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Mateo Tannatt "Studio Agony (Revisited) / Barn Paintings / A Monochrome the Color Yolk" at INOVA, Milwaukee

March 11~2015



INOVA is pleased to present a new body of work by Mateo Tannatt, including video, painting, sculpture, and architectural intervention. The exhibition centers on a video shot in a construction site for future artists' studios. A menagerie of farm animals and a lone protagonist wander the space in a strange state of limbo. Accompanying paintings and sculptures flesh out a project that weaves an absurdist parable of labor and play, minimalism and digital post-production, avatars and zombies.

Sites of cultural production—like studios, film sets, and stages—are recurrent subjects for Tannatt. He focuses on these locations as production sites where he investigates labor, improvisation, and collaboration, as well as the negotiation between the creative impulse and the boredom of everyday comings and goings. Tannatt finds fodder in historical portrayals of artists' working environments and depictions of physical labor, drawn to both their documentary appeal and allegorical nature. In the new video, Tannatt addresses this territory of self-identification and self-promotion through an oblique and dark parody. Nothing is romantic or heroic here. The generic build out is the typecast architecture of lofts and warehouses common to countless contemporary artists' studios. A soundtrack of strings sets a baleful mood and the gray walls reinforce this bleak tone. A coterie of livestock becomes a company of nonsensical associates, while the protagonist evokes a ghostly figure in suspended animation. Tannatt's video finds kinship with Andy Warhol's studio films that capture seemingly inconsequential activity for hours on end. The films, and this video, ultimately convey time's nondescript and inescapable passing.

Tannatt's moves require us to think twice about what we are seeing and what we think the images and objects might mean. The artist has instilled a dysfunction between form and context in order for multiple references and multiple perceptions to unfold. For example, the architecture in the video is both a set and a character that performs alongside its habitués: the repeating forms of linear metal beams and the neutral colors of unpainted drywall play cousins to minimalist sculpture and gestural abstract expressionist painting. An intervention into the gallery architecture echoes the physical structure portrayed in the video, but now at INOVA it is newly finished. Inside, silk-screens on raw canvas drop cloths act as contemporary formalist paintings while simultaneously alluding to floor plans and depictions of psychological investigations. Tannatt's sculptures also have multiple possibilities as finish-fetish abstractions, ready-mades taken from the farm, indexes of studio activity, or display devices.

Tannatt has further altered INOVA's space by wallpapering the black corner wall, camouflaging it behind images of patched drywall rendered in chroma key colors. Chroma key enables the "green screen" effect of compositing multiple images or video streams together. Its red, blue, and green hues appear in paintings and sculptures as the broad color fields of minimalist abstractions. But by virtue of chroma key's role in digital special effects, the colors indicate that the objects are also props that become windows into a narrative realm. The multiplicity echoing through the exhibition suspends

us between abstraction and narrative, the provisional space of the studio and the finished products of gallery display, and the blurred value between art, design, and entertainment common to our current post-Internet age.

Funding for the exhibition is provided by the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts. Curated by Sara Krajewski, Director of INOVA.

- See more at: <http://moussemagazine.it/mateo-tannatt-inova-2015/#sthash.v5Unzj5b.dpuf>

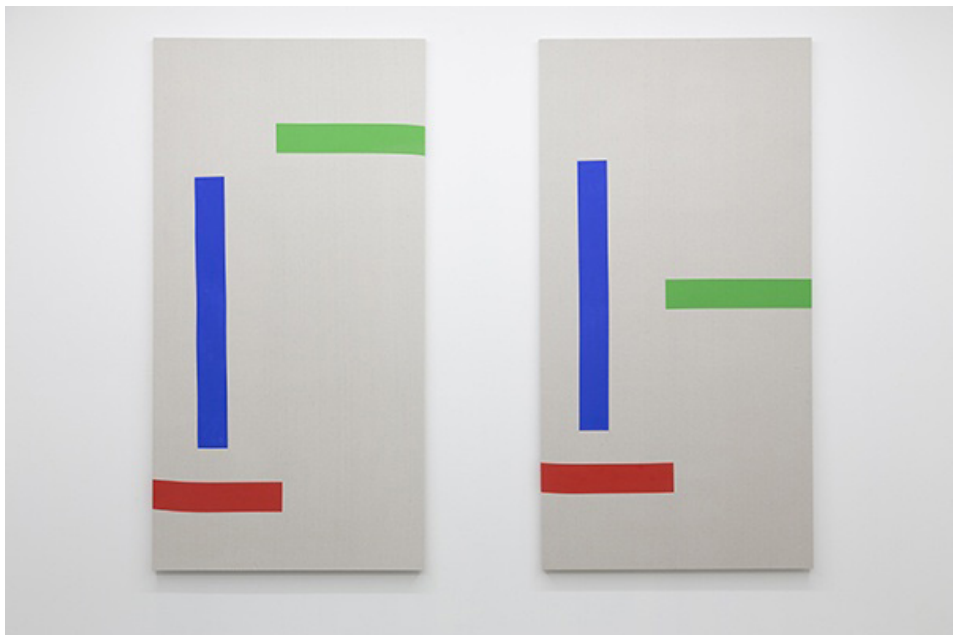
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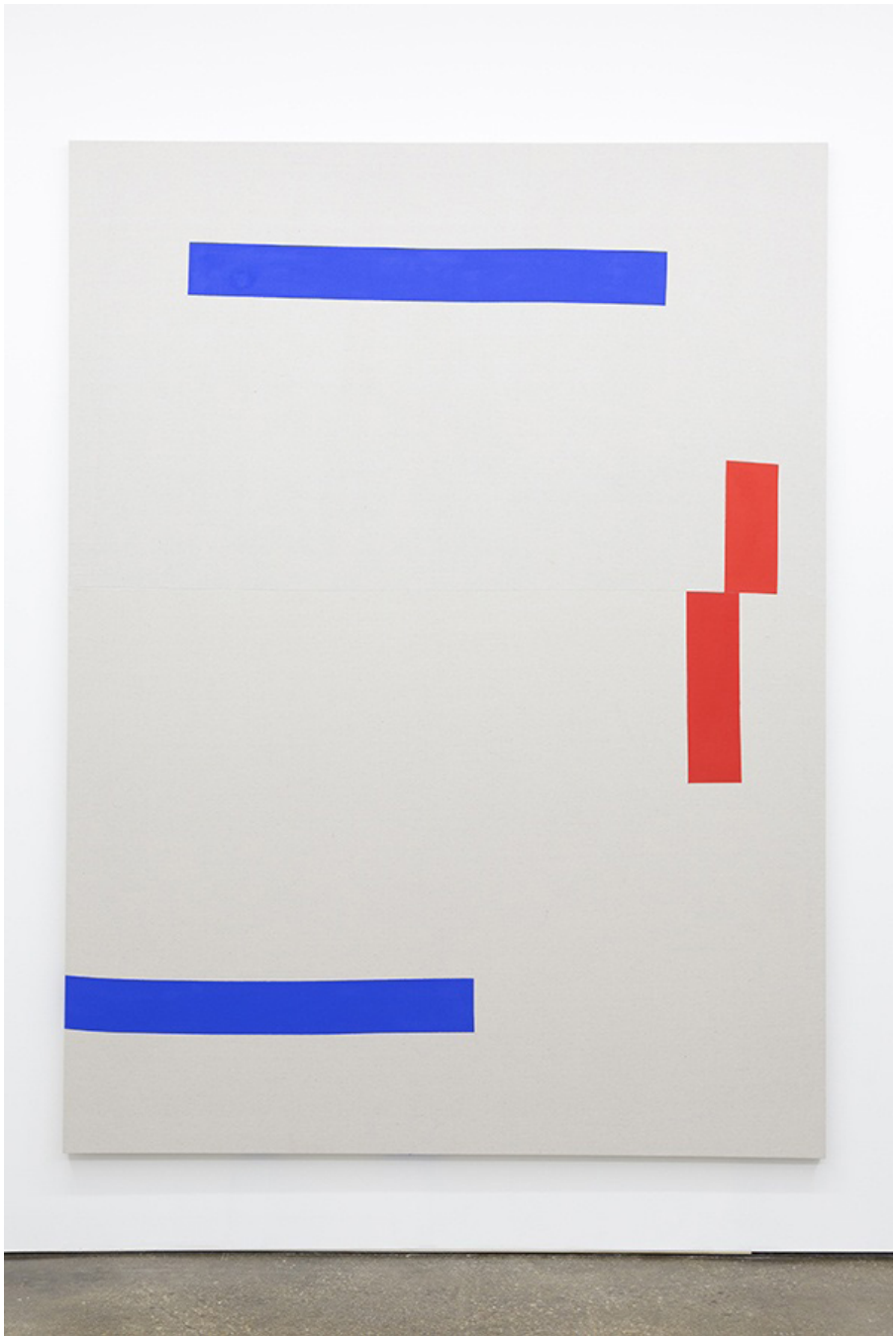
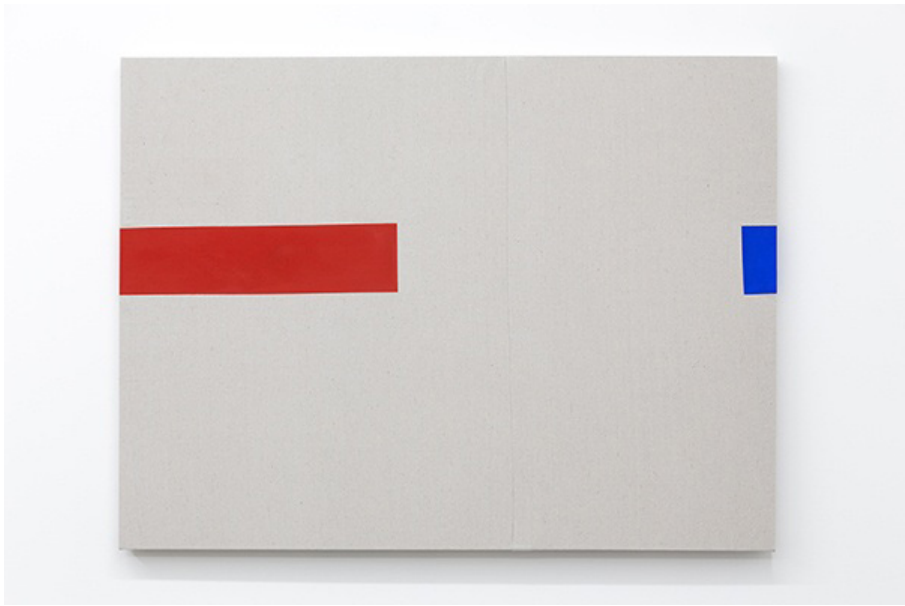
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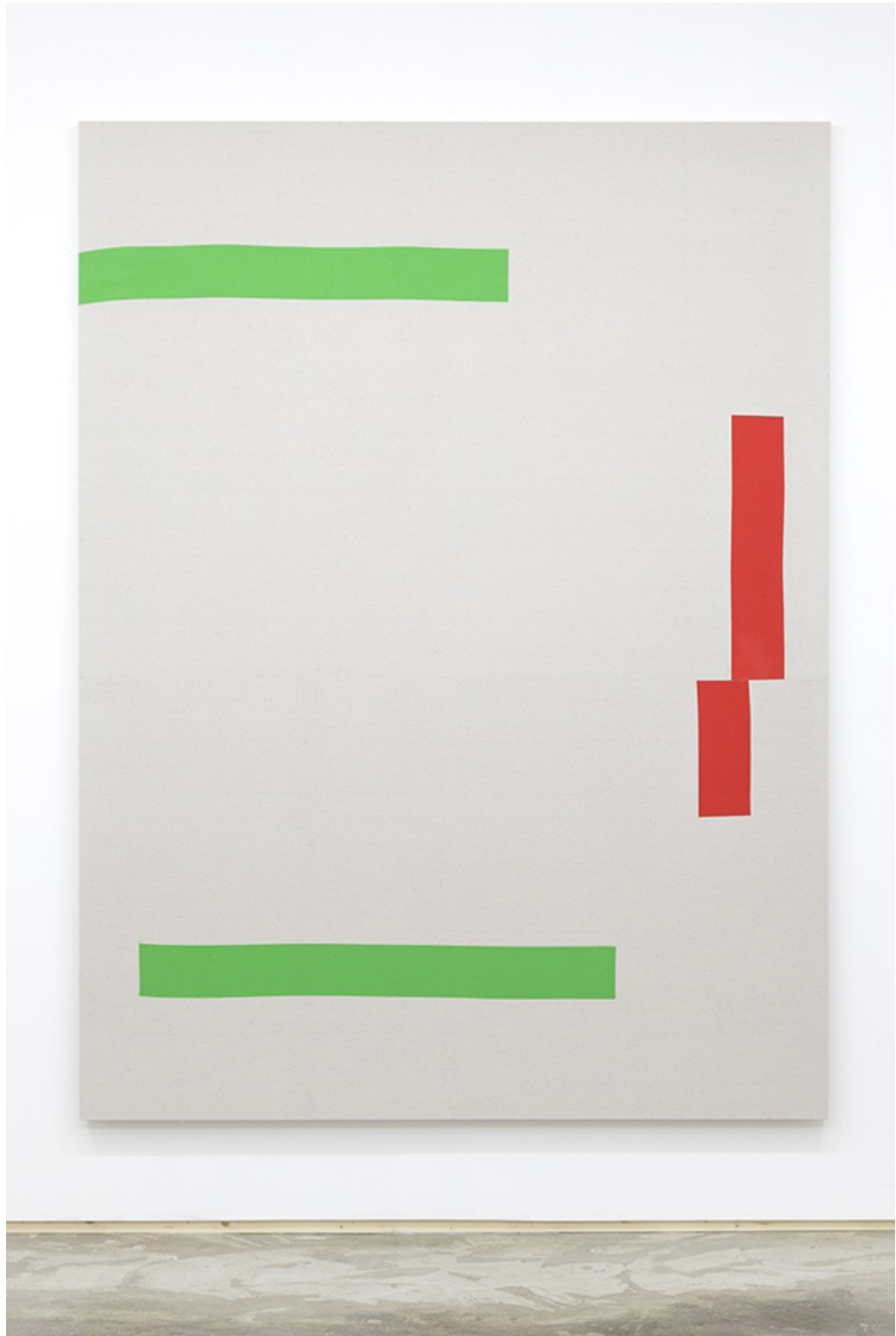


















Mateo Tannatt, “Studio Agony (Revisited) / Barn Paintings / A Monochrome the Color Yolk” installation views at INOVA, Milwaukee, 2015

Courtesy: the artist and Marc Foxx, Los Angeles.