

Todd Kelly

Jolly Liar

October 29 - December 19, 2015



Asya Geisberg Gallery is pleased to present “Jolly Liar”, **Todd Kelly’s** third exhibition with the gallery. Continuing with the thematic evisceration of the still life genre, Kelly ups the ante by focusing on distinct permutations of abstraction, all deviating from an ur-painting: Chardin’s Still Life with Brioche. Strategies both conscious and subjective are put to the task. Kelly has executed each idea in series of four or more works, and includes an example of each style on five gallery walls, forming five different arrangements. Subtle differences create a dialogue within the gallery, so that each variation vies for attention across the room. What emerges in the end is a meta-artwork, which then comes apart again into sections, like a fractal with no end or beginning.

In each of his exhibitions, Kelly begins with the question of what painting does. In “Jolly Liar”, he further excavates the still life as a metaphor for embellishment as a form of narrative-building. The “Jolly Liar” is Kelly’s figurative stand-in for creating a truth through the re-telling of a tale, fine-tuning and adjusting it until it feels right. Similarly, Kelly takes each element of the Still Life With Brioche, multiplies, graphically pares down, overlays, and flattens, until the original is consumed by Kelly’s transformations. Kelly’s multiples further stretch the distance, each one’s slight difference increasingly harder to gauge. With his varying arrangements on each wall, Kelly posits the wall as its own form of still life and re-telling. Suddenly we are back to where we started and yet nowhere near the point of origin.

We see this paradox most with the grid paintings, composed of imperfect squares in a roughly symmetrical pattern. A pre-mixed palette makes each color the element to be rearranged, allowing the painting to form a pattern as a reaction to its canvas’ dimensions. The game has reached an endpoint as the objects disappear - though for Kelly, the game is never-ending, as is the history of painting with its endless possibilities.

Originally from Michigan, Todd Kelly lives and works in New York. He began his career in architecture, an influence that still resonates in his work. Kelly earned an MFA at the School of Visual Arts and a B.A. at Anderson University, IN. Recent exhibitions include Transmitter Gallery, Brooklyn; LVL3, Chicago; Tiger Strikes Asteroid, Philadelphia; and the New Bedford Art Museum, MA; and he has been included in exhibitions in London, UK; Galway, Ireland; New York, NY; Spokane, WA; Minneapolis, MN; Albuquerque, NM; and Madison, WI. His work has been featured as an Artforum Critic’s Pick, and reviewed in the London Times, the London Paper, Art F City, LVL3, Bmore Art, The New Criterion, Gorky’s Granddaughter, and Beard and Brush.



High Kick Jolly Liar, 2015 Oil, acrylic and spray paint on canvas, 40" x 30".



Still Life with Violet Bowl 1, 2015. Oil, acrylic, collage on canvas, 25" x 21".