

Henry Flynt, *Tritone Monochord*, 1987, dulcimer tuning pin, brackets, screws, violin bridge, guitar string, permanent marker, wood, 48 × 40½".

perspectives, appeared in grid-like fashion over the white interior walls and ceiling of the square-room installation *Logically Impossible Space*, 1990, and painted on the two mirrored panels facing each other that comprised *Stroke Numeral II*, 1989. In the latter, when the viewer placed his or her head at a certain angle between the mirrors, the work produced a *mise-en-abyme* effect. These installations were similarly perceptually confounding: In *Logically Impossible Space*, the repeating shapes disoriented one's sense of place within the real cubic space of the room, while the endlessly echoing Necker cubes in *Stroke Numeral II* created a sense of vertigo. In *Esthetics of Eeriness*, 1992, a suite of six off-key phrases painted on MDF plaques oscillated between

absurdly making some sense and making no sense (e.g., PEOPLE TURN WHAT IS ROBUSTLY MURDEROUS OR STAINFUL ABOUT IT INTO WHAT IS ROBUSTLY MURDEROUS OR STAINFUL ABOUT THEM).

Less captivating were works that didn't seem to be much more than the sum of their parts. For example, there was little intrinsically interesting about *Aleatoric Painting #3*, 2012, and *Aleatoric Painting #4*, 2017, two abstract oil canvases that were made through a combination of predetermined scores and chance operations. Nearby, *The Seminar*, 1988, didactically presented photographs of Flynt and his niece reading, conversing, and posing for the camera; these photos were hung above a vitrine containing excerpts from expository texts on depth psychology by Flynt alongside examples of the mainstream materials he was critiquing.

Upon leaving the gallery, the viewer was proffered one last intellectual provocation. An enigmatic wall text printed on a plaque prompted the viewer to COUNT THE WORKS IN THE SHOW WITHOUT REFERRING TO A LIST, and afterward to ASK AT THE FRONT DESK FOR THE EXPLANATION PAGE. The "explanation"—for a work titled *Counting*, 2011, as the page revealed—points out that mentally counting relies on memory, so by the time one counts to "two," "one" is already gone. This leads to a paradox, that "one already has to believe in the impossible to understand counting." This is what makes Flynt most memorable: his ability to produce an exercise in logic that leads to a productive contradiction framed within an aesthetic experience.

—Kavior Moon

Caroline Walker

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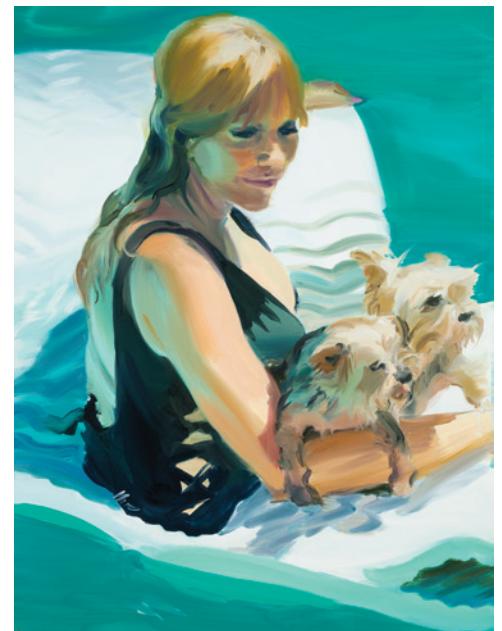
"Goes to LA once" would be one way to describe "Sunset," the Los Angeles debut of Scottish-born, London-based painter Caroline Walker, for its preoccupation with warm, reflective surfaces—but such an indictment may not be entirely warranted. Walker's fixation on Southern California stretches back to 2016 at least, as manifested in her solo outing at Grimm Gallery in Amsterdam, "The Racquet Club," for which the artist drew from Palm Springs to articulate her peculiar nostalgia for midcentury resort living. The banality that underwrites her ritzy panoramas decelerates her finish fetish, giving

a look of a sustained attention to her subjects. Yet her measured arrangement of all the kitsch totems and pretensions that have come to stand in for a particularly lobotomized affect supposedly native to upscale subdivisions—a near-eugenicist obsession with fitness and cleansing, loungewear, yappy toy-dog breeds, and manicured pools, as well as an outmoded belief in the virtues of modernist single-family home architecture, all tastefully modulated by a feigned noir voyeurism—does not defamiliarize their surroundings so much as reinforce their vapidness.

Depth, however, appears to be beside the point. In dividing the show between two thematically related but practically disjointed parts, the message that could potentially bind them into a more robust whole remains ultimately obscured. The first section, comprising six large, rectangular oil paintings that line the main exhibition space, presents a dossier on the life of a former Miss Colorado, who drifts expressionlessly between breakfast at the Beverly Hills Hotel (*Desayuno* [all works 2017]) and poolside calisthenics behind her Hollywood Hills home (*Training*). In each of these expansive canvases, she is dwarfed, Gregory Crewdson-like, at regular intervals by the excess of her environs. *Adrift*, a thirty-one-by-twenty-four-inch portrait of our buxom protagonist depressing a chic white pool floaty while cradling two Yorkies, hangs dryly in a foyer linking the main gallery to an auxiliary space displaying the show's more modest offerings. In this second room, the viewer encounters six scaled-down studies, among them *Blow Dry Study* and *Study for Cooler*, that miniaturize in oil the archetypal bourgeois interiors that lend merely a supporting role in the primary space. The former depicts a salon excursion, while the latter, a purple nocturne, features an illuminated glass Case Study House that indirectly corresponds to the rectilinear domicile that frames the larger paintings. As a kind of behind-the-scenes take on the first room, these sketches obey a certain prying logic underlying the show but undercut some of its dissociative fantasies.

If one suspends efforts to tally what the exhibition's constituent parts add up to, one finds, to be sure, a certain *jouissance* present in these paintings that approaches something like adding an Edward Hopper filter to the reality television series *Vanderpump Rules* or blasting yacht rock to spite your neighbors. But Walker isn't exactly Michael Haneke, so it's unclear how ironic a sensibility she truly means to embrace. The realist gaze she casts onto her central protagonist can be a little too on the nose with the references it deploys to succeed completely as a joke, and too abbreviated in its range of tropes to be accepted as an elaborately coded critique of bourgeois femininity. (One possible exception is *Fishing*, in which the intrusion of a balding pool cleaner—whose body is angled toward a seemingly indifferent, imperiously floating pageant queen—might be read as an attempt at class commentary, but with no discernible follow-through.) While the uncertain middle ground Walker occupies may be, virtuously, neither moral nor neutral, it is perhaps stenographic in its curiosity about the private lives of other women—one that bends more toward the film character Jeanne Dielman than *Real Housewives* in its insistence on the unbearable melancholy of white, suburban tedium.

—Karllyne Ejercito



Caroline Walker, *Adrift*, 2017, oil on linen, 31½ × 23¾".