

LOOCK GALERIE BERLIN  
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**Jonathan VanDyke**  
*Some Were Caught Up, &  
Some Were Not*

February 24–April 22, 2017

Loock Galerie is pleased to present its second solo exhibition of New York-based artist Jonathan VanDyke. Drawing on the lexicons of gestural abstraction, textile design, installation, and photography, VanDyke presents three intersecting series that push new possibilities for painting. Each series explores the process of color application differently, arriving at three distinct but interrelated depictions of pigment. The exhibition suggests states of fracture and dissolution while challenging classical ideas of beauty and sensorial pleasure.

In the main gallery, a series of large-scale works are made from t-shirt fabric, marked and soaked with washes of color and imprinted with the patterns of nets. The nets—undulating across the works in an illusion of three dimensionality—are fragmented by a process in which the painted t-shirt fabric is cut into hundreds of pieces, and then sewn together in geometric shapes. One of the oldest tools of civilization, frequently depicted in historic and religious painting—the net is both a barrier and a device used to “catch” a person or animal, but it is also porous, soft, and transparent. The use of the net alludes to the migration of people and who does or does not get “caught up” as nations debate the politics of belonging and identification.

These paintings are installed in a maze of wooden lattice structures that disrupts the flow of movement through the space. This architectural structure re-orientates the space while also offering the viewer an opportunity to observe both sides of the works. Each painting has a verso as rich as their front surfaces: the t-shirt material is backed with colored linen patches and photographs printed on canvas. VanDyke refers to these hidden images as the “subconscious and interior desires of the paintings themselves, situated behind the face that they display to the outer world.” They tell the same story as the surfaces but countervail their mere suggestion or simulation of corporeality. Instead, they embrace desire and fetish—showing sleeping men, sock advertisements, a young boy touching an anaesthetized bear.

In a second series of paintings in the front gallery, the artist moves into figuration and the abstracted portrait. For five years, VanDyke made his paintings with two dancer-collaborators, exploring body movement and gesture to mark the canvas; when this collaboration ended in 2016, he sought to make a *memento mori* for their absence. These works, based upon a 1932 Paul Klee painting, present a conjoined pair of abstracted heads; like the series in the main gallery, they are sewn from geometric shapes of cut fabric. Here the paint has slowly soaked into raw canvas, resulting in vibrant washes of color and complex gradients in tone.

Installed throughout the gallery, black-and-white photographs depict nude men interacting with clear glass vessels filled with liquids. Dyes and pigments hover in the water, caught in time as they intermix. The men pictured in the images watch this slow integration. These gelatin silver prints--printed by hand, in the darkroom--recall in their imagery the alchemy and wonder that underlined the invention of photography. The images are made through long, slow sessions between model and artist. Juxtaposed against advances in telecommunications that encourage us to expect instant gratification, these photographs are purposefully ambiguous works, dependant on intimacy and direct exchange.