

The Multicolored Complexity of Chris Trueman and David Hicks

ARTSY

FEB 23RD, 2016 9:34 PM



Chris Trueman and David Hicks, the two artists currently showcased in the “New Works” exhibition at Edward Cella Art and Architecture in Los Angeles, might seem to be an unlikely pair. They work in drastically different media: Trueman in paint, Hicks in sculpture. Both, however, are carefully attuned to the optical qualities of color, and one finds in both their practices a passion for rich hues and a search for the perfect palette.

Hicks’ sculptures merge two unlikely materials (ceramics and steel) into towering assemblages. There’s a sense of contained chaos to the works;

each features a jumble of steel rods propping up a collection of delicate, hand-made ceramics. In contrast to the impersonal coldness of the steel constructions, the ceramic is often brilliantly colored, like flowers. Some, like *Construction (framed water)* (2015–16), bring together similarly colored objects, while others, like *Still Life Collections series 1* (2015), seem to enjoy their disarray.

The lively colors of Hicks' ceramics play wonderfully off Chris Trueman's vibrant canvases. Unlike abstract paintings that emphasize the flatness of a painting's surface, Trueman's paintings achieve a sense of considerable depth. Trueman does so by densely layering his paint, alternating between swaths of acrylic and coats of spray paint. The resulting canvases have an almost metallic quality; many of the color splatters read like oxidization on a time-weathered surface.

The complexities of Trueman's process result in painterly spaces that can be difficult to decipher. A mark will for one moment seem to reside on the topmost surface before quickly receding into the painting's hazy depths. Like Hicks, Trueman revels in unlikely color combinations and dizzying compositions that are difficult to turn away from.

—Andrew Wagner