



KING'S LEAP

368 Broadway #506 & 302
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Joe W. Speier

You Likey?

March 26 – May 2, 2021

You Likey is Joe W. Speier's first exhibition at King's Leap. In eight new works, Speier extends his painting vocabulary, which has up to this point featured store-bought craft materials such as Bic ballpoint pen, acrylic medium, glitter, metal beads, and wax. Across these works, Speier has appropriated images of drawings sourced from various websites by unknown non-artists. These vulnerable and crude drawings are blown up to canvas-sized proportions, wherein Speier re-inscribes the image pixel-by-pixel. When the image is complete, Speier secures it with a resinous material releasing the image's pixelation, ghosting and blurring Speier's meticulous pen-lines. On top, Speier employs his self described "canned expressionism," itself a performative gesture of the artist caught between authenticity, sarcasm, guilt, and compliance.

An excerpt from Ellis von Sternberg's exhibition essay, available at the gallery:

" [...] how Speier happens upon the digital images is, ironically, with an indifference to why and how the images themselves were made. And other than their similarities in unskilled mark-making and a seemingly morbid anxiety, the websites pass before Speier's eye as little else than a bemusing and cringey tableau. Distance gives way to indifference; so in an attempt to bridge that divide Speier simulates and intensifies the initial labor through his own process of enlarging, projecting, and transcribing the "original" image onto his canvases. But with every inch pressed closer to the canvas, through this system Speier can only experience the original labor in an outward appearance. The truth of the image escapes him. Painting itself asymmetrically determines the content it represents in paint, and that determination excuses the inconvenient remainders. He remains alienated. How can Speier, as the painter himself, hope to understand his source material beyond their predetermined incorporation into his own system of image appropriation; a system that is itself just a cog in a larger machinery called art history?"

Joe W. Speier (b. 1992, Cincinnati, Ohio) is a Brooklyn-based artist. Recent exhibitions include a solo presentation at Springsteen Gallery (Baltimore, MD), a two-person with Zoe Barcza at Galerie Schmid (Chicago, IL), a solo at Gern en Regalia, (New York, NY), and a two-person with Michelle Uckotter, curated by Macgregor Harp at Chin-Up Bar (Baltimore, MD). Speier directs the roving fence-based curatorial platform Sinkhole Project, which he has presented at Pik Deutz (Cologne, Germany), and Interstate Projects (New York, NY).