

Three Dallas artists and a cat named Marmalade inspire new exhibition at And Now gallery

Artists Shelby David Meier, Paul Winker, and Oshay Green focus on themes of gentrification in new And Now show.



Artist Shelby David Meier (left), gallery owner and director James Cope, artist Oshay Green and artist Paul Winker in front of Fence by Green at the opening of "Marmalade" at And Now gallery

Drop by Deadbolt Studio, the artist-run studio space in West Dallas, and the first to greet you is a friendly orange-and-white cat named Marmalade.

Studio residents adopted the scrappy little girl after she wandered over from a neighboring warehouse, and she now serves as the de facto mascot for the space, prowling around during the day and napping next to the artists as they work into the wee hours.

She is also the namesake for "Marmalade," the current exhibition at And Now gallery, which features work by three Deadbolt artists: Shelby David Meier, Paul Winker and Oshay Green. Like all And Now shows, "Marmalade" eschews a conceptual format in favor of a stripped-down, object-focused aesthetic.



Interior detail with *Weighted Blanket*, 2019, cast cement by Shelby David Meier (foreground) and *Fence*, 2019, reclaimed wood and black spray paint by Oshay Green at the opening of "Marmalade" at And Now

"We named the show after Marmalade because we thought, 'She is as much a part of the studio as the walls that we share.' It ties our work together without forcing any preconceived conceptual framework," says Meier.

And Now's owner, James Cope, who has been working with Winker since last summer, has been keeping an eye on the trio for the past year, doing studio visits and watching them develop alongside each other.

"I thought now was the right time to organize an exhibition with them; they've all been committed to the grind of making consistently strong work. They might be too close to see it, but to me it is evident that they influence each other, as they all work out of the same building," Cope says.



Paul Winker (left) with his work *Untitled*, 2019, enamel on canvas, with a patron at the opening of "Marmalade" at And Now

Indeed, despite the differences in their practices, viewing the artists' works together provides a sense of evolution, with Meier and Winker's technical prowess obvious next to Green's cruder construction. This doesn't diminish Green's aesthetic and conceptual skills, but rather underscores how far the other two have come in the last few years.

In a city that has seen its fair share of DIY space shutdowns and artistic migrations to more progressive locales, at 30 and 29 years old, respectively, Meier and Winker are practically elder statesmen.

Meier has established himself as a master of the tongue-in-cheek and trompe l'oeil, creating pieces that expose the absurdity of the mundane and the ability for objects to take on individual personalities. In "Marmalade" he exhibits two moving blankets expertly cast in concrete, each carefully dyed and painted to reflect the worn and greasy patina of the ubiquitous rental item. Titled *Weighted Blankets*, the sculptures take their name from a device used to calm anxious behavior, pointing to a blanket's purpose as a protective or cloaking mechanism, albeit one that will eventually outlive its usefulness for either as it deteriorates over time, becoming just another discarded object.



Interior detail with Weighted Blankets, 2019, cast cement by Shelby David Meier

Winker's monolithic painting, *Over the Top*, continues in his signature style of jittery digital drawings rendered in thickly layered house paint, although this painting moves a step in a new direction by incorporating three shaped canvases. The work is based off a quick collage Winker created while teaching a workshop, sandwiching together images of a table and chair, the legless chair tossed over the equally legless tabletop. The resulting piece, done in shades of gray and black, toys with perception, collapsing three-dimensional objects onto a flat plane so the work shifts based on the viewer's physical proximity.

Rounding out the show is Green's Black Fence, a striking jet-black picket fence made of materials found within the area surrounding the studio. This exhibition marks the first time Green, a 24-year-old self-taught artist, has exhibited his work in a commercial setting. His inclusion emphasizes the idea that Deadbolt serves as somewhat of an incubator for rising Dallas artists, and his imagery puts a fine point on the gentrification of the West side and the displacement of at-risk populations, of which artists themselves are often both the unwilling perpetrators and victims.



Artist Shelby David Meier (left), gallery owner and director James Cope, artist Oshay Green and artist Paul Winker in front of Fence by Green at the opening of "Marmalade" at And Now gallery

Overall, "Marmalade" fits in with And Now's focus on cultivating up-and-coming artists. Cope's keen eye and rigorous vetting process is evident in the show's inclusion of only one work by each. The gallery has developed something of a cult following among the younger, emerging art crowd, and Cope is doing his best to keep his space fresh and low-key.

In doing so, he's touched upon an intriguing ideology within the works of Meier, Winker and Green — ideas about value, collecting and commodity; the physical presence of objects and the space they take up, and who is displaced or left out in the process.

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