

Hutson, Laura, "Just Announced: *Summer Reading*, a Nashville Pop-up Exhibition From Zieher Smith & Horton, Opens June 18", NASHVILLE SCENE, 5 June 2015.



VISUAL ART

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Summer Reading

A Nashville pop-up Exhibition from Zieher Smith & Horton

When: June 18–27

Where: 509 Third Ave. S.

June has barely begun, and yet there are already art events marked and underlined and circled in red on my calendar. Next week alone there's Elizabeth Williams' *Flag Day Flag Show*, *The Semi-Pro No No Show*, which celebrates **famed LSD-dropping pitcher Dock Ellis**, and *Sightlines*, a video art show at The Packing Plant. And today I got word that **Zieher Smith & Horton**, the gallery in New York's Chelsea neighborhood that has hosted pop-up exhibits in Nashville for the past few years, has finalized its summer exhibition roster.

The exhibit, *Summer Reading*, features work by artists including Hope Gangloff, Tucker Nichols, Rachel Owens, Joe Reihsen, Dario Robleto, Luke Rudolph, Rachel Rossin, Christoph Ruckhäberle, Allison Schulnik, Karen Seapker, Lauren Silva, Paul Anthony Smith, Aaron Spangler, Willie Stewart, Nicola Tyson, Vadis Turner & Haley Green, Nicola Tyson and Mike Womack.

From the gallery's press release:

The best contemporary art is an act of discovery — in becoming and beholding, conception and contemplation. That said, every maker and every viewer bring to what they see an increasingly sophisticated set of criteria. *Summer Reading* presents radical departures within traditional formal constraints: landscapes, portraits, still lifes and abstractions, unfettered by theory, reliant only on the singular vision of their creator within the canonical standards of the past.

Alongside Nashville-based artists like Karen Seapker and Vadis Turner, two artists of particular interest are **Hope Gangloff** and **Paul Anthony Smith**, both of whom are currently showing work in New York and getting consistently great reviews. Gangloff (who first garnered attention for her killer T-shirt designs with Built by Wendy) has gotten a bulk of the recent buzz. In a **May 21 New York Times review** of her show at Susan Inglett Gallery, critic Martha Schwendener names Vincent van Gogh, Egon Schiele and Alice Neel as Gangloff's influences. An excerpt from that:

The broken brush strokes, bright colors and skewed perspectives in Ms. Gangloff's paintings not only suggest van Gogh but also carry traces of Edgar Degas and Mary Cassatt, who were obsessed with photography and Japanese prints — which is to say, new ways (for them) of seeing and depicting the world. In contrast with van Gogh's extreme impasto, however, Ms. Gangloff's acrylic flat surfaces look as if they've been drawn with felt pens, and her electric colors have the backlit brightness of liquid crystal displays or white-cube galleries illuminated with fluorescent fixtures.

Even with all those comparisons, Schwendener never conflates Gangloff as derivative — she isn't. Maybe it's because of the skillfulness of the artists she draws influence from, or because portraiture is kinder to its heirs than conceptual art, but Gangloff's style is entirely her own, and she brings Schiele and Klimt straight into the present with subtle but clear details, elements the *Times* critic says make this one of the most topical shows in New York.

The topical part is in the details. Ms. Gangloff attended Cooper Union, which offered its students a free education until last year when, despite protests, occupations and allegations of financial mismanagement, the school started charging tuition. The imagery in her paintings includes a newspaper with a Cooper Union headline and the artist Yuri Masnyj, a former classmate, wearing a "Save Cooper Union" button on his shirt.

Why is this relevant, beyond New York? Because it's part of a larger pattern in which artists create value for global cities but are increasingly disenfranchised and driven into debt. (Last week the entire class of first-year master of fine arts students at the University of Southern California quit to protest program changes, many of them financially driven and echoing Cooper's crisis.) In this sense, though "just" a portrait painter, Ms. Gangloff has deftly channeled not only the visual language of our era but its politics as well.

While it feels almost ridiculously obvious to say that Nashville's art world isn't nearly as multifaceted as New York's, the effects of Cooper Union's tuition implementation and the Southern California student protests are felt deeply throughout the art community, full-stop. Gentrification is an issue in Nashville, too, and our city's lack of local MFA programs (though Watkins is planning to offer one soon, **as we reported in January**) is a thorn in the local art world's side.

Paul Anthony Smith is a completely different kind of artist — and not just different from Gangloff but different from just about everything I've ever seen. I had the chance to look at some of his work in Zieher Smith & Horton's back room while I was in New York recently, and his technique is something you really have to see to fully understand. He takes large-scale photographs, typically during his trips to his native Jamaica, and cuts into them with a tiny ceramic tool that lifts the surface of the photograph just enough to displace it without removing it completely. He repeats this method meticulously until the photograph is patterned with geometric forms that looks like pointillism from a distance.

The curatorial statement from **Smith's solo show at Zieher Smith & Horton** last month includes this description of his style:

The artist picks at the emulsified surfaces of photographic prints, resulting in a surface that appears both tattered and glimmering. Employing a diamond pattern borrowed from a detail of Kuba tribe masks, Smith further enhances the texture by either leaving parts untouched or picking the surface in alternate directions for a holographic effect. Whereas in earlier works, the artist focused his action on his subjects' faces or bodies, he now uses this process to abstract the entire image. Here, Smith hints at the subjects' identities with titles that refer to where the images were captured.

Smith, who was born in 1988, is currently showing work at Columbia's Wallach Gallery and The Studio Museum in Harlem.