

MASSIMODECARLO is delighted to present *Put a Mess* by Los Angeles-based artist Spencer Lewis, marking his debut exhibition in Italy. The title of the show is an intriguing cypher, a dynamic exploration in the enacting of chaos and turmoil. Lewis invites us into a realm, the canvas where painting becomes a space of deliberate crafting and inventive disarray.

Spencer Lewis's fascination with language takes on an abstract form—transcendental, universal, and capable of conveying shared meanings and emotions. His works serve as visual embodiments of his physical exertion, through gesture, pulsating with emotion and infused with a controlled intensity through a staccato mark. While not simply a record of his process, a palpable performative aspect infuses Spencer's creations. The works draw viewers into the visceral experience of his exploration of the mark as a sign, object and force.

As Lewis immerses himself in the language of painting, he grapples with the concept of his work akin to the movement of Action Painting, sparking questions about the very nature of the artistic act and the degree of control exerted on the canvas. Within this orchestrated mess, an undeniable energy emanates from each brushstroke— wet, dry, matte, shiny, muddy and garish, covered with glass beads or soil, scumbled, glazed sfumato and broken, opaque transparent, languid and agitated, splattered, ham-fisted, wiped, sprayed, teased, brushed, hand printed, pallet knifed, stick painted and whole bodied.

Beneath the seemingly volatile surface of Lewis's compositions lies a confident methodology and structural underpinning. Lewis's interest in the organization of imagery often belies his armature, with his brushstrokes continually converging toward the canvases center but then obfuscated in the crossing of hued line. In doing so, he urgently crafts a multi-layered narrative that unfolds a captivating story. Within the current works, splashes of ochre and orange serve as the opening notes, providing viewers with an initial glimpse into a narrative woven from a multitude of

moments, strokes, gestures, and acts. Descriptive marks and eloquent symbols converge upon the coarse jute canvas, crafting a narrative that tiptoes on the edge of legibility. This distancing of the illustrated form allows the viewer their own experience of what the artist himself may name.

For Lewis, the meticulously put mess in his art isn't a mere act; it's a thoroughly crafted composition. At times, it unveils faintly discernible characters that, instead of conforming to conventional limbs, exude a profound sense of vitality.

These robust gestural abstractions flicker with energy, radiating an inherent sense of violence— a force that creates and simultaneously destroys, seeks order and craves unrestrained expression. Lewis's deliberate choice of jute amplifies the expressive essence of his work. The tactile quality, soil tone, and raw edges of jute contribute to the profound intensity that his compositions exude. Jute, it seems, serves as the ideal object for his artistic confrontation; its rugged surface absorbs, assimilates, and emanates a potent, unwavering, and ever-evolving molting of visual language. Colors accumulate, scatter, layer, and are propelled onto the canvas, displaying Lewis's distinctive artistic language and articulated and, indeed eloquent, mesmerizing mess.

*Put a Mess* is an immersive journey into the intersection of chaos and order, language and action, and liberation through unconventional mediums—an exploration where the artist's narrative beckons for interpretation, breathing life into fresh disarray.