

JOHANNES VOGT

Marc Horowitz

Nothing on the Other Side of the Slash

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Having exhausted himself, the artist becomes a painter. He looks to the world around him, approaches others, scans their bodies, their clothing, their faces, waists, torsos, and hands. He decides there is something about the clothes that concerns him.

He paints figures. His brushstrokes glob on the canvas; they slack and harden; sometimes they break like a wave, leave behind a crest or fold. The figures reside at the center of their frames, suggest portraiture. He paints them wearing clothes, dresses them, assembles jackets, parkas, sweaters, coats. It's almost like he's keeping them warm.

The paintings, he decides, are surrogates, attempts to hold the world in place. Doesn't he have a role to fulfill? He notices few of the figures have legs, none have feet. They don't quite stand up (it's not yet a comedy), perhaps because they are incapable. But they are likewise unable to topple over, fall. Since they have been isolated, sequestered, immobilized, they have nowhere else to go. Whereas life occurs in stages (and he would like a stage, he thinks), these surrogates, figures that mimic the human organism, possess one stalled duration: eternity. Perhaps the blue relief found in three of the paintings—not a triptych, their connection only delineated in common visual cues—alludes to an environment where such figures could rise up and vacate their painting. But they can't, they don't have legs, they're nothing without their support. Without a foundation on which to stand, it shouldn't matter. Because behind them, there is nothing. They possess an abyss into which they are free to lapse.

At least it feels that way.

When I saw his desk, it was covered in crayons. The portraits stood on toy blocks. He has always been considered a comedian, a clown, a fool, a jester, a prankster, a joker, a buffoon, a funnyman—but now the joke is on him. Things are getting serious.

The figures had no means to look at themselves. But, in being blind, with time pooling and accumulating around them, they were able to experience everything.

Such was their impromptu response.

Perhaps it was necessary for their protection. Or, like a veil or mask that materializes a defense present in the psyche, the figures were his protection.

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And from whom other than himself.

—text by Evan Kleekamp

Marc Horowitz (b. 1976) is a Los Angeles-based artist working in painting, performance, video, photography, and social practice. The artist turns American culture on its head to explore the idiosyncrasies of entertainment, class, commerce, failure, success, and personal meaning. Horowitz has had solo exhibitions at China Art Objects in Los Angeles, The Depart Foundation in Los Angeles, Ever Gold [Projects] in San Francisco, Johannes Vogt in New York, The Hayward Gallery in London, BANK Gallery in Shanghai (with Petra Cortright), and New Langton Arts in San Francisco. He received a project grant from Creative Time for their first onlinebased project. His work has been featured extensively on local and national television including ABC News, NPR Weekend Edition, CBS Inside Edition CBS, CNN American Morning, and on NBC's The Today Show. Horowitz holds an MFA from the USC, and bachelor's degrees in both Art and Marketing from SFAI, and Indiana University Kelley School of Business respectively. He has lectured at The Hammer Museum in Los Angeles, California Institute of the Arts, Stanford University, and Yale University, has taught at the University of Southern California, UC Santa Barbara, and developed a course in Post-Internet Art at Otis College with his partner, Petra Cortright.

Johannes Vogt Gallery is committed to bringing attention to the complex artistic and cultural ties that bind New York to Europe, the Americas, and beyond. The gallery program features a strong roster of emerging to mid-career artists and has become known for reintroducing established artists to new audiences, including Garth Evans, Mernet Larsen, and Abby Leigh, among others. Founded in 2011, Johannes Vogt first opened at 526 West 26th Street in New York City's Chelsea neighborhood, where it resided before relocating to 55 Chrystie Street in the Lower East Side. In September 2018, the gallery relocated to the Upper East Side at 958 Madison Avenue.