

Through a Green Glass Door Opaquely: Perspectives in Alexi Worth

by Roman Kalinovski

Alexi Worth: Green Glass Doors at DC Moore Gallery

March 26 to April 25, 2015
535 West 22nd Street, 2nd Floor
Between 10th and 11th avenues
New York City, 212 247 2111

Alexi Worth's latest solo exhibition at DC Moore, "Green Glass Doors," consists of six paintings tied together by similar size, content, and a Coke-bottle green palette. The theme of the show, as implied by the title, involves glass doors that appear to be the entrances to condominium buildings or boutique shops. The exact identity of the doors is ultimately unimportant, as Worth seems more interested in their formal qualities: his paintings are, like the doors some of them depict, simultaneously transparent and closed.

Worth uses non-traditional supports and techniques in his work. Painting with airbrushed acrylic on nylon mesh or Mylar has the effect of layering illusionistic space on top of the painting's actual, material space. In areas where the surface is translucent, the stretchers and the wall behind the painting can be glimpsed. This gives each painting two sources of space: the illusionistic space of the painted image and the space behind the painting that can be seen through the mesh. These perspectives often clash with each other, such that perspectives cannot be synchronized to create a coherent sense of space.

365 (all paintings 2015) presents the strongest example of this, with a head-on view of a glass door and the various opaque notices and work permits taped to it. The door is a convincing example of illusionistic painting verging on *trompe l'oeil*. The painting's literal interior space, seen through the translucent mesh, presents another perspective that contradicts the painting's illusionism. Looking through the painting, the depth of the stretchers is inconsistent with the depth of the illusion. *365* isn't a mere anamorphic trick: there is no magic spot where the viewer can stand to make these viewpoints snap into place. On the contrary, the painting flips back and forth between illusion and reality, never settling in one position for very long.



Alexi Worth, *Doorway*, 2015. Acrylic on nylon mesh, 28 x 21 inches. Courtesy of DC Moore Gallery



Alexi Worth, 365, 2015. Acrylic on nylon mesh, 34 x 22 inches. Courtesy of DC Moore Gallery

Voyeurism — the perverse joy of seeing what one isn't supposed to see — is another recurrent motif in this show. In fact, all of the works on view have some voyeuristic elements, whether in terms of content (a hand reaching under a fig leaf) or material (an inventory number written on a stretcher bar). The painting *Green Bedroom* shows the entangled bodies of a couple *in flagrante delicto*, each groping under the other's shirt. With their heads outside the frame and their bodies devoid of personality, these lovers are anonymous to the viewer. They could represent a consequence of living behind glass doors: the desire to be seen and the need to frustrate the act of viewing.

Faced with a locked glass door, one can peek inside, but sooner or later there is a wall that cannot be breached without permission. In Worth's paintings it is the literal wall behind the canvas that frustrates the surface's illusion of depth. This frustration prevents the paintings from resolving into architectural studies or

green and white erotica. In the places where the wall is visible through the mesh, the painting ceases to be a flat canvas and becomes a veil that hangs between two

ways of seeing, between the real and the illusionary, between painting and the world.

<http://www.artcritical.com/2015/04/24/roman-kalinovski-on-alexi-worth/>