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Foullon and Burgos at Halsey McKay

Katy Diamond Hamer



New York Tales...

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September 14th – October 6th, 2013Ernesto Burgos – *Old Habits*, Installation view, Halsey McKay Gallery, NY
Image courtesy of the gallery, 2013

Two artists who have recently exhibited at Halsey McKay gallery in East Hampton, New York are Rachel Foullon and Ernesto Burgos. Both artists, while different in their physical practices could both be compared by one commonality: "painting". Foullon is a sculptor whose work hangs on the wall, not unlike a painting. Burgos, also a sculptor, makes work which stands on its own, and in this case on custom pedestals, yet the surface of the work has been painted and reactive in-situ similar as might happen to a painting extracted from the wall and bent in an unnatural way. The gallery is two floors, the street level being a large rectangular space and the second level, smaller and cubed, humming in a fluorescent glow. The ground level was occupied by Foullon's work while the second floor gallery housed the 2013 sculptures by Burgos. Both artists were born in California; Foullon in 1978 and Burgos 1979, however the latter grew up in Chile. This is

where their similarities end.

Ernesto Burgos – *Old Habits*, Installation view, Halsey McKay Gallery, NY
Image courtesy of the gallery, 2013

Rachel Foullon's *Shapeners*, as an exhibition, is a subtle and poetic note. The work, sparingly installed, delivers moments of respite for the viewer to leave the busy rush of Newtown Lane and contemplate the combines that beg us to question object identification and purpose. Using mostly found and then polished objects, the artist makes work that is extremely foreign but with elements of familiarity. There is an earthiness to what she makes and a muted color palette. The objects often relate to or are farm tools, horse stirrups, and fabric, occasionally actual garments and at other times, dyed and arranged, appearing to be a shirt or crumpled rag. Her work is extremely humanistic without giving any literal hints or true representation. She channels a false nostalgia, whereas one pines for the ideal days of yore, however illusory, all is made with fresh, polished materials. The title of the exhibition (from the press release) takes its title from James Agee's essentialist description of an individual in an effort to describe the whole of the cotton tenant population- Foullon's sculptures also examine the anarchist notion that chances of success and joy are based in the randomness of circumstance.

Ernesto Burgos – *Old Habits*, Installation view, Halsey McKay Gallery, NY
Image courtesy of the gallery, 2013

Ernesto Burgos transports *Old Habits*, from his studio in Red Hook, Brooklyn, to the gallery in East Hampton. After his last solo exhibition with New York City gallery Kate Werbel, titled *The Tone Was A Synthesis Of All the Voices They Had Ever Heard*, June summer 2012, as a viewer it's comforting to find some familiar tropes in the work even while *Old Habits* is a departure (or evolution) from what the artist has been making within the frame of the last several years. His process commences with a piece of cardboard that is bent, turned, creased and only then, made into a fiberglass sculpture. A metamorphosis occurs giving a sense of weight and permanence to an object such as crinkled cardboard. The materials are reminiscent of an anthropomorphic dream, floating around the room at varying heights. His color palette, other than that of Rachel, is vibrant and based strongly in rich purples and areas of teal.

Ernesto Burgos – *Old Habits*, Installation view, Halsey McKay Gallery, NY
Image courtesy of the gallery, 2013

The artists took advantage of the spaces they were given, the first providing a temporary escape. *Shapeners* cohesively attempts to make us contemplate familiar objects, while with *Old Habits*, rather than channel nostalgia, we are reminded of a crumpled piece of paper, an idea gone sour, reincarnated and elevated as a sculpture.

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