

F A R A G O

Leigh Johnson
Gospel Oak

30 January - 30 March 2015

Thursday - Saturday 12 - 6 pm
and by appointment

FARAGO, a new Los Angeles project space, is pleased to announce its second exhibition, Gospel Oak by Leigh Johnson.

These paintings expose barriers and boundaries upon abandoned mattresses—rendering public spaces onto formerly private surfaces. They recall camera less photography: photograms in which objects placed on light-sensitive paper leave a negative shadow image behind. But here, the architecture of access, exits, and security are the objects for shadowy abstractions.

Leigh Johnson is attracted to private lives that are not hers, the tremendous amount of intimacy from which we're excluded. Exposed to public view, the traces of those existences inspire repulsion and fascination. An object that was once touching our nakedness, so close to bare bodies, is now rubbing up against street dirt. Retrieving is an act of pity and of identification. Johnson has a fearful relish of the disowned. She doesn't quite understand how it happens not to be her. These pieces are pile-ups of mark making. Shadows of sleep and sex and secrecy are embedded on industrial stitching. Fortress forms of gates and fences are revealed by clandestine gestures. Abstractions built from stories about people and things. Rescued, but not saved.

Leigh Johnson's solo exhibitions include Hard Shoulder at the Journal Gallery (New York), and Filling my Pockets With Empty Spaces at Rivington Arms (New York). She has an MFA from Yale University. She lives and works in London.

FARAGO



She drove her car...

2013

Latex and acrylic on fabric

49 x 70.5 inches

FARAGO



An era resting...

2013

Latex and acrylic on fabric

53.5 x 71.5 inches

FARAGO



Who wants to...

2014

Latex and acrylic on fabric

53 x 70 inches

FARAGO



Secret Feelings...

2014

Latex and acrylic on fabric

44 x 68 inches

FARAGO



Scouring the weather...

2014

Latex and acrylic on fabric

49 x 70.5 inches

FARAGO



She drove her car into a sidewalk, faked a flat, stood with her hand on the hood and pretended to wait. Fingers spread, blue metallic showing up pale skin, her legs stretched in diagonals, negative space all diamonds and bent poles. This one time a man pulled up. With his head under the car near her breezy skirt she did her song and dance as hard as she could. She talked about sex in space, zero gravity and the positions she would try and try into the abyss. And the giant lonely squid who swam alone in the deep sea. How she liked the word abyss because it just went on and on. He slid his head past her knee on the way up and told her there was nothing to fix.

2013 Latex and acrylic on fabric 49 x 70.5 inches



Secret Feelings. Good name for a bar. Put what you want in that memory, it'll always play minor chords now that you cease to stroke the dog, put that strand of hair behind her ear. A peacock strolls across your photo, sees you, fans it's tail and lets out a cackle for your remorse. Words thrown at each other, no one lifting their hands to catch, more hurls across the rainbow, no pot of gold to pick up the insults, and you begin to remember why you left her and the dog. You would have kept the dog. Back to longing. Back to back. Failed rainbows, I wonder what the cocktail of the day is, or maybe there's a house drink we can pay to remember.

2014 Latex and acrylic on fabric 44 x 68 inches



Who wants to belong to this trash? Maybe some hard drives, don't you want to be driving hard down a Malibu highway? Happier in cheaper times, brownie greys, vinyl suede leather, weather watching. I'm sure grandma would have loved the new style shopping, the deals, price comparing, watch lists in ebay. All that with instant coffee and long thin Capris, pink lipstick smudged on the rims, pieces of art, a few always going, hanging out on the edge, beaming in shiny pink smudges. If only I could remember the rest, you'd be so impressed.

2014 Latex and acrylic on fabric 53 x 70 inches



An era resting on my hand, or was it just an ear? A slip by the machine that makes words easier to grasp, epic. I admit it wasn't mine, but I'll take it. Weight on my wrist, pressing down to make something good, no more jibbery jabbery. I'll take the ear over the era, especially if it's my dog's triangular flesh. Pockets of cartilage I like to iron out with my palms when he isn't looking. The era of the ear. Take what you want, it's all up for grabs. Even the clouds, pretend they're yours, I'll believe you.

2013 Latex and acrylic on fabric 53.5 x 71.5 inches



Scouring the weather for answers: it's raining now, a few minutes ago it was sunny, so stripes today. Tomorrow the weather will come in diagonal lines. My clothes are outside soaking up thunder. My orchid is on it's way out. I could have been with him. At a table filled with couples on the edge we chewed on our dashed hopes. The future that is now in the past looked appealing: jawbone, hallowed cheeks, stubble. Years had made him mannish, a dullness I knew now sharpened. Words working their way back and forth like layers in a big sub. American too, at least part. Upper body English, American heart, head English, who knows? It didn't bring me to tears.

2014 Latex and acrylic on fabric 49 x 70.5 inches