

The New York Times

REVIEW: DAVID SALLE PAINTINGS DELIVER COLLIDING CULTURE AT SKARSTEDT GALLERY

June 18, 2015
by Roberta Smith

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/19/arts/design/review-david-salle-paintings-deliver-colliding-culture-at-skarstedt-gallery.html>



David Salle's "Home Guard" (2015) in oil, acrylic, crayon, archival digital print and felt. All Rights Reserved, David Salle/Licensed by VAGA, New York, Skarstedt

DAVID SALLE

'New Paintings'

Skarstedt Gallery

550 West 21st Street, Chelsea

Through June 27

David Salle's paintings may vary in quality, but not much. The general range is from great to more than good enough. His current show presents the newest twists in a line of work initiated nearly 40 years ago that conceived of painting as a meticulously built surface where all manner of visual culture collide and collude; various artistic processes inbreed; and the tension between extreme self-consciousness and stream of consciousness is acute. Mr. Salle's restless, remarkable, constantly expanding endeavor deserves a New York retrospective sometime soon.

The current show doubles the fun with two distinct series. The "Late Product Paintings" are compressed odes to art and commerce of the 1950s and '60s. In the works, enlarged images of coiling toothpaste, cascades of crackers, a telephone receiver (remember them?),

fragments of advertisements, strings of "Grand Opening" banners — all reminiscent of the work of James Rosenquist — mingle with hands and heads lifted from Picasso's late paintings. Encroaching from all sides are thickly impastoed colors — blue with white, red with yellow — that evoke Willem de Kooning but also Gerhard Richter. And that's only the top layer. For example, look closer, and you'll see a new kind of trompe l'oeil mix of painting and photography: Some of the impastoed areas are printed photographs that merge imperceptibly with the real ones; patches of thin droplets of color are also printed photographs. In contrast, two of the best works, "Freak Flag" and "Home Guard," are jazzed up by black or white shapes that turn out to be felt.

Alternating with the visual overload are the relatively spare "Silver Paintings," which are monotypes made from photographs Mr. Salle took in 1991, enlarged and printed in grainy, bubbly sections. They show the performer and art dealer Massimo Audiello, draped in a sheet or blanket, vamping in front of works from the "Early Product Paintings" series. Return to the "Late Product Paintings," and you'll discover fragments of these images here and there. The eyes boggle, the mind follows suit, and a kind of delirium ensues.

A version of this review appears in print on June 19, 2015, on page C23 of the New York edition.