

MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY

523 West 24th Street, New York, New York 10011 Tel: 212-243-0200 Fax: 212-243-0047

**PRESS RELEASE**

**Paul Sietsema**

September 14 – October 27, 2018

Opening: Thursday, September 13, 6:00 to 8:00 PM

Matthew Marks is pleased to announce **Paul Sietsema**, the next exhibition in his gallery at 523 West 24th Street. The exhibition features new paintings, drawings, and a 16mm film.

For one group of paintings, Sietsema worked with found abstract paintings by anonymous artists that he purchased at local auctions in Europe. He tore up bills of different euro denominations and scanned them. The images of the currency as it fell onto the scanner were then painted by hand in a photorealistic manner on top of the abstractions. The layering and materiality of these paintings point to assemblage and earlier avant-garde aesthetics. Sietsema has also expressed interest in making physical the symbolic value of currency.

In another series of canvases, Sietsema has painted images of rotary telephones in monochromatic tones. The receiver lies beside the phone's base in a manner the artist has stated can be read as either an open line of communication or a dead line. To make these works, he first mixed paint to match the original color of each telephone. He then poured the mixture over the phone, coating it in a pool of paint. The paint-covered phone was then photographed, and the resulting image file was painted by hand on the canvas. Sietsema describes the rotary phone as an artifact that was once an object of pure utility and thus invisible, but which now has a highly sculptural and iconographic quality due to its obsolescence.

Two ink drawings in the exhibition depict newspaper advertisements for luxury credit cards: black, gold, and titanium. The cards utilize an iconography based on outdated associations of gold and other metals as a standard of value. Images of dollar coins dripping in black enamel have been painted on top of the newspaper ad. The coins appear to have been tossed onto the image, simulating a type of expressive mark historically associated with value in painting. The tag line of one ad reads, "Heavy Metal," employing a formerly subversive genre to sell a mainstream financial product.

The 16mm film, *Encre Chine* (2012), presents a range of studio-related objects covered in a viscous black printer's ink. The film moves between close-ups of the objects — a disassembled picture frame, a film canister, a paintbrush, a camera — and broader shots of a studio mise-en-scène. The artist states, "The ink is a democratizing agent that renders all objects as pure image. It is like photographic emulsion. It introduces a material link between earthly functional objects and the world of images and image production."

Displayed throughout the exhibition are large silk-screened paintings on linen based on decades-old posters from commercial gallery exhibitions for Pablo Picasso, Jean Dubuffet, and Louise Bourgeois. The posters have been made into monochrome images by screening the background color from each over its graphic content. A slight shift in register allows the original image to bleed through the screened dots. Regarding these works Sietsema has said he is interested in "the assumed timeless quality of these masterworks locked into the tastes of another time and painted over with the colors of their pre-digital promotional apparatus."

Paul Sietsema (born 1968) lives and works in Los Angeles. He has had one-person exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art, NY; the Whitney Museum of American Art, NY; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; the Museo Nacional Centro de Art Reina Sofia, Madrid; and the Kunsthalle Basel, among others.

**Paul Sietsema** is on view at 523 West 24th Street, September 14 to October 27, 2018, Tuesday to Saturday, from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM. For additional information, contact Ted Turner ([ted@matthewmarks.com](mailto:ted@matthewmarks.com)).