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Arts

Featured Review: Christopher Orr & J. Parker Valentine & Rezi van Lankveld

By Jessica Baran

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This trio (from London, New York and Amsterdam, respectively) propose their solutions to the problems of abstraction and novelty in the painting tradition. Orr, whose small canvases possess the shadowed, sepia patina of Dutch Old Master paintings, is figural in his depictions, though utterly elusive in his content. Valentine makes chaotic charcoal marks and pink blush rubbings and assembles the pieces to create jagged lean-to structures that rise to a mere fraction of the human scale. Van Lankveld is thoroughly abstract in imagery, filling a moderate-size board with matte, gray-scale, marbled paint, but suggestively depictive in spirit: The piece is entitled Listen. The artists couldn't be treating their projects with any more dense a sense of history, seriousness and importance, which makes their work both highly portentous and highly cerebral. Through June 28 at the Front Room of the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis, 3750 Washington Boulevard; 314-535-4660 or www.contemporarystl.org. Hours: 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Wed.-Sat., 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Sun.