Cultural Daily

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Hung Up: On MOCA's Show Stealers

James L. Chapman · Wednesday, November 7th, 2018

Zoe Leonard goes on view for her first retrospective in an American museum (MOCA Geffen Contemporary), Rosa Loy opens at Kohn Gallery, and Julie Orser closes down JAUS' brick and mortar for their final exhibition: with over 20 local show openings, here's the art in LA to get hung up on this week…

Less than a month old, MOCA Grand Ave's *One Day At A Time: Manny Farber and Termite Art* is must-see programming for aficionados and novices alike. An eclectic discourse of over 30 artists and more than 100 works, this hybrid group show offers endless subliminal messaging between each solitary piece and the show's overall context embedded in the negative space on the gallery walls. Cleverly curated by Helen Molesworth and Rebecca Lowery, *One Day At A Time* is presented in homage to artist and film critic Manny Farber's notion that art should communally incite extraordinary reflection for life's everyday occurrences and surroundings. Taken as a whole, *One Day At A Time* asserts that the ordinary and banal contain no shortage of eccentricities, intricacies, nor eerie abnormalities. Visitors will encounter a forced perspective of life when gulping the show in a final mental swig upon exit — that those tiny, trivial items we shove under our beds as children, evening walks we've repeated countless times, and even our own recurring reflection in the bathroom mirror each deserves attention and contemplation for their ridiculous anomalies. The analytical icing on the cake for visitors is to imagine their own stunning existence as the most puzzling component of life's routine. What is the value of any object or location without human presence and interaction? This question echoes loudly in relation to the fact that every single person passing through *One Day At A Time* will experience something very different than their fellow guests, thus making this show… so charmingly strange.

August 2016 – Becky Suss (photo credit: James L. Chapman)

Though the late Manny Farber wins top billing in the exhibition's title, theme and gallery real estate, it's the female artists on view who positively steal the show. Becky Suss shines with her jaw dropping oil paintings of home interiors which appear more like portals as opposed to paintings. Museum-goers are gifted the chance to become acclimated with the show (and get those proverbial wheels spinning) before encountering Suss' rather imposing *August (2016)* waiting for them in the next room. The large canvas on loan from Josh and Sara Slocum's private collection transports the viewer to a gorgeous apartment, peering past crown molding to an ornate living room and picturesque study. An exceptionally pleasing palette is employed to depict endless eye candy and hidden objects of which viewers will delight in hunting for across their horizontal gaze. Suss' skill is unmistakable as displayed by her painting within a painting, hanging over a marble fireplace

amid acutely detailed Parquet floors and an unmissable bust on the bookshelf in the next room. When you see *August*, you simply want to be there and thanks to Suss' talent you simply are there.

August is followed by Suss' *Bathroom (Ming Green) (2016)* inviting MOCA's guests to her grandparents' Long Island bathroom— since demolished for larger residential developments. Featuring mementos and typical accoutrements like toothbrushes, Suss' work buys viewers a ticket on a nostalgia trip that encapsulates how the most commonplace environments and items create the deepest of meaning, and thus command feeling. Not lost is Suss' comparability to Lichtenstein's interiors; though less radical in nature, she maintains that epic ability to pluck the viewer out of the gallery and drop them into the world of her paintings.

Bathroom (Ming Green) 2016 – Becky Suss (photo credit: James L. Chapman)

Much deserved, honorable mention goes to Rachel Rose for her pensive video installation, *Lake Valley*. Layering her own hand-drawn animations with illustrations from 18th- and 19th-century children's books, Rose navigates habitual environments and their interconnectivity to our dreams. Aesthetically beautiful and narratively mesmerizing, *Lake Valley* is a piece worth seeing entirely on its own. There's a sincere allegory to this video work and *One Day At A Time*'s most delightful accomplishment in its attempt to explain the overall, curatorial thesis. Though visitors will meander through the gallery observing the most usual of items from the world outside, they'll never look at them the same way again — and that's pretty magical. *One Day At A Time: Manny Farber and Termite Art* is on view at MOCA Grand Avenue until March 3, 2019. Visitors can enjoy free admission every Thursday from 5pm – 8pm.

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