

# ARTSLANT

## Visions from the Present Future: Artissima's Top Emerging Artists

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Now entering its 14th year, Artissima's Present Future is an acknowledged launch pad for the careers of emerging young talent. Indeed, internationally renowned artists such as Dora García, Jeremy Deller, Ryan Trecartin, and Phil Collins all had early presentations in this section of the fair. This year, 20 artists have been selected by a team of five international curators: Luigi Fassi, Catalina Lozano, Piper Marshall, Jamie Stevens, and Xiaoyu Weng. Each curator's distinctive aesthetic sensibilities—not to mention overarching conceptual concerns and particular engagements with the “contemporary”—have resulted in a dynamic and layered, if somewhat uneven, selection of solo presentations.

Unlike other sections of the fair, which snake around the convention center demarcated by brightly colored way-finding vinyl installed on the ground, Present Future forms a dense cluster directly in front of the main entrance. A blank, unstretched canvas, laptops, cables, records, and various bric-a-brac littering a large portion of the floor greeted early visitors to the preview. While most gallerists relaxed and awaited visitors, several attended to last minute installation details: hanging a final work, applying labels, or (a popular sight) smearing daubs of white paint directly onto the wall with a finger to hide nail holes.



Dawn Kasper at work

At first glance, Dawn Kasper's quiet, industrious tinkering—moving small items, playing music on a laptop, adjusting cables—could be taken for the work of a gallery preparator or a musician preparing for a performance. A small outcropping of chairs abutted Kasper's work station where visitors could share a moment with her free-floating, yet

intimate performance. The everyday accumulation of objects and gestures often makes it unclear where the fumbling ends and the performance begins, which is perhaps one of the most interesting aspects of how Kasper directs her audience's attention. When a woman, presumably from Kasper's New York gallery, David Lewis, came over to apologize for not being able to locate a bucket, Kasper looked up from repeatedly dragging her paint-covered hands down the unstretched canvas on the floor to respond sunnily, "No sweat!" Unbeholden to any particular theme, the strength of Present Future resides in its artists. In this spirit, I'll share a few more of my personal favorites:

Jeremiah Day, *The Frank Church - River of No Return Wilderness*, 2012–2014; Courtesy Arcade Fine Arts and Ellen de Bruijne Projects

Immediately adjacent to Kasper, the American artist Jeremiah Day had a fascinating work co-presented by Arcade Fine Arts and Ellen de Bruijne Projects. The Berlin-based artist primarily uses photography and performance to investigate issues of historical memory and place. His research-based project *The Frank Church - River of No Return Wilderness* (2012–2014) comprises a video, photographs, mural, and archival documentation relating to the former American senator Frank Church, who led investigations into the FBI and CIA's harrasment of Martin Luther King and the Black Panther Party. The installation at Present Future places Church's political investigations of covert government activity into dialogue with an eponymous state wilderness park.

Chinese artist Yang Xinguang's painting *Whipped on Canvas* stretches diagonally across a corner of Boers-Li's booth, cinched on each end with twine. The work's title riffs on a Chinese homonym, meaning both "abstract" (chou xiang) and "whipped image." The installation situates the canvas, painted with gestural whipstrokes, as both the site and the victim of a violent act.

Toril Johannessen, *Unlearning Optical Illusions*, *Unlearning the Muller-Lyer Illusion* (left), *Unlearning the Hering Illusion* (right), Both: 2014, Photographed textile, 1:1 120 x 170 cm (unframed) Edit 1/3+ 1AP; Courtesy OSL, Norway

Norwegian artist Toril Johannessen continues her exploration of perception with a suite of photographs entitled *Unlearning Optical Illusions* that depicts Dutch wax cloth. The two-dimensional pattern on each cloth suggests a three-dimensional design. Johannessen deconstructs the illusions using accompanying text panels and instructions on how the viewer can eliminate the text panels from their field of vision by engaging a blind spot in the optic nerve.

American artist Rachel Rose's mesmerizing *A Minute Ago* (image at top), was shot on the grounds of Phillip Johnson's Glass House in Connecticut. Rose rotoscoped Johnson from archival footage and placed him frame by frame into her new footage, achieving a spectral presence heightened by the artist's haptic editing and a swirling, layered soundtrack.