



Sebastian Black
Self-Portrait as a Good Boy
C L E A R I N G Brooklyn
September 13 - November 4, 2018

At the end of the day an artist statement is a request. What looks at first like an authoritative assertion is more like a Christmas wishlist, a hopeful missive, leveraging good behavior against an ambiguous and unknown will. Now that exhibitions have mostly displaced artworks as the basic lexical units of aesthetic language, most artistic good behavior involves the studious accumulation of interests. “I’m interested in this. I’m interested in that,” we chant, seeking to divine and predetermine the opinions of the ghostly spectators who haunt our cluttered studios. If it’s really the case that these specters’ authority in fact derives from their cultivated surfeit of disinterest, well, that’s a paradox whose resolution should be left to antacids. Then again, if Beauty – the criterion most associated with the polarization of interest and disinterest into the avatars artist and spectator – has been inverted so many times it’s become irrelevant, then why are you ghosts hanging around right now? What pleasure do you get from twisting my stomach into knots?

Tums pending, I’ll warn you I’m not interested in anything. Oh spirits, there is no concept machine which outputs these paintings. I ask you to see them simply, as the residue of a summer’s worth of practice. I’d like to think that we can take for granted the overlap between thinking and doing and that we don’t need to separate concepts from the material forms of their instantiation. Like the machines they analogize, these paintings are composed of parts, defined by their specific combinations of thinking-doings, and thought-things. For example some thinking I’ve been doing a lot of lately is circles, also lines-down-the-middle, lots of cadmium orange (though lately I’ve tried to get my mind onto other things). If like many abstract paintings, these machines seem silent or dumb, it’s not that they can’t talk and walk at the same time, rather they propose that walking and talking are already the same lumpy activity.

As you ghosts can see, I also offer you some drawings on pedestals. I ask that you think of these as self portraits. For most of my life my mom worked for Chase Bank and my dad worked as an architect. I got some paper slips from the desks near the ATMs at Chase Bank and I commissioned an architect to draw buildings based on the pastel geometries which organize their surfaces. I hear the voice of a different sort of ghost whispering on the wind that a middle class kid’s career should add up to at least the sum of their parents’. To the extent that these drawings, and this show, bring my own doings into line with that breezy admonition, they depict me.

- S.B., 2018

Sebastian Black (born 1985 in New York, USA) lives and works in New York.

He received his MFA from Columbia University in 2012. Solo exhibitions of his work have been held at CLEARING New York and Brussels; Balice Hertling, Paris, FR; Croy Nielsen, Berlin, DE; and Karma, New York, USA. His work has been featured in group exhibitions at Kunsthalle Andtrax, Mallorca, ES; as well as Hauser & Wirth, Marlborough, JTT, Rachel Uffner, New York, USA. Sebastian Black’s work is part of the collections of Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris, FR; MAMCO, Geneva, CH; Modern Forms, London, UK.

His first monograph, *Puppy Paintings*, was recently published by Triangle Books.