

ALTMAN SIEGEL

49 GEARY ST, *str.* 416 SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94108

tel: 415.576.9300 / *fax:* 415.373.4471

www.altmansiegel.com

art ltd.

Lutz, Leora, "Liam Everett: 'The Elephant Calf' at Altman Siegel," *Art ltd*, May 2016

Archeology can loosely be defined as the study of civilizations and the history of people through the examination of excavated geological sites. In contrast, architecture is the process of designing and constructing habitats. Reminiscent of both architecture and archeology, artist Liam Everett approaches his new series of paintings through a rigorous process akin to building and excavation. Like an historical documenter, he works on all the canvases at once—each individual piece becomes complete in its own time as if stopping at that moment when sacred ground has been discovered. Everett's new large-scale paintings are on view at Altman Siegel gallery in an exhibition titled "The Elephant Calf," after Bertolt Brecht's 1926 play of the same name. The play was originally presented as an appendix to a longer play "Man Equals Man," a surrealist farce. Brecht envisioned the smaller play presented in the foyer of the longer play; a "play within a play." As such, Everett approaches his art practice as "play/farce" with materials and process, foregrounded by the context of a larger whole: life and our surroundings. His indoor/outdoor studio in Sebastopol is the perfect habitat to use discarded pieces of the suburbs as tools for his expeditions that take place on the canvas.

Techniques such as pressing painted plastics and peeling them away, using grates or pieces of construction sites as stencils, and applying industrial spray paint as well as thick brushstrokes all form his lexicon of gesture. Throughout the blasts of color, white shows through after vigorous sanding, creating a texture that causes the eye to jump around the canvas. In this way, there is no focal point but instead a pulsating rhythm that creeps forward and recedes at each gaze, on par with the Mark Rothko's contemplative near-monochromes or Helen Frankenthaler's energetic color fields. All of the work is untitled, with subtitles referencing Native North and South American tribal lands, seemingly linked to abstract ideas of place and

identity with a nod to the concept of archeology. *Untitled (Nakbe)*(2016) is the most stunning piece, particularly poetic as it is bold, with vivid blue and purple tones dominating a field scattered with glints of white where the paint has been sanded all the way down to the primer. It is as if digging to unearth buried treasure only reveals solid marble at the bottom to be the most beautiful discovery of all.

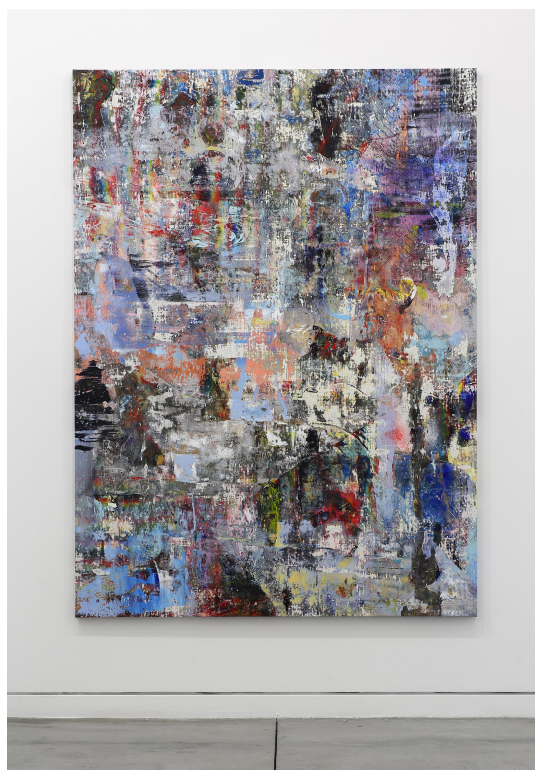


Image: *Untitled (Nakbe)*, 2016, **Liam Everett**
Acrylic, enamel, alcohol, and salt on oil primed linen
77" x 56 1/2"