

ARTFORUM

Megan Marrin

by Zack Hatfield
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Megan Marrin, *The Legacy (STL)*, 2017, oil on canvas on Styrofoam, 72 x 96”.

If the art world had to be reduced to a single smell, the pungent fumes of freshly slathered white paint would make a strong candidate. Its redolence plays an unwitting foil to Megan Marrin’s latest show, “Corps,” a septet of Photorealist paintings that take as their muse the *Amorphophallus titanum*, or corpse flower. Thousands of people descend upon botanical gardens to bask in the flower’s languid bloom—which occurs every seven to ten years—that is celebrated for a rancid fragrance often likened to that of a spoiled carcass.

This pageantry is transformed into sexual farce on Marrin’s large oil, canvas, and Styrofoam images, where peeling spathes resemble shy stripteases and spadices are tape-measured or cordoned off like talent on a porn set. Given B-movie titles such as *The Breed* and *The Hunger* (both 2016), their debt to the floral abstractions of O’Keeffe originates not in reductive Freudian readings, but in how both artists approach an individual subject from various perspectives in order to glean its essence. While deep mauves and a healthy chartreuse appear triumphantly in *The Invitation*, in *The Legacy (STL)* (both 2017), our subject is imbued with a sense of destined wilt—erupting from a bed of blackened petals, the deflated spathe, in seasick beige, resembles a chewed-up ballet slipper. Elsewhere, the occasional human figure is smoothed and faceted, as though run through a Prisma filter—ironic, since the allure of this painterly time-lapse resides in the toilsome attention paid to what is so often memorialized with an iPhone snapshot.