

CURATOR

INTERVIEW

SAMUEL JABLON (September 9, 2016)

SAMUEL JABLON (USA, b. 1986) is an artist, poet and performance artist who lives and works in New York City. Jablon received his MFA from Brooklyn College/CUNY (2013) and his BA from Naropa University, Boulder, Colorado (2009). Jablon's work has been exhibited nationally and internationally at the Museum Of Modern Art, The Queens Museum and Storefront for Art and Architecture, New York. Recently, he had solo exhibitions in New York at Freight + Volume (LES) and Arts + Leisure (Harlem). He has been written about in The Wall Street Journal, Interview Magazine, Art in America, ARTnews, Hyperallergic, BOMB, the Brooklyn Rail and others.

Your new exhibition, *Over Heard*, just opened at Diane Rosenstein Gallery in LA. Can you tell us about the show, and the new work?

This is my first show in Los Angeles and with the Gallery. For this show I wanted all the text to be from conversations I overheard. For the past six months I have been jotting down snippets of conversations that I later rearranged and used as the structure for the paintings. Through color and texture I pushed the text to the brink of illegibility.

Words clearly play an important role in your art - and we understand that you studied poetry before focusing on painting. Can you tell us a bit about the significance of language/poetry to you as an artist?

I have always admired poets and poetry as an art form. When I first started reading poetry I was at Naropa University where I was introduced to writers like Amiri Baraka, Allen Ginsberg and Anne Waldman. I respected their directness and boldness. Since then I have been interested in how poetry can be a part of my work. Everything stems from writing it then ranges from paintings to performances.

You are known for embedding interesting materials, such as glass and tiles, into your paintings. What is the significance of these reflective materials in your work?

I start by using materials that are around me, and part of my life. I want to use materials that weren't so expected in painting, and I like how mirrors pull the surrounding environments and people into the painting. The embellishments are challenging to work with, and it is not an organic process, so it forces me to

constantly adapt.

Last year was a breakout year for you, with two concurrent shows at Freight + Volume, and at its sister space, Arts + Leisure. How did those exhibitions come about, and what was the experience like preparing for them?

The owner of the gallery came by for a studio visit and basically loved the new work. He wanted to do a show that connected the two spaces, and offered me an opportunity to do both galleries. It was incredibly exciting, stressful and challenging to exhibit work both uptown and downtown. I kept stressing over the different neighborhoods and what hooked people to see both spaces. I decided that the exhibition needed something you could look at and read while traveling between the two, so we created a book that tied the spaces together.

One thing that impressed us about you (in addition to your paintings), was your professionalism. You seem to already have a very good grasp on how the art world operates as a business, and how to navigate it. What advice might you impart to artists in terms of viewing their art practice as a career?

The most important thing is the work, you have to have good work, and be ready when opportunities are presented. Besides that it's important to be clear with what you want and expect from the people you are working with.