



PAINTING

CHRIS JOHANSON'S "POSSIBILITIES"

Apr 06, 2017 - May 13, 2017 Mitchell-Innes & Nash, New York
April 2017

Chris Johanson: *Possibilities* is an exhibition of new paintings and works on paper on view in an immersive installation at the [Mitchell-Innes & Nash's](#) Chelsea space. Johanson's work engages with the meditative qualities of art-making and the sincere direct communication through painting and sculpture.



He often refers to his painting as a form of “social documentary”, as the work captures common human issues like anger, anxiety, hope, fear, joy, and doubt, as well as the collective sense of wonder about our place in the universe. In *Possibilities*, Johanson reflects on the complex moral and political state of society today. Human figures are balanced in the air, caught in the delicate and dangerous act of traversing tightropes that Johanson has suspended in the gallery. In between the human figures, paintings of parrots, rats, and worms complete a small ecosystem which

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both coexists and intersects with the traversing humans above, offering a model for peaceful co-existence and a sense of a synergistic community.

Text-based works figure heavily in the exhibition. Throughout the gallery are odd-shaped pieces of found wood painted with a serially repeated '¢' sign. Johanson has often been concerned with how society measures value, and the proliferation of 'cents' signs throughout the gallery space offers a poetic critique of the capitalist impulse to accumulate wealth. Of these works, Johanson offers the pointed remark: "I want to make cents. I just want to make sense." Works on paper that read "possibility" are also tacked throughout the gallery, alongside paintings that exclaim "Oh, yes" or "Oh, no". Despite the social and political critique inherent in much of the work, as the title of the show suggests, Johanson's enduring message is optimistic.