

# MARTOS GALLERY

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## Justin Lieberman

February 20 - March 29, 2014

Opening reception: February 20, 6-8 pm

All will be well, and all will be well, and all manner of thing will be well.

Painting, the haptic medium par excellence, occurs here on a series of surfaces whose material make-up cartoonishly overdetermines this very tactility, and yet *what* is painted is language, a medium with so such quality. So what, you ask? Well, so nothing, and So much for the cute inversions.

For this exhibition, I have reassembled a large amount of my work of the last 15 years, both painting and sculpture, into a series of pieces which I call "Squeezed Reliefs," a literal translation of the Italian "rilievo schiacciato," a 15th century technique perfected by Donatello and regarded as the apex of perspectival illusionism of that time. Now we have the prerequisite macro-historical and micro-biographical contextualization.

My work is a place where capitalism goes to die. Or if not to die, than to become infected with a crippling disease, which slows it down immensely. Like Polio. Or Multiple Sclerosis. The works here are the same works you've already seen in other shows, so they are not even new. They're just cut up, reassembled, and painted black and white. Why black and white? I'm not going to lie. It's just because that's what we're all doing these days. Check out the group show over at Bortolami for more examples. Every month there's another 3 or 4 B&W shows, and I don't want to cause too much fuss. My strategy is in keeping with the bundling and repackaging of bad debt, (unsold works from old shows by a notoriously "difficult" artist, meaning I've been ripped off by plenty of galleries), but the repackaging here, while stylish, offers too much information concerning its provenance to qualify as a sexy redress of a devalued asset. Basically, there is nothing behind the curtain.

Economic humiliation is really the worst. Especially if you thought you "earned" what you had

before. There is an upside however, which is that this repackaging significantly reduces storage costs, and offers transparency for those more interested in the reality of the situation than its fantastical, romantic, or surrealist variants. Here is ground zero of art-as-career, and not just for those of us in the art world. It's got to be said that the do-gooder community builders and the participants in Madame Wal-Mart's Baptist Biennial also have a spot in our boat.

Honestly, we should expect more of our artists than this kind of puerile collapse, this absurd drunken vacillation between positivism and antifetishism. There is indeed a cynical reduction of art to its price tag, a sell-out move, but the price tag has undergone some revisions. It is the cut-out bin price tag, overlaid again and again in a slow countdown that inverts the accumulation of material. Or to put it another way, the higher the stack of price tags, the lower the price.

#DECELERATE

P.S. Here is a bit about the sculptures from Taylor:

Situated between the rows of repeating reliefs are two sculptural works that further expand on concepts of accumulation and redistribution. Installed on the floor in the front of the gallery, *That Part Of My Life Is Over: Part 1* houses a library of Lieberman's catalogues from 2009, each redacted in a different way. Simultaneously archived and on view, these books reside in a special purgatory between the library and the landfill. In *Arbeitsbeschaffungsmaßnahme*, Lieberman has pieced together drawings, paintings, and ephemera authored by a variety of sources, including himself into a 10 by 16 foot picture, which is simultaneously a salon and a collage, a painting and a group show. The work's label is thus a document, which is at once a list of artists and a list of materials. Stenciled on the surface is the title of the piece, its literal English translation being "job creation scheme".

*For additional information or images please call the gallery at 212.560.0670 or email [info@martosgallery.com](mailto:info@martosgallery.com).*