality of the light in the room when they were taken, a settling of dust on the camera lens, a shifting of the negative on the paper or on the object, a subtle jerk in Brand’s steadying hand. The elemental constituents of a moment cannot be separated; they are present *all together* in our experience, as well as in our documentation and our recollection of it. Brand’s photographs demonstrate this physically, and represent the simultaneity of sensory experience by picturing it. They are, in fact, collisions between a photograph—an index of light as it exists in the space surrounding the pictured object —and a photogram, which is an index of the precise opposite—that is, an index of the object-space itself. They are thus the products of an interaction between positive *and* negative space, and everything in between; they document all elements of reality and representation: time, space, object, subject, color, sound, ad infinitum, reflected and refracted upon and amidst themselves, projected like light through the lens of each moment in their making.

Image: Bianca Beck, *Untitled*, 2010, oil on canvas, 40 x 31 inches

Rachel Uffner Gallery  
170 Suffolk Street  
New York, NY 10002

+1 212 274 0064  
info@racheluffnergallery.com  
racheluffnergallery.com