

## Night Under Light

Three positions: canvas, wall, hand. Each like a station in the act of painting.

No brushstrokes, but a *raster* (Latin, “to scrape”) of dots on black gesso ground—*dmk m02*, *dmk m03*, *dmk m04* (all 2014). Their gesture? A pulling away of overlain surfaces like living lamina, or skin, in the invention of after-effects. In Julie Oppermann’s images, every choice, every selection of options brings about a myriad of visual transformations like an act of mechanical reproduction found in nature. What is screen-printing, but the extrusion of pigment through woven mesh and stencil? As successive layers peel away, there is a palpitating superimposition of incremental shifts. *1404* (2014), a patterning out of layered screens, rendering relations like quantifiable numbers. Working at a remove from the picture plane—though she carries out systematic rotations by hand—the image shifts and remains unsettled as the gaze drifts back and approaches again.

Painting acts of its own accord. What it does is adhere to surfaces and won’t let go, it’s an unrelenting autonomy of things and acts. Infinitesimal specks of wet paint make contact and disperse. To say, one paints while blind, it’s a kind of willful darkness, a darkening of perception. For Yorgos Stamkopoulos, is it a letting go, or escaping all manner of control. In 1913, Marcel Duchamp dropped the thread and the meter curled and resisted the straight line, which gives it its measure, *3 stoppages étalon* (3 standard stoppages). With *Supersonic Psalm* (2013) an invisible process produces visible artifacts, a vivid camouflage of dark and fluorescent hues in high-contrast color dispersion. An anti-mimetic abstraction, or an arbitrary dropping of color; his hands operate at a remove from the ground, which the materials mask, dissimulate, cloak.

Alexander Wolff’s *Berlin, The Big Canvas* (2012) is a screenprinted canvas nested into the very wall that supports it. A movement from the inside out, and back again, the work makes reference to painting’s base while gesturing beyond it. Indeed, a “nested” painting then: To nest is to burrow down, to be embedded, but embedded in these traces on the canvas is an act of deferral, a resistance to participate in the very act of painting. In his black untitled painting from 2011, he stitches a line with a sewing machine. However, up is not fixed anymore; it is relational. Like the grid of seams, rotated at 90 degrees, its tracks and folds are replicated with a glittery topstitch he has rendered by hand, producing a layer that hovers above ground. An intentional drawing out of accidental seams.

Moving through the galleries, these works reveal differing outcomes, interlacing relations between doing, making, seeing. Yet in aggregate, they remind us: there is no ground, only one that shifts.

—Alena J. Williams