MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY
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Flash Art

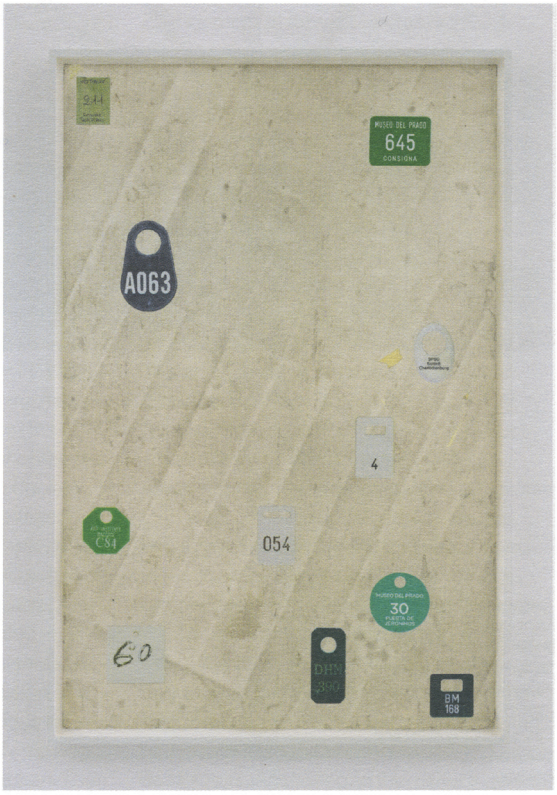
Paul Sietsema

Matthew Marks, Los Angeles

Los Angeles-based artist Paul Sietsema, though long praised for his work with film, has maintained a practice that is equally dedicated to painting and drawing. Out of a total of fifteen works shown here, thirteen were exquisite photorealistic renderings in ink and enamel on linen and paper, all produced this year. To only emphasize Sietsema's impeccable illusionism would ignore his subjects' weighty address of temporality, obsolescence and circulation. The artist's project is a self-reflexive analysis of cultural production, specifically of the distribution status of art objects, from their exhibition to their acquisition to their dissemination throughout the culture industry.

Sietsema chose the color green as his point of departure here, whose manifold meanings include fecundity, inexperience, envy and greed — the latter being the show's most salient topos. Most works address money or incorporate it literally in the form of coins, credit cards or dollar bills, while other pieces variously allude to age-generated value, museological effects and painterly processes. Sietsema's chosen color emphasis plays out in the main gallery's installation in a wittily entropic manner, beginning with the chromatically saturated *Green painting*, moving toward the lichen hues of *1997* and *1998*, and ending with the rather pallid pairing of *Telephone painting* and *Figure ground study (50/50)*, both of which employ green only sparingly. This flow from purity to dilution hints at the eventual rupture of artistic, technological and financial systems. As such, Sietsema's indefatigably analogue works are increasingly relevant in the face of digital omnipotence. Indeed, his unrelenting reliance upon and allusions to outmoded technologies — as in *Telephone painting*'s rotary telephone — uncannily address the speed of evolution and the inevitability of obsolescence.

by Thomas Duncan



Paul Sietsema
Collection 4 *(2016)*
Courtesy of the Artist and Matthew Marks Gallery, New York/Los Angeles

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