



SUBSCRIBE

ARTFORUM



artguide NEWS SHOWS PRINT ARCHIVE COLUMNS VIDEO BOOKFORUM A&E 艺术论坛 NEWSLETTERS

CRITICS' PICKS

- All Cities
Baltimore
Bolzano
London
Moscow
Mumbai
New York
Portland
Rome
Salzburg
San Francisco
San Juan
Seoul



View of "Studio Visitor," 2022. From left: Rebecca Ness, Sam, 2022; Joel Shapiro, Untitled, 2021; Rebecca Ness, Mike, 2021-22.

NEW YORK

Rebecca Ness and Joel Shapiro

MORGAN PRESENTS
155 Suffolk Street
February 24-April 7, 2022

"Studio Visitor" is a two-person exhibition that features a selection of new figurative paintings by emerging artist Rebecca Ness. All of them have been hung to surround Untitled, 2021, a deep-blue, freestanding wood sculpture by renowned Minimalist Joel Shapiro—his sole

contribution to the show.

While many artists have rendered their own studios—most famously Henri Matisse, and more recently, Lisa Yuskavage—Ness sets about depicting others' spaces, capturing her fellow thinkers and makers at work within them. Her approach is marked by meticulous detail—see the lettering of file names on the titular subject's desktop in Willie, 2021-22—while broader stylizations imbue her large-scale tableaux with a vivid, almost animated character. Ness portrays her subjects with a clear affection and demystifies the oft-mythologized creative process with an affable, unpretentious matter-of-factness. She does this most compellingly in Mike, 2021-22, in which we see the artist moving amid the clutter of his garage. The room's fluorescent lights spill into the night, illuminating pebbles and foliage beyond the concrete flooring.

Meanwhile, Shapiro's sculpture — built out of six rectangular blocks and set on a short plinth —counters Ness's vibrant, naturalistic settings via an elegant, simple abstraction. Framed by these paintings, Shapiro's pared-down but vaguely figurative form echoes the people in Ness's pictures, navigating the fragmented organization of their respective environments. With this, Shapiro's piece conjures the stuff of your typical artist's studio, full of raw materials and endless potential. The sculpture's off-kilter stance also calls to mind the excited pose of someone in the throes of a major eureka moment, eager to see through the work at hand.

— Rachel Summer Small



NEW YORK

The Yes Men

CARRIAGE TRADE
277 Grand Street 2nd Floor
December 9, 2021-March 27, 2022

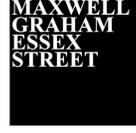
Stepping up to Carriage Trade's second-floor glass doors, you'll see a still from a BBC broadcast with text reading: "Dow accepts full responsibility." It's meant to feel like walking into a TV, passing through a mediated image. Thus begins a career survey of the Yes Men (Jacques Servin and Igor Vamos) who have spent decades culture jamming, pranking,

protesting, and infiltrating the highest echelons of global neoliberal governance, from the World Trade Organization to Shell Corporation to the Republican National Convention. This blown-up image (Dow Does the Right Thing, 2004), perhaps their most recognizable work, shows them live on air as spokespersons for Dow Chemical, publicly pledging massive reparations to victims of the 1984 Union Carbide pesticide plant disaster in India.

Most interesting for me is the historical context to their development present in ephemera. Rather than typecasting them as maestros of the "parafictional," the show begins from their inception during the alter-globalization movement of the 1990s and early 2000s, from which many of today's street tactics and autonomous media projects emerged. Before they were the Yes Men, Vamos was part of the Barbie Liberation Organization (BLO), which swapped the voice boxes of three hundred talking GI Joes and Barbies on store shelves, while Servin worked as a developer on 1996 video game SimCopter, sneaking unauthorized gay characters into the Sims universe. They met one another through a mutual friend, formed @TMark, and executed several ambitious actions, such as building a fake George W. Bush campaign website, egging on the war criminal qua painter to foreshadow the Patriot Act on live TV: "There ought to be limits to freedom." Reminding gallery visitors of their militancy, as discourse on "pranks" is often depoliticizing, in Genoa during the 2001 Group of Eight protests, they distributed mirrors to focus sunlight into the eyes of rampaging police (Archimedes Project, 2001).

There has been much discussion over the past two decades about whether critical art can be materially effective while still being complicit with institutional frameworks. For more than twenty years, the Yes Men have sidestepped this question, itself determined by liberal premises of social change. The materials assembled at Carriage Trade are an entryway to strategies that are important tools in a wider arsenal, a diversity of tactics if you will. The exhibition amounts to more than just an archive—it is a toolbox for intervening in the dissemination of information, inviting repetition and escalation for these worrisome and ever more mediated times.

— Andreas Petrossiants



ARTFORUM INBOX

Register to receive our newsletters—The Archive, Must See, Dispatch, and The Issue—as well as special offers from Artforum.

E-MAIL [input] [SUBMIT]

artguide
ADVERTISE
SIGN IN

SUBSCRIBE
BACK ISSUES
CONTACT

PRIVACY POLICY
CONTACT
[social icons]