

MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY

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PRESS RELEASE

Paul Sietsema

September 13 – October 25, 2014

Opening: Friday, September 12, 6:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M.

Matthew Marks is pleased to announce an exhibition of new work by **Paul Sietsema** in his galleries at 522 and 502 West 22nd Street. Sietsema's works address the production, consumption, and proliferation of cultural objects and the systems in which these objects circulate. The exhibition includes a group of new paintings and drawings, as well as Sietsema's two most recent films.

The paintings begin with objects in the studio. Sietsema photographs the objects coated in paint and duplicates these images on linen by hand. Each painting in the exhibition represents some aspect of how a painting can function. One work, addressing the idea of transfer between the artist and viewer, portrays a phone with its receiver lying beside it. Another depicts a red expanse of paint with exposed areas of raw linen. The image, which resembles a materialist painting in the vein of Arte Povera, suggests that paint can make its own forms. The exposed linen sets the rendered image of paint beside the actual material of painting. A third work features painted images of coins flooded with or sliding in pools of paint, likening the commerce and exchange value of painting to a material action.

In three large drawings, hands carry out a series of actions — painting an oval, holding a cloth folded into a triangle, or presenting a painted rectangular board. The drawings are made through a technique that involves applying latex to the negative space of the image, after which ink is applied over the entire surface of the paper. The latex is then removed, revealing the image. This technique mirrors the material reversal of analog film-based photography, in which a negative is used to transfer the image.

In another series of paintings, years are depicted as if etched in stone. Taken from images of historical buildings and monuments, these years have been restructured to reflect the artist's personal history. Because current modes of image proliferation are creating a more generalized notion of the past, the 1980s and 1990s seem much more distant in time, a phenomenon invoked in these paintings.

Abstract Composition, a 35-millimeter film, is being shown for the first time. In it, a sign rotating in space displays a brief description of a different object with each rotation. As Sietsema notes, "The punched dot letters of the sign represent the infrastructural aesthetics that exist for manufacturing — a sublanguage within automated industrial production." Likewise, the film itself is an automated system of rendering each phrase.

In the small gallery, the 16-millimeter film *At the hour of tea* is being shown in New York for the first time. The central work in Sietsema's recent traveling survey exhibition, the film presents five sequences that explore configurations of found objects — including an envelope, a typewriter, coins, an inbox, Roman glassware — each following a structure that concludes with an image of a composed tableau. These sequences and objects offer historical analogues for modern processes of consumption, production, and communication: collecting, arranging, and recording. Throughout the sequences a text is revealed piece by piece, gradually describing a historical painting in modernist terms.

Paul Sietsema (born 1968) lives and works in Los Angeles. His work has been the subject of one-person exhibitions at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago, the Wexner Center for the Arts in Columbus, the Kunsthalle Basel, the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia in Madrid, the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York. Monographs on Sietsema's work have been published by the Kunsthalle Basel, the Wexner Center for the Arts, the Museum of Modern Art, and the Whitney Museum.

A publication about Sietsema's films from the past twelve years was just published by Mousse Publishing in Milan. An artist's book focusing on the film *At the hour of tea* was recently published by Rite Editions in San Francisco and Sternberg Press in Berlin.

Paul Sietsema will be on view at 522 and 502 West 22nd Street from September 13 to October 25, 2014, Tuesday through Saturday, from 10:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M.

For additional information, please contact Helen Brown at (212) 243-0200 or hbrown@matthewmarks.com.