

## *Broken/Window/Plane*

Organized by John Yau

### Artists:

Gary Stephan

Lois Dodd

Andrea Belag

Joanne Greenbaum

Judy Ledgerwood

Olav Christopher Jenssen

Catherine Murphy

Paul DeMuro

Merlin James

Sangram Majumdar

Marc Handelman

Nicholas Krushenick



16 February - 17 March 2012

Opening reception: 16 February 2012, 6-8pm

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

The idea for this exhibition came from a conversation that I had with Gary Stephan while we were looking at the newest paintings in his studio. He began talking about “pressure being applied to the picture plane,” but didn’t specify whether this force came from the artist, history, or nature. And, to compound matters, I also realized that there is the pressure on the artist as well, from authorities and institutions, not to mention gravity.

In order to clear a space for yourself, you have to ask a basic question but defer the solution: couldn’t the picture plane be both solid and transparent, layered and punctuated, there and not there, something we see even when it is invisible? Why would you want to confine painting’s identity to a narrow set of conventions? Why not try and find fresh ways to distinguish it?

Stephan’s observations confirmed a long-held suspicion. Painters – the best ones, anyway – have long found ways to supersede the received wisdom regarding painting’s identity. The reasons are obvious – why would you want to spend your days thinking of a painting solely as a two-dimensional surface upon which to apply paint? Might not a more challenging goal be to bring everything back into play – from discredited illusionism and the figure/ground problem to allusiveness and association – without being nostalgic, sentimental, ironic, or coy?

I was reminded of conversations that I had had with Lois Dodd, Sangram Majumdar, Catherine Murphy and others. A space for reflection had opened up, and I thought it was worth exploring.

The sole motivation for my selections was the work itself – the paintings are in dialogue with others in the show. They speak across generations. They don’t recognize the borders separating abstraction from observation. They are free spirits. Speculation and play have replaced claims to being factual. Or, to put it another way, the artists in this exhibition recognize that what you need – if you wish to pull a rabbit out of a hat – is a rabbit and a hat.

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