



## Mark Van Yetter and Matt Hoyt

### DISPATCH

Dispatch, a small Chinatown gallery established in 2007 by regular collaborators Howie Chen and Gabrielle Giattino, presents itself with formidable seriousness: “Dispatch offers a model for curatorial production: an office for receiving and originating exhibitions, projects, and concepts treated as time-sensitive transmissions. The activities of Dispatch reflect the independent ability to mobilize with tactical urgency, editorial decisiveness, and critical rigor.” That Dispatch’s most recent “time-sensitive transmission” was one of the quietest little exhibitions imaginable, intriguing and alienating in pretty much equal measure, makes the self-conscious institutional rhetoric—tongue-in-cheek or not—seem all the more unnecessary. Artists Mark Van Yetter and Matt Hoyt seem to appreciate that showing a few modest works, made by well-established means, is a complex enough undertaking on its own.

Yetter and Hoyt are both graduates of the School of Visual Arts, and also share an aesthetic modesty that Dispatch’s press release is at pains to contextualize as consciously oppositional to contemporaneous high-production-value art. The impression the show gives is, however, less one of critical responsiveness than of something close to timelessness, a retreat into semiprivate

obsession rather than an overt refusal of a prevailing trend. In any case, we have recently seen the emergence of an opposing tendency: See the New Museum of Contemporary Art's recent "Unmonumental" and the current Whitney Biennial's concentration on "lessness" for starters.) On the evidence of this outing, teasingly dubbed "Escalator to Common Art," Yetter's practice is a rather scattershot affair, while Hoyt's revolves around an almost Zen-like introspective focus. What seems to bind the two artists together is an attraction to the anachronistic and opaque, an interest in making objects and images that pull away from the here and now.

In this exhibition, the Pennsylvania- and Istanbul-based Yetter showed three paintings and three mixed-media works in which various influences, from dada to German Expressionism, are discernable but muddled, and any kind of consistency continually gives way to a discomfiting restlessness. No two works share the same format, media, or subject. *Bourgeois*, 2008, an oil painting on wood, depicts a sketchy pastoral scene populated by two languid figures. Yetter allows the grain of the wood-panel support to suggest surreal embellishments, one surface swirl becoming the incongruous form of a leaping dolphin. *Portrait of Jonas Lipps as Young Man*, 2001, is a scrappy head-and-shoulders study of the young German artist in a medium—watercolor on paper—often used by the subject in his own work. *Untitled*, 2008, a collage of fragmented classical figures sandwiched between a wall and an oversize sheet of glass, seems to represent yet another disorienting change of pace.

If Yetter's work tends toward obscurity, Hoyt's is a little easier to parse (though his admission that "the pieces are never the execution of a technique nor the expression of any clear and logical idea or concept" seems less than encouraging). Apparently, the New York-based artist's *Untitled*, 1998–2008—a pair of grubby painted wooden shelves bearing an unprepossessing selection of mostly tiny sculptures—represents ten years of work. But what might seem at first like a glacial work rate comes to seem at least partially explicable as one learns more about the artist's process of thinking and making. Though the bits and pieces on display are mostly abstract (what appears to be a rat's head on the end of a length of wire is one notable exception), and insubstantial (a shell-like wood carving on the upper shelf is the only component that might conceivably hurt one's toe were it to fall on it), many are also variations on formal themes—several look like bones, for example; others resemble machine parts—or perfected versions of some privately imagined ideal form. Apparent manifestations of a childlike fetishism, Hoyt's sculptures resonate precisely because they seem at first so inconsequential, their individual significance seeming to hover just out of reach.

—Michael Wilson