

October 24 – December 5, 2015

AUSTIN LEE

Nothing Personal

Postmasters is pleased to announce our second solo exhibition with Austin Lee. Paintings, wall paintings and sculptures will be on view in both of our gallery spaces.

"Everything should be exploration."

"I keep exploring until there is calmness where nothing asks to be changed."

"I don't think of my work as being understandable. There really isn't an answer or end. My hope is that anyone can understand it as well as they understand a tree."

- Austin Lee

Austin Lee's generation can be called "digital natives," - artists for whom that realm is natural, organic and matter of fact. He is a painter who effortlessly delivers pixel to paint transformation. Lee's paintings are familiar, yet strange, otherworldly, yet grounded in sometimes tragicomical earthly realities. While they are figurative, there is a level of abstraction that takes the simplest and most recognizable of forms and disassociates them from representation.

Lee often starts by making digital sketches on an iPad. He then loosely translates the compositions onto canvas using airbrush and fluorescent paint in response to the garishness and luminosity of the screen. By remaking the virtual into physical, the immersive textured surface and color of the paintings slow down the viewer's perception of the more immediate screen images. Often based on real people, the figures depicted could be described as cartoons with a soul where a few quick gestures vividly convey the emotions of his subjects.

Lee's works in "Nothing Personal" range in their delivery of spatial progression from flat to perspectival to dimensional illusion, culminating in physical figurative sculpture (3D printed scans that are then textured and painted).

With economy of means, Lee serves up prodigious psychological turmoil, his faces registering many varieties of pleasure and fright. They're James Ensor's masks or Peter Saul's monsters updated for an age in which identities no longer hold their shape for long.

- Andrew Russeth, Gallerist/New York Observer

While Hockney presented works on iPad that look like someone trying to make 'proper' paintings that transcend the limits of digital painting tools, Lee's art revels in those supposed limitations. While Hockney's paintings look like the carefully worked products of an old man who has stumbled across the joys of the digital but whose thinking is rooted in the analogue world, Lee's work transfers a digital aesthetic onto canvases.

- Niru Ratnam, The Spectator, London

Austin Lee (b.1983) lives and works in New York. He received an MFA in Painting from Yale School of Art and a BFA from Tyler School of Art. His most recent solo exhibitions include Carl Kostyal in London and Stockholm and Kaleidoscope in Milan. His work has been written about in Artnews, New York Magazine, Leap, Time Out New York and London, The NY Observer, Hyperallergic, Black Book, Kaleidoscope Magazine, The Spectator, and Rhizome.

In September, a book of Austin Lee's drawings has been published by SPHERES. It comes with a free augmented reality app that animates the images. The book is available at the gallery or via www.spheres-publication.ch

