



Vladislav Markov, *xC*, 2017, tar and gasoline on vintage toilet paper, dimensions variable.

Brian Dario, Liza Lacroix, and Vladislav Markov M23

The palette of this three-person show was dominated by brown hues: in the crude-oil-like sheen of paintings by Liza Lacroix, the grimy residues of sweaty hands and raw materials in sculptures by Brian Dario, and the delicate gradations of burnt umber to dark tan in an installation by Vladislav Markov. Materially, each work was in some way stained. The protective panels of suede in Dario's *Foam*, 2018—a foot-and-a-half-high stack of eighteen single, used work gloves—looked rough, teased into a texture resembling sandpaper. Markov's long sheets of old toilet paper, *xC*, 2017, which had been soaked in tar and gasoline, hung like a row of worn coats along one wall of the gallery. Though durable enough to withstand the artist's process, the tissue was torn and puckered. Within this context, Lacroix's works—*Untitled*, 2017, and *Untitled*, 2018—also seemed to be less “paintings” in the traditional sense than modifications of canvas as a textile. On the larger piece from 2017, thin brushstrokes and fingerprints feathered a border around the central block of a uniform, leathery color, which could have been some other viscous material.

The press release for the show declined to describe or analyze the art on view. In terms of their forms and properties, the works seemed to function as meditations on time—time as labor, or aggregation as a marker of time. Even Dario’s gloves, with the thicker fingers aligned so that the overall form created an upward-reaching gesture, felt like a stop-motion animation of a hand being slowly raised. The palpability of time could be considered a result of most of the works looking used—as though they had already lived a life outside the studio and gallery—thereby emphasizing both the taking and the doing in Jasper Johns’s famous instructions to “Take an object / Do something to it / Do something else to it. [Repeat.]” Here one returns to the concept of labor, thinking now of whose labor is framed and what that labor entails. If Dario’s *Foam* brings to mind blue-collar workers welding and perspiring in the warehouse, or even fabricators making art, his *Untitled*, 2018, shifts the focus to more minimal gestures. This small sculpture is merely a white handle grip, dingy from human contact, taken from the artist’s bike. It was pulled off the handlebar in such a way that it folded in on itself, and thus appears vaguely sexual. Markov’s *xC* similarly complicates such questions of labor. As vintage material, the toilet paper—mass-produced, originating in a factory—had already been marked by age, but not by use. Its beige tone may have resulted from a long wait in a supply closet, or from Markov’s procedure. Within this formal dialogue, it is tempting to again break down Lacroix’s paintings, to discuss them as if they are sculptures, the canvas another readymade sullied by fingertips, scuffs, dust, and paint until it was finally relieved of its banality and hung in the gallery.

But to focus on processes and histories is to neglect something important about the way these objects sat with each other in space. *xC* fluttered and breathed, sighing at its more solid, painterly cousin, Lacroix’s 2017 canvas, across the room. *Foam* reached out, offering an invitation to touch, hinting at the tactility of its neighbors. Dario’s bike grip sculpture was more hesitant to reveal itself, fitted carefully over a metal rod protruding from the far wall of the gallery. While searching for the work or coming upon it by chance, one was made more aware of the rawness of the exhibition space: its beams and rafters and plastic-covered pipes could also be works. The *Untitled* paintings looked on stoically, absorbing and refracting light in intermittent whispers.

—Mira Dayal