

LAUREL GITLEN

122 NORFOLK ST.
NEW YORK, NY 10002

T 212 274 0761
F 212 590 6191
LAURELGITLEN.COM

Joseph Montgomery *Heads, Calves*

OCTOBER 26–DECEMBER 22, 2014

OPENING RECEPTION SUNDAY, OCTOBER 26, 6–8PM

Laurel Gitlen is thrilled to present *Heads, Calves*, Joseph Montgomery's third solo show with the gallery. The exhibition opens October 26th and remains on view through December 22nd. In his newest body of work, Montgomery further articulates his critical position in painting, positing that images can be both literal objects and representations, and that their production can be similarly twofold: both labored and automatic. This exhibition presents a group of paintings in pale and powdery shades nearly approaching colors, a palette that makes the insistently tangible objects seem to partly dissolve in shadow, recede in relief, or collapse into visual effect.

Beginning with his first exhibition at the gallery in 2010, Montgomery has engaged painting with a hybrid or pluralist approach to image-making. Initially, two types of paintings emerged in his practice. The first employs the logic and form of collage—amalgams of sheet metal and cardboard fragments coated, creased, and encrusted with oil, resin, paper, fiberglass, oatmeal or wooden shims. The second exclusively employs a single element from the collages—the shim or wedge—as a unit of perpetual progression and variation in geometric compositions. Often working in series, each painting's structure and materials creates the terms for his next, employing manually repeated forms, strategies of representation, and computer algorithms as catalysts for consecutive iterations of images. This evolutionary approach—a sort of image Darwinism—is manifest in his system for titling: each work is drolly titled "Image" and numbered sequentially.

Oscillating between the idea of painting as unique object and as mere manifestations of images predetermined by a formal logic or conceptual law, the work thus establishes a dialectic between physical labor in the studio and automated production. This emphasis on labor and production as resistance to, or an illustration of, the nihilism of modern painting's reductive endgame is further explored in the artist's recent forays into animation. A single character—an avatar born from his paintings and constructed from hinged cedar shims—performs simple tasks, suggesting a substitute protagonist in the studio and another surrogate for painting. Simultaneously assuming the role of the artist *and* the artwork, the avatar is a metaphor for Montgomery's painting practice: an autonomous, self-generating machine.

Montgomery (b. 1979) is based in New York. He received his BA from Yale and his MFA from Hunter College. Recent museum exhibitions include *Five Sets, Five Repts* (solo) at Mass MoCA, MA (2013–2014); *Painter Painter* at The Walker Art Center, MN (2013), and *Curating the Contemporary: Joseph Montgomery and Ned Vena*, Kunsthaus Baselland, Basel, (2011).

Joseph Montgomery *Doll Index* at Peter Blum Gallery, New York, October 24–December 6