

## **Seth Armstrong - *The Air is Thick***

***March 28, 2015 - April 18, 2015***

**Thinkspace (Los Angeles)** - is pleased to present *The Air is Thick* featuring new works by Los Angeles based artist Seth Armstrong. Armstrong's paintings self-consciously capture a sense of looking, arresting moments with cinematic detail and voyeuristic curiosity. Varying in scale, the paintings offer views that are alternately intimate and vast, moving expertly between the monumental and the minute. Laden with detail and suggestion, each piece offers a moment in the trajectory of a larger narrative, and the viewer is compelled to realign the fractures of these inconclusive moments. Hanging the works on suggestion rather than on the overt, Armstrong builds tension and excitement in every painting with the possibility and expectation of action. Surfeited with this palpable sense of permanent anticipation and arrest, the air is indeed thick enough to cut.

Originally from Los Angeles, Armstrong studied painting in Northern Holland and completed a BFA at San Francisco's California College of the Arts. His deft handling of oil paint clearly demonstrates a facility inspired by traditional painting techniques, and a material aptitude for the dense capture of light and color. The intense realism of his style is often tempered by a looser, more painterly approach, and by a stylized handling of light and dimension. With viscous luminosity and substantive flesh, qualities achieved with a seamlessly clean application, his works feel heavy with tactility and dense with tangible space and body. Armstrong's use of stark saturated contrasts is offset by a tendency towards stylized hyper-color, creating both depth and edge that exceeds the muted tones of the real. These contrasts achieve a sense of brooding visual tension that manages to evoke both nostalgia and strangeness simultaneously.

In *The Air is Thick*, Armstrong continues to explore themes that have consistently fascinated his output: the intrigue of illicit looking, and the fine line between intimacy and trespass. Just as cinema manages to satisfy our innate love of voyeuristic access, so too do the paintings offer us views onto private lives that both frustrate and satisfy. The suggestion of constant narrative pervades even the stillest and least active views, as Armstrong reminds us of the secret recesses behind all closed doors and all quiet faces.

**Erik Jones - *Color/Full***  
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Concurrently on view in the Thinkspace project room are new works by Erik Jones in *Color/Full*. Originally from St Petersburg Florida, Jones currently lives and works in New York city. His technically complex mixed-media works combine the figurative with the geometric in seamless collusion and concert. Jones' hyperrealistic figuration is offset by geometric patterns and momentums that seem to live and breathe as symbiotic organisms. The figure is ensconced by these colorful geometric expanses, as each "wears" the other and becomes virtually indivisible from its counterpart. Clothed by pattern and color, the body is set within and against expressionistic modules of sculpted graphic space. In his new body of work, Jones takes his penchant for spatial play and surreal composition to the next level in a series of Dimensional Paintings. These works invade the third dimension, literally, as surfaces peel from their supports, images slide from the walls, and paint pools on the floor.

Jones begins his works by compiling a figurative reference from several photographic images, then designing harmonious geometric fields by compositing form, color and shape digitally. The composition is then projected and traced onto paper and materially executed with several painstaking layers of watercolor, ink, pencil, oil pastel and acrylic. This expert combination of illustration and painting techniques accounts for the depth and dimensionality of the work. The combination of graphic patterning, color blocking, line and hyperreal figuration meld into an entirely elevated visual plane of oppositional, and yet entirely confluent and continuous, axes. The visual delight of these paintings resides in this inspired reconciliation. The Dimensional Paintings take this impulse to the next level by revealing some of the materiality and process that remains otherwise concealed in the high finish of the work. This intentional disclosure of tension and process - a literal stripping and dismantling of planes - takes the paintings into a sculptural realm, revealing the artifice and construction of their dynamic oppositions.

As the title of the exhibition suggests, the work is *full*; saturated to the point of rupture, the paintings burst with color and movement, and spill unapologetically into real space and time.

