

ALTMAN SIEGEL

1150 25TH ST. SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94107

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"Painter Painter," The Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (cat), ed. Pamela Johnson and Kathleen McLean, 2013

Walker Art Center



Painter  
Painter



Notes  
for an  
Exhibition

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## Artists

Matt Connors  
Sarah Crowner  
Fergus Feehily  
Jay Heikes  
Rosy Keyser  
Charles Mayton  
Dianna Molzan  
Joseph Montgomery  
Katy Moran  
Alex Olson  
Scott Olson  
Zak Prekop  
Dominik Sittig  
Lesley Vance  
Molly Zuckerman-Hartung

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At a time when artists may work without obligation to medium, why choose the materials of painting? What does it mean for an artist to assume the role of painter today? And just what is at stake for a new generation committed to the medium?

This exhibition, the Walker's first group painting show in more than a decade, presents the work of 15 artists from the United States and Europe in a focused survey of emerging developments in abstract painting and studio practice. Our collaboration as co-curators began with a shared interest in the current state of the medium as well as a set of questions about the ever-shifting role of the painter in contemporary art and culture. A series of ongoing conversations and studio visits with the artists have culminated in this presentation of new work made specifically for the occasion. In the entries that follow, we offer our impressions of each.

Through our research, we have come to understand abstract painting today as a means, not an end. For these artists, painting is a generative process—one that is rooted in the studio but nevertheless open and receptive to the world. In recent years, as abstract painting has once again become more prominent in the field, a new generation has opened up fresh territory by sidestepping its entrenched discourses. Each freely pursues new languages of abstraction and eccentric methods of making, yet also affirms new relationships beyond the specificity of the medium. Indeed, painting today increasingly crosses paths with sculpture, poetry, film, design, fashion, music, and performance as well as disparate histories of art, craft, and visual culture.

The simple repetition in the show's title—*Painter Painter*—is meant to highlight the term's slipperiness as artists recast its various meanings in our present moment. While the painters in this exhibition identify as such, their roles remain as fluid and open as the medium itself. Within that freedom, painting becomes a conduit—a way to make contact with a world beyond the frame of their formal invention.

Eric Crosby & Bartholomew Ryan  
Exhibition co-curators, Walker Art Center

## Alex Olson

There is an elegant directness in Alex Olson's handling of paint that I admire. Her style is accessible and welcoming, and her means are modest. She uses inexpensive brushes, palette knives, and trowels to produce fluent, obvious marks (which she calls "flat-footed") with oil paint on linen. Each piece is the result of a careful process of making and evaluation—painting and reading. Proceeding layer by layer, she develops a distinctive architecture of conflicting visual cues for us to decipher. Yet despite their economy of means, her paintings yield complex and shifting optical effects of texture and color.

Grazing, swiping, scraping, carving, imprinting—every mark seems to signal a unique condition of surface. They offer up paint as a kind of information to be read. Olson collects these gestures as "stock signage," or a repertoire of characters that may be familiar from the history of painting but that resist a definitive interpretation. Each is at once an image of a brushstroke and the thing itself—a signifier and its signified. This relationship to language also extends to her titles, which often reference speech acts and include ambiguous words that may function simultaneously as verbs or nouns. Olson reminds us with her work that "painting" is one such word.

With her new works in the exhibition—*Proposal 9* and *Proposal 10* (both 2012)—Olson offers two further propositions for the painted surface. Each canvas features an overall iteration of woven "curls" created with a large round brush—a magnification of her smaller "commas" used in earlier pieces. Then, based on a sequence of moves, such as scraping, dragging, and inpainting, each piece develops differently. In *Proposal 9*, the artist executes an irregular grid of "ribbons." Paradoxically, they appear to rest on the surface of the layer below as well as cut through it. Black has carefully been dry-brushed over the entire canvas to amplify the graphic presence of each gesture in relief. As a result, certain aspects of the painting begin to read as a printed or photocopied image. Colorful scrapes dominate *Proposal 10*, making its central field take on the appearance of a textile or a torn poster. A border of shiny black curls further complicates our reading of figure and ground. —EC

b. Boston, 1978;  
lives and works  
in Los Angeles

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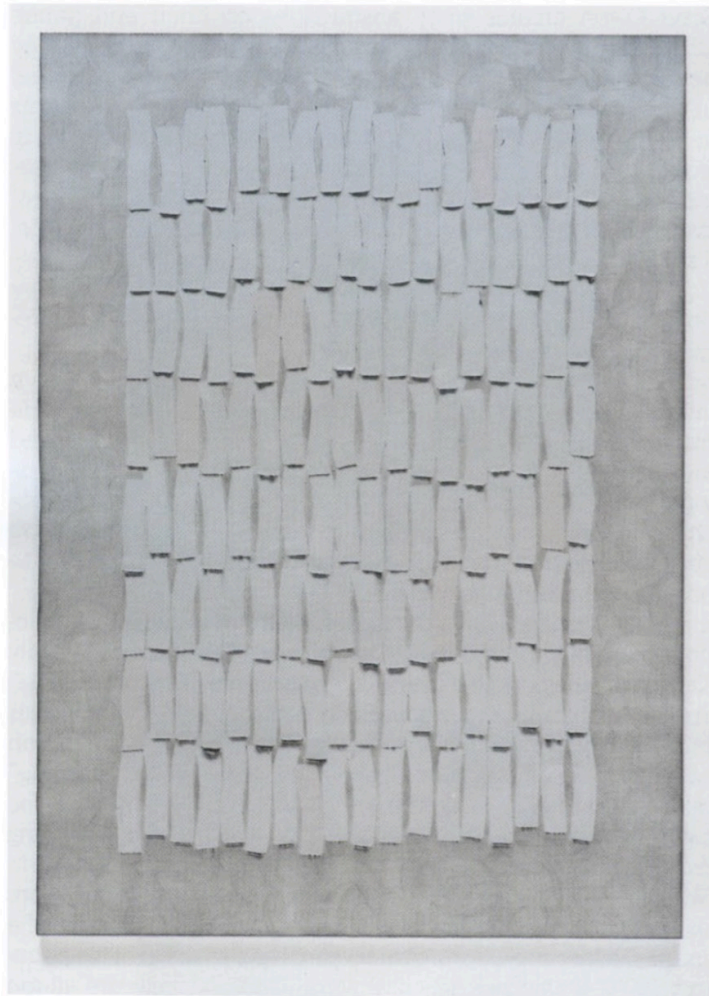
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Proposal 9 2012



## Exhibition Checklist

Matt Connors	12 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub> × 9 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>16</sub> × 9 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>16</sub> in. (31.5 × 22.9 × 1.4 cm) Courtesy Galerie Christian Lethert, Cologne; MISAKO & ROSEN, Tokyo; and mother's tankstation, Dublin	Dianna Molzan
<i>Lisp</i> 2012 chromogenic color print dimensions variable Courtesy the artist and CANADA, LLC	<i>The Ship</i> 2012 foil, enamel, spray paint, pen on paper, found frame, glass 14 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> × 10 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>16</sub> × 9 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>16</sub> in. (37.5 × 26.5 × 1.5 cm) Courtesy Galerie Christian Lethert, Cologne; MISAKO & ROSEN, Tokyo; and mother's tankstation, Dublin	<i>Untitled</i> 2013 oil on canvas 72 × 19 × 1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> in. (182.9 × 48.3 × 3.8 cm) Courtesy the artist and Overduin and Kite, Los Angeles
<i>Second Divot (articulated) for Candy</i> 2012 acrylic on canvas 80 × 60 in. (203.2 × 152.4 cm) overall installed Courtesy the artist and CANADA, LLC	Jay Heikes	<i>Untitled</i> 2013 oil on canvas on poplar 43 × 29 × 8 in. (109.2 × 73.7 × 20.3 cm) Courtesy the artist and Overduin and Kite, Los Angeles
<i>First Straight Third (red/blue)</i> 2013 acrylic on canvas 100 × 80 in. (254 × 203.2 cm) Courtesy the artist and CANADA, LLC	<i>We lead healthy lives to keep filthy minds</i> 2013 mixed media dimensions variable Courtesy the artist; Marianne Boesky Gallery, New York; Federica Schiavo Gallery, Rome; and Shane Campbell Gallery, Chicago	Joseph Montgomery
Sarah Crowner	Rosy Keyser	<i>Image One Hundred Sixty Six</i> 2011–2012 oil, cardboard, cedar, enamel, paper, canvas, plaster, pastel, fiberglass, resin, PVA, and oatmeal on canvas 28 × 19 × 3 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> in. (71.1 × 48.3 × 8.9 cm) Collection Ellen Kern, New York
<i>Ciseaux Rideaux</i> 2012 oil and gouache on sewn canvas, fabric, and linen 60 × 137 × 2 in. (152.4 × 348 × 5.1 cm) overall installed Courtesy the artist and Nicelle Beauchene Gallery	<i>Big Sugar Sea Wall</i> 2012 enamel and spray paint on steel and polycarbonate 100 × 90 × 12 in. (254 × 228.6 × 30.5 cm) Courtesy the artist and Peter Blum Gallery, New York	<i>Image One Hundred Sixty Eight</i> 2012 gouache and wax on cedar mounted to gypsum 32 × 16 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> × 2 in. (81.3 × 41.3 × 5.1 cm) Collection Adrienne and Peter Biberstein, Switzerland
Fergus Feehily	Charles Mayton	<i>Image One Hundred Seventy</i> 2012 oil and enamel on plaster, polystyrene, cardboard, fiberglass, and resin 73 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> × 20 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> × 7 in. (186.7 × 52.1 × 17.8 cm) Collection Lauren Belgray and Steven Eckler, New York
<i>Lodger</i> 2012 oil and acrylic on MDF 13 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> × 11 <sup>13</sup> / <sub>16</sub> × 5 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>16</sub> in. (35 × 30 × 0.8 cm) Courtesy Galerie Christian Lethert, Cologne; MISAKO & ROSEN, Tokyo; and mother's tankstation, Dublin	<i>Blind Ventriloquist</i> 2012 oil, acrylic, latex, fabric, collage, and silkscreen on canvas 72 × 120 × 1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> in. (182.9 × 304.8 × 3.8 cm) overall installed Courtesy the artist	
<i>River River</i> 2012 oil on card, found frame		

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Katy Moran

*Joe's in Town* 2012  
acrylic, paper, leather, and  
collage on board  
21 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> × 34 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> in.  
(55.3 × 87.6 cm)  
Courtesy Stuart Shave/  
Modern Art, London and  
Andrea Rosen Gallery,  
New York

Alex Olson

*Proposal 9* 2012  
oil on linen  
61 × 43 in.  
(154.9 × 109.2 cm)  
Courtesy the artist; Shane  
Campbell Gallery, Chicago;  
and Lisa Cooley Fine Art,  
New York

*Proposal 10* 2012  
oil on linen  
61 × 43 in.  
(154.9 × 109.2 cm)  
Courtesy the artist; Shane  
Campbell Gallery, Chicago;  
and Lisa Cooley Fine Art,  
New York

Scott Olson

*Untitled* 2012  
oil and marble dust ground  
on wood  
23 × 28 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> in.  
(58.4 × 73 cm)  
Courtesy the artist and  
Overduin and Kite,  
Los Angeles

*Untitled* 2012  
oil and marble dust ground  
on wood  
18 × 21 in.  
(45.7 × 53.3 cm)  
Courtesy the artist and

Overduin and Kite,  
Los Angeles

Zak Prekop

*Untitled Transparency* 2012  
oil and paper on canvas  
84 × 58 in.  
(213.4 × 147.3 cm)  
Courtesy the artist; Shane  
Campbell Gallery, Chicago;  
and Harris Lieberman  
Gallery, New York

Dominik Sittig

*Untitled* 2012  
oil on canvas  
70 <sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 51 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in.  
(180 × 130 cm)  
Courtesy the artist and  
Galerie Christian Nagel,  
Berlin/Cologne/Antwerp

*REPRISE II - APOTHEOSE  
DER SCHWESTER  
(REPRISE II - APOTHEOSIS  
OF THE SISTER)* 2013  
offset lithograph on paper;  
edition of 350  
33 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 23 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> in.  
(84 × 59.1 cm)  
Courtesy the artist and  
Galerie Christian Nagel,  
Berlin/Cologne/Antwerp

Lesley Vance

*Untitled* 2012  
oil on linen  
18 × 14 in.  
(45.7 × 35.6 cm)  
Courtesy the artist and  
David Kordansky Gallery,  
Los Angeles

*Untitled* 2012  
oil on linen  
24 × 17 in.

(61 × 43.2 cm)  
Courtesy the artist and  
David Kordansky Gallery,  
Los Angeles

*Untitled* 2012  
oil on linen  
15 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> × 13 in.  
(39.4 × 33 cm)  
Courtesy the artist and  
David Kordansky Gallery,  
Los Angeles

Molly Zuckerman-Hartung

*The Failure of Contingency*  
2012  
mixed media  
dimensions variable  
Courtesy the artist and  
Corbett vs. Dempsey,  
Chicago

*The Impossible* 2012  
oil, glitter, screws, ribbons,  
globe scrap, wire on cheese-  
cloth  
24 × 12 in.  
(61 × 30.5 cm)  
Courtesy the artist and  
Corbett vs. Dempsey,  
Chicago

*The Necessary (Blushing for  
Now)* 2012  
oil, acrylic, drop cloth on  
canvas  
70 × 60 in.  
(177.8 × 152.4 cm)  
Courtesy the artist and  
Corbett vs. Dempsey,  
Chicago

Dimensions are listed  
height × width × depth.

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THE FORBES

Studio Sessions:

Get to know the artists in *Painter Painter*, both in and out of the studio, through a collection of conversations, playlists, manifestos, and visual essays online at [walkerart.org/painter-painter-studio-sessions](http://walkerart.org/painter-painter-studio-sessions).