

ARTslant San Francisco

The Slant

HOME MAGAZINE CALENDAR GALLERIES ART SHOP ARTISTS COMMUNITY ADD

Art Los Angeles Contemporary: Kevin Cosgrove at mother's tankstation by Charles Moffett



Tucked in a corner of the churn and bustle of Art Los Angeles Contemporary, a mid-sized art fair in its sophomore year, I found a few unexpected paintings, which in their quietude puncture the raucous noise so common to a fair. Dublin gallery, mother's tankstation, devoted its entire booth to the 26-year-old Cosgrove, creating a booth that allowed me to get lost (as much as one could at a fair) in his brushstrokes and imagery.

From afar, Cosgrove's work appears to be nothing more than working class photorealism. Upon closer examination however, the pictures unfold into abstracted scenes of blue-collar workshops painted with a rough and tender craft. While the nominal amount of light that seeps into his scenes does little to warm the chilly locales, it is here the artist excels. Cosgrove has a tremendous grasp on the depiction of light, especially how it penetrates the coldest of spaces, or reminds us of the buzzing flicker of a neon light. Painted from memory, Cosgrove brings to life the smell of diesel or the feeling of a slick concrete floor stained with oil and fuel. His uninhabited paintings allow for the viewer to be absorbed into the environment, making his work particularly poignant for anyone who has stepped a workboot into a shed or barn, or spent hours hunched tinkering over a work bench or tractor.

The work may not have been the best choice for a fair in Los Angeles, it is a bit cold, and the mood a little dark for the flash and sun of this traffic-jam on the Pacific, but their Proustian quality gives the work a sentimental touch, one that warms the cold spaces, if only ever so slightly. However, the easily accessible subject matter coupled with a use of light reminiscent of a Luc Tuymans painting, allows for multiple entry points for a variety of people. Only in his mid-twenties, it is clear Cosgrove is perfecting his style, but when he gets it right there is a certain combination of art historical awareness and personal touch that makes his work indelibly human.

- Charles Moffett

(Image: Kevin Cosgrove, *Brown Capri*, Oil on Linen, 50 x 60 cm, 2010. Courtesy of mother's tankstation)