

# rachel uffner

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## *Proper Nouns*

Lucas Blalock, Leonhard Hurzlmeier, Jamie Isenstein, Zachary Leener, and Paul McCarthy

Curated by Wyatt Kahn

January 11 – February 22, 2015

Opening Reception: Sunday, January 11, 6 – 8 pm

Rachel Uffner Gallery is pleased to present *Proper Nouns*, a group exhibition curated by the artist Wyatt Kahn. Through the work of five artists, the show explores the tension between figuration and abstraction, delicately balanced through the use of different mediums and often humorous expression of personal sensibilities. The exhibition revolves around a set of nouns that constitute the central imagery of each artist's work. Hot dogs, lamps, knobs, cranks, women, and the painter's persona all inhabit the gallery, and through decontextualization and embodiment, emerge as figurative terms hovering on abstraction, not unlike proper nouns.

Lucas Blalock's photographs investigate stand-ins, or surrogates, with hot dogs acting as lines, brushstrokes, body parts, and still life objects. The corporeal quality of food develops an uncanny relationship to the flatness of the printed object, facilitating a comic scenario that the images exploit through humor and abjection.

Leonhard Hurzlmeier's most recent series of paintings depicts women engaged in various activities of daily life. Imagining these quotidian moments, which range from flossing, to practicing yoga, to putting on a pair of boots, Hurzlmeier's paintings seek to draw insight from the everyday. His figures always hinge on abstraction, while his use of color, composition, and deadpan humor balance the discomfort that comes from the voyeurism inherent in his gaze.

Jamie Isenstein's work merges performance and sculpture, bridging figure and material through slapstick humor. The new works exhibited in *Proper Nouns* shift away from the artist's use of her own body as an object, yet maintain a familiar relationship between the subject and matter. Isenstein makes use of light and the surrounding environment to activate the everyday objects in her forms.

Zachary Leener's ceramic sculptures, drawn from observation, duplicate, castrate, and merge phalluses, limbs, and orifices with knobs and handles to create abstract table-top works. His enigmatic and often inscrutable objects bring to mind the comics of artists like R. Crumb, with an attention to detail for color and surface that balances the gentle humor of his abstraction.

Paul McCarthy's seminal video, *Painter* (1995), is a clownish parody of the Abstract Expressionist artist Willem de Kooning, using eschatological and visceral performance to demount the myth of a heroic male artist by satirizing the painter's grandstanding studio persona and his notorious interactions with collectors and dealers.

Wyatt Kahn lives and works in New York. His paintings, prints, drawings, and collages have been exhibited at LAXART, Los Angeles; Galerie Eva Presenhuber, Zurich; T293, Rome, among others. His work is included in the collections of the Whitney Museum of American Art; the Centre Pompidou, Paris; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; the Dallas Museum of Art; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; the CCS Bard Hessel Museum; and the Albright-Knox Art Gallery. In 2015, Kahn will present solo exhibitions at the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis; a joint exhibition at Tanya Leighton, Berlin and Adrian Rosenfeld, Los Angeles; and a solo project at the Performa Biennial.

Image: Zachary Leener, 2014, glazed ceramic, 13 x 13 1/2 x 13 1/2 inches (33 x 34.3 x 34.3 cm)  
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