

**Press release  
October 2017**

**Alex Hubbard, Chemical Compulsion**

**October 28 to December 22, 2017**

**Opening on Friday, October 27, 6 – 8 pm**

**Maag Areal, Zahnradstr. 21, 8005 Zurich**

**Tuesday – Friday 10-6, Saturday 11-5 and by appointment**

Galerie Eva Presenhuber is pleased to present the third solo exhibition of Los Angeles-based artist Alex Hubbard. Hubbard is a painter and video artist. He weaves together both fields by using the same approach in each medium and thereby rethinks video, painting, and their connections.

In his earlier videos, which are usually shot from a fixed perspective, he arranges material such as blankets, foil, screens, flowers, air balloons or simply garbage. He cuts them with the help of different tools, paints them, or simply spills paint on them. Sometimes he layers different motions, creating gravityless and timeless floating movements. Sharply cut and underlaid with sounds unsynchronized with their actions, the videos become almost animation like. The unexpected movements, like swiping things with a hand and causing them to break, and the physical power eminent in this gives a layer of absurd tension and sometimes a comic impression to the videos.

Both his videos and paintings are created according to a 'not so perfect plan', that is, a plan made to fail. This is foundational to the precarious tension of the crashes and other movements in the videos.

In his paintings, Hubbard uses the volatile, fast-drying materials of urethane, resin, and fiber-glass. Once applied to the surface, these materials cannot be changed. Therefore his paintings, like the videos, always have the potential to unmoor themselves from their original plan. This gives the paintings a lot of space for accidents and unpredictabilities to take place during the process.

Chemical Compulsion is exhibited throughout three adjoining rooms. Two rooms display a new series of nine paintings and are separated by a third room, showing exclusively the new video work Interior I.

In Interior I Hubbard uses a scene as a constant background on which he projects another layer of schematic motions reminiscent of his former video works and a third layer of digitally animated colors. As a background scene, he uses for the first time a figurative scene. It shows a set in which a person, sometimes split to three people, sits in a small corner in front of a dozen computer screens, each emitting LCD light which illuminates the otherwise dark room. The walls are filled with toilet-wall scribble. The person smokes and at one point, starts kicking the screens.

In the foreground the video shows a schematic, flipped easel burning. Then it shows the same burning easel projected onto a burning folding movie screen. The background scene is disturbed by the raising smoke and at the end by the spray of a fire extinguisher ending the fire.

The third layer blurs the whole video with digitally animated colors. They swell and recede, giving the whole composition the dramatic tension of the former videos yet without their stark physical powers. These colors are reminiscent of a prismatic vision of the LCD-spectrum or of toxic chemicals. They link Interior I to Hubbard's new paintings.

The paintings range from purple over yellow to red and thus, like the animated colors in Interior I, show the whole spectrum. Two black-and-white paintings link the schematic vision of the burning easel from Interior I to the paintings.

Hubbard starts the paintings with a squeegeed spill of tinted urethane onto the linen. Then he applies enlarged stenciled drawings made on paper on the spills and the remaining linen and finishes with another layer of either fiberglass and resin or with more urethane. The original compositions, reminiscent of abstract expressionism, are still recognizable but it's unclear whether the patches, spills and lines are planned or just traces of failure. The different surfaces, color fields, lines, and materials hint at the breathless and tripping process of their creation. Through the size of the swipes, drips and blister-like areas, the paintings emanate the physical and chemical power of this process. This genesis, which leaves its traces in both the videos and paintings, creates the sometimes absurd, sometimes funny and sometimes dramatic attraction of Hubbard's works. They assemble a lasting collection of 'almost failure moments'.

Alex Hubbard was born 1975 in Toledo, OH, USA. He lives and works in Los Angeles. In 2012 his work was shown for the first time at Galerie Eva Presenhuber. His most recent solo exhibitions took place in museums such as Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University, MA, USA (2014); Hammer Museum, Los Angeles/CA, USA (2012); Kunsthalle Berlin, Berlin, Germany (2010); Mercer Union – Centre for Contemporary Visual Art, Toronto/ON, Canada (2010); Castillo/Corrales, Paris, France (2007). Group-shows in major museums include: "Single-Channel Catalyst: Alex Hubbard's 'Eat Your Friends' and Selections from the Collection", Weatherspoon Art Museum, Greensboro, NC (2016); "America is Hard to See", The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY (2015); "L'Almanach 14", Le Consortium, Dijon, France (2014); "Chat Jet", Künstlerhaus, Halle für Kunst & Medien, Graz, Austria (2013); "Deep Comedy", Curated by Dan Graham, Le Consortium, Dijon, France (2011); "Greater New York", MoMA PS1, New York/NY, USA (2010). Alex Hubbard's work is represented in public collections such as the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA), New York, the Museum of Contemporary Art - North Miami (MOCA), Miami.

*Tillmann Severin*

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