

Josephine Halvorson

*Facings*

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## Introduction

Josephine Halvorson makes paintings on-site, face to face with an object in its environment. Often no more than an arm's length away, she detects variations in texture, light, and temperature, transcribing these perceptions through the medium of paint. Each work that results shares a natural likeness with the object, yet bares its own countenance.

In the past, Halvorson has traveled far afield, making paintings on the road, seeking intimacy from happenstance. For this new body of work she stays local, concentrating on the immediate surroundings of her studio and home in western Massachusetts—the foundation of a new structure, a woodshed, and heat from a fire.

With extended attention over the course of daylight hours, latent histories are expressed and unexpected understandings of the everyday emerge. Traces of human activity, composition of material, and evidence of energy surface in the paintings. As Halvorson looks hard at the routinely overlooked, she finds liveliness in stillness and the unforeseen in the seen.



*Woodshed Window (North Facing)*, 2013  
Oil on linen, 35 x 15 inches / 88.9 x 38.1 cm





*Form (Facing In)*, 2013  
Oil on linen, 60 x 24 inches / 152.4 x 61 cm



*Form (Facing Out)*, 2013  
Oil on linen, 60 x 24 inches / 152.4 x 61 cm





*Foundation*, 2013 (7 panels)  
Oil on linen, 40 x 143 inches / 101.6 x 363.2 cm





*Foundation*, 2013 (panel 1 of 7)  
Oil on linen, 40 x 12 inches / 101.6 x 30.5 cm



*Foundation*, 2013 (panel 2 of 7)  
Oil on linen, 40 x 25 inches / 101.6 x 63.5 cm



*Foundation*, 2013 (panel 3 of 7)  
Oil on linen, 40 x 25 inches / 101.6 x 63.5 cm



*Foundation*, 2013 (panel 4 of 7)  
Oil on linen, 40 x 25 inches / 101.6 x 63.5 cm



*Foundation*, 2013 (panel 5 of 7)  
Oil on linen, 40 x 25 inches / 101.6 x 63.5 cm



*Foundation*, 2013 (panel 6 of 7)  
Oil on linen, 40 x 25 inches / 101.6 x 63.5 cm



*Foundation*, 2013 (panel 7 of 7)  
Oil on linen, 40 x 6 inches / 101.6 x 15.2 cm





64, 2013  
Oil on linen, 17 x 12 inches / 43.2 x 30.5 cm



*Woodshed Vine*, 2013  
Oil on linen, 36 x 28 inches / 91.4 x 71.1 cm





*Heat 2*, 2013  
Oil on linen, 16 x 19 inches / 40.6 x 48.3 cm



*Heat 3*, 2013  
Oil on linen, 16 x 19 inches / 40.6 x 48.3 cm







*Woodshed Door*, 2013  
Oil on linen, 70 x 35 inches / 177.8 x 88.9 cm



*Yellow Clapboard*, 2013  
Oil on linen, 17 x 21 inches / 43.2 x 53.3 cm



## The Unreality Principle

By Tom McGrath

Josephine Halvorson's paintings are flatly enigmatic. In rendering the appearance of what has been withheld, they veer off from the more conventional modalities of realism into misrecognition, ambiguity, and sometimes even vitalism, in order to lay bare the myth of their resemblance to her observation, rather than our own.

Halvorson's subject is not simply the phenomenological object of our perception. Her play with the constructed space of painting, her depiction—or "transcription" as she calls it—of numbers and signage into painterly surfaces, and her experimentation with perspective structures and vantage points all make visible what would otherwise remain furtively visual. Halvorson's interests span beyond the visible and the visual, in her compression of image and surface.

How can Halvorson sidestep stubborn faith in observational painting to find some correspondence between local color and competing notions of the real? Isn't the whole problem of a purported "realism" to mistake that which can only be seen for all that cannot?<sup>1</sup> Here are some of the givens we can fairly extend to painting "from life" that are easily understood in relation to other modes and formats of representation.

Observational paintings often evoke the presence of the very object on whose eventual absence their representation is predicated. The potential in this contradiction is to cast larger perspective biases into relief. The irony of observational painting is that often the finished painting presents less than originally met the artist's eye. And yet, in the absence of the depicted object, the finished painting alludes to more than meets the viewer's eye.

It's not easy to be the kitchen sink realist, elevating the status of the quotidian, because paintings as objects are themselves often overlooked. And rightfully so. What is it about the ordinary that is so overlooked? Stock imagery rendered in overreliance on unexamined paint treatments? And what does "realism" mean today, except the belabored historicism of technicians whose entire output simultaneously overlooks and advertizes its utility in the administration of social norms? Did we forget that realism's greatest provocations were once tied to radical politics?<sup>2</sup>

Halvorson renders the opacity of realism's contradictions visible, usually in grey semi-impastoed hues, so that something entirely different can be rendered transparent. She sees in her practice—with her on-site work and resulting art objects—the possibility, expressive of a desire, for something greater to exist in the airtight wedge of between the surface and picture plane. Halvorson's misrecognitions provide a way of leaving open the possibility (a slightly open window or door, perhaps) of a greater reality than can be represented in an image.

Halvorson's 2011 exhibition, *What Looks Back*, established a vitalistic conceit in that she painted from observation frontal objects or surfaces that appeared to have a physiological mirroring effect of a face. This current exhibition, *Facings*, plays with shifts more sly than a face would allow. To paraphrase Wittgenstein, the expression is not of the face, but the face can be expressive. "If I draw a meaningless squiggle, and then draw another later, pretty much like it, you would not know the difference. But if I draw this peculiar thing which I call a face, and then draw one slightly different, you will know at once there is a difference."<sup>3</sup>

Who would alter, repeat and play with the parallax shift of observation only to camouflage their structural uncanny in vitalism? Or, as WJT Mitchell remarks, "why does this metaphor have a life of its own?"<sup>4</sup> Given her previous titles, it's likely that she's spent some time reading Mitchell. In his *What Do Pictures Want?* he addresses all sorts of animisms and totemisms when he writes, "one might want to say that this is just the primordial condition of pictures...their innate doubleness and duplicity, looking back at us with eyes that do not see".<sup>5</sup>

Observation is so rife with irony that Halvorson's work announces itself on the most sincere aesthetic sensibility she can mine from a Yankee quarry, while the question of whether her apophenia springs from romantic mourning, classical irony or a mild-mannered bizarre remains irrelevant. Who would see faces and patterns in objects simply out of wishful thinking, loss of pagan formalism, mourning the impossibility of painting having an "inner life"? What is it about the loss of obvious utility that leaves a speculative space in which an old found object can seem totemic?

If you ask a painter who works "from life" about their process, they tend to put themselves outside the equation in an attempt to vanish behind verisimilitude. Halvorson provides no such alibi: she wants to

see with her hands as much as feel with her eyes. She walks a fine line wherein she implicates herself as an artist in this subjectivity but knows that ultimately anything that results of it depends upon a larger inter-subjectivity. Her painterly touch, for example, seems suspended between the slight tilting of the plane of her pictorial surfaces and the actual surface of the canvas. This might seem claustrophobic were it not for the occasional slip of surface incident to reveal that the mark is on our side of the plane. Actual material shape is determined by virtual necessity: the inside and outside are not simply contingent, they are contiguous. Her brushstrokes are discernable, where gestures shift roles unexpectedly in the intensity of shallow space. The effect of these turns between material relief and pictorial incident may seem *de rigueur* of painting's generic mimetic patina, but in Halvorson's claustrophobic parallelism, it is one of oscillation, a dynamic unfolding or becoming between object and other. This comes at the expense of a seamless continuity with actual space, as practiced in trompe l'oeil painting or faux finishing.

This new body of work could be experienced as a series of misrecognitions. In *Foundation* (2013), a group of seven concrete-textured paintings are conjoined serially into one long minimal-object-looking-object (the redundancy here is key). The horizontal sediment of her concrete resembles the ubiquitously technological raster effect in a way as salient as any painting that might use printer banding—but only because we've seen both. What would appear a cast surface quickly slips its veneer of material integrity under oily-looking residues. Gestures, which momentarily suggest the supple atmospheres of 18th century Chinese watercolors painted "drunken-master" across vertical screens into a long horizon, but from which emanate a strange counter-contoured striation of thick and flat ridges of brush marks, catch horizontal light streaks as the eye chases them from the vantage point. But there is no landscape. It's a picture of a wall. A picture of a wall so close to the picture plane some of it seems to be on our side of the painting.

Just as the problem of the horizontal "cross contour" brought a specific set of patterning challenges to the pre-modern engraver's horizontal line, Halvorson approximates, wherever possible, the countervailing directionality of the brushwork to cross-sectioned illusions of wood grain or fluid irregularities of poured cement, seeking ways that must alternately map and mimic the material's qualities. The weight, density and optical rivalry of the vector to the brushstroke suggest what she depicts, that is, without becoming obviously diagrammatic.

*Foundation* has a vertical parallax shift between image and object: a discrepancy between pictorial plane and the shape of the painting as surface, wherein the image has been slightly skewed to appear the same size and shape as the canvas on which it is painted. My own initial encounters with the paintings, several weeks prior to installation, involved a different viewing scenario than the gallery, one that coincidentally heightened the vaguely perceptible vertigo from Halvorson's tweaking of the picture plane. The paintings were installed as usual within the relative height tolerance of a pedestrian. When I sat down for a longer look, however, the angle pronounced a strange isometry already availed in the piece at eye level. A series of improbable spatial orientations lent the work a narrative of dislocation. I sensed I was looking down at the form in the image even though I had been looking up at the paintings.

And there is no getting around the vanishing point. You can try to eliminate or multiply it. You can even turn it off like a cell phone, yet, like all location-based technologies that employ sensors, it can be used to locate you. Its structural tyranny can be so subtle that we are scarcely aware of its presence even as it grazes the optic nerve. Halvorson, however, has found a way to locate the vanishing point so far off the visual plane as to vent the perspectival cube of its claustrophobia.

One of the simplest but possibly most exacting of Halvorson's new paintings, *Woodshed Vine* (2013), depicts what appears to be the back of an architectural molding or window frame and a recessed but parallel-to-the-picture-plane wooden surface with the most intricate house paint *cracqueleur* I've seen. Much of the network of fine cracks is painted with a thin but visible brush in Halvorson's not-too-indulgent way. This in itself is counterintuitive: she paints the cracks over her approximation of the flaking surface of lead white house paint that surfaces the object of the painting's depiction. One would think she would take the suggestion of the surface to mimic its finish, but that wouldn't be observation so much as forgery. But in another way it is: the painting looks not simply like another surface. Rather, it feels much older than it is through its description of plywood baked in the sun for years. It reminds me of how Han Van Meegeren was said to have baked his notorious Vermeer forgeries in an oven to obtain just the right scale, pattern and shape of cracked shrinkage in the paint film. This piece also recalls the seventeenth century Dutch painter Cornelius Gijsbrechts' *Reverse Side Of A Painting* from 1670, a depiction of the back of the canvas and stretcher frame on the very front of itself. The painting depicted has a number tagged to the

back, which one historian remarked was for sale, a practical joke at the commodity, but also a dry pun on blankness.<sup>6</sup>

Easels aside, there's an open similarity between Halvorson's surfaces and Bruce Nauman's *A Cast Of The Space Under My Chair* (1965-1968), expanded upon in Rachel Whiteread's cast remainders of lived space, such as *House* (1993). Interior and exterior form resemble one another, almost permeably, even as they represent a domestic wall or obstacle. Her suburban excavations share the cheeky indexicality of Robert Smithson's *A Tour Of The Monuments Of Passaic* (1967)<sup>7</sup>, or rather, a tour of the brown sites of Nantucket. As if the nuclear life of suburbs wasn't supernatural enough, when Halvorson taught at Princeton she took her students to the Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory to make art on-site, conducting the unseen currents of deuterium and plasma through the pigments of cadmium and chromium.

There's something preternatural about Halvorson's naturalism. Sure, there are the old machines, the New England storm windows, the lingering allusions to Charles Sheeler and Giorgio Morandi. But I don't regard this as simply a kind of provincial "realist style" equivocation between the matter-of-factness of Yankee utilitarianism, the overuse of Occam's Razor in Shaker-style furniture, or the grid and the high-modern pension for reduction and autonomy. That particular anti-modernism could be proposed by anyone who might find Andrew Wyeth to be the consummate response to Agnes Martin. I'm more interested in syncretic approaches than blind compulsion or salt-lick nostalgia.

Halvorson's work raises, only to make redundant, her imagery's connections to the romantic ruin—as a melancholic, weathered surface of the industrial or agrarian object of no obvious application—in contrast to the Dutch still life traditions which first made the description of everyday surfaces into narratives of domesticity, middle class exchange, and speculative arrangements of social promise.<sup>8</sup> It's almost a before *and* after to industrial capitalism: where one began with colorful abundance, the other exists in some Cormac McCarthy version of a Superfund site, alongside a too-well preserved New England town, where people still know the value of a refurb, still bag their own lunch even if they can afford otherwise, and antiques are worth less if they've been refinished. The register of this contrast begs the comparison with the early modern fetishization of the machine as body and dynamic diagram to abstraction, to which Halvorson's weathered industrial surfaces evoke stasis and obstinacy, only to move in the corner of your eye.

What is it about weathered objects of indeterminate use, that superstition or mystery fill in for the loss of obvious utility? Like the aforementioned ruin, Halvorson's relics of unremarkable or obscure origin are transfigured as objects, either "found", as in readymades, or "sought", as in images.<sup>9</sup> Henri LeFebvre describes this passage between extraordinary and ordinary: myth and ritual are demoted to become gestures in the everyday, but insofar as those gestures are emptied of mystery, they retain the character of the irrational in the face of the otherwise imposing order of reason. Of course, then he cautions against replacing lost or unseen economies of mystery with the easy fascination of the bizarre.<sup>10</sup>

Halvorson's compulsive pareidolia is not the magic of a metaphysical belief. Rather, the arresting likenesses that Halvorson projects are equal parts reverie and wake-up call. Her gestures are sleights of hand and mind, foiling both classical clarity and romantic mystification. The emptied-gesture of the magic trick reveals that it is an illusion, unlike the proselytizing gesture; rather than being self-performative, it is deictic—a gesture that points. It simply points back to something else.

So far, so good: the veil of illusory materiality, at once unified and duplicitous, is an important subject in contemporary art, evoking spatio-frontal hybrids from *Informel* painting's glazed impasto illusions to Olivier Mosset's beach towel monochromes to Allan McCollum's serial monochrome casts. It's almost the inverse of the sculpture-image problem of how close the three-dimensional can get to surfacing a discrepancy with the image without succumbing to the redundancy of the painted statuary effect found in medieval sculpture—without the whole thing looking like a philosopher's stone caked in make-up?

Halvorson answers with paintings caked in cosmetics of stone. Typically, painting from life avoids objects already twice mediated. For example, a painting of a toy ice cream cone will look like a badly painted ice cream cone. To succeed is not simply a question of how close you can get to trompe l'oeil or faux finish, but rather, the much larger question of how to address the rationales of observational painting in ways that defy the normative motives of its practice.

In the same way that Marcel Duchamp's impossible objects, such as the flattened inconsistency of the bed frame in his *Apolinère Enameled* from 1916, exposed the magic trick without losing the amusement, the radiator and screen paintings of Meredyth Sparks or the refractive cinematic

painterliness of Marc Handelman's geological substrates foreground the illusion of material integrity. Halvorson is working with a similar conceit in confronting the profound "unreality" of both the image and its form as material substrate. Jasper Johns, of course, took this neo-Duchampian approach into a crypto-camouflage space. Both Johns and Halvorson do their subtlest work in the perspective folds that emerge from the contours of spatio-frontal flatness. What compels someone of such consummate possibility to start composing hidden images into their paintings?

This "unreality" in question is somewhere between the phenomenology of minimal form and the lingering structural image. Sylvia Plimack Mangold's work from the mid 1970's comes to mind, as does more recent work by Mangold's contemporary, the observational painter Catherine Murphy. Both Mangold and Murphy have produced a version of the Ponzo illusion in their recursive pictorial framing. For Murphy, these scopic and perspectival reflexes manifest in the psychological spacing of narrative and the everyday: less the *mise en abyme* of Diego Velázquez's *Las Meninas* and more Johannes Vermeer's perpendicular windows and anterior facades. Several of Halvorson's more recent paintings attempt to capture the heat emanating from firewood embers, finding common cause in a more recent graphite drawing of Murphy's depicting the view through an electric oven window, *Oven Light* (2008), or Vija Celmins' *Heater* (1964). Halvorson's moodiest fireplace painting is similar: it depicts almost no fire, just the scintillating scotoma-like wavering atmosphere of cooling air.

Also like Mangold in his interest in the measure of the reality principle, and influential perhaps to Halvorson, Robert Bordo is known for his equation of the minor, the contingent and the ephemeral as a position of identity and painterly assertion. Bordo's importance among younger artists like Halvorson should be obvious, it's not simply that he's a teaching artist in a certain post-Philip Guston way, or his long-term refusal of the supposed incompatibility between critical practice and the studio, but because of a certain bitter-sweetness of touch—his measured, post-photographic paintings are capable of an intense but never sentimental kind of stormy.

Like Bordo, Mangold, easel cohorts Merlin James and David Schutter, or sometimes even Richard Bosman, or peers like Allison Katz, Jessica Dickinson, or maybe Patricia Treib—but quite uncharacteristic of her work's contemporary look, the aim of Halvorson's muted, neutral

palette is not to further aestheticize a certain documentary fetish or the serious black-and-white look of early performance, conceptual and later *Pictures*-era art (is the cover of the printed New York Times still grey?). Her mutable, unpretentious scale and suggestive economy of paint handling can seem as cool-headed or emptied of frill as any of the paintings caught leaving the photographic haze of Luc Tuymans's studio, except that Halvorson's practice involves too much field work to cultivate that look of importance, that pose of powerful hesitation achieved under Tuymans' grey spotlight. Halvorson's colorful *grisaille* is as anxiously local as Tuymans' is global, but the difference in the claims made of their respective poetics is greater than the rift between epistolary fiction and editorial reportage.

The "local" takes us back to observational painting's great disavowal: its confusion of subject and object. But herein also lays its anarchic potential: the disorientation or dissimulation of both—the "modalities of the real are invented anew".<sup>11</sup> The act of focusing one's attention becomes a continuum of projection and visual suppression<sup>12</sup>—the coming together and breaking apart of the self. This fleeting unity of the self is leveraged against the dissonance of looking *at* and *through* the paint at the same time. In Paul Valéry words, "...attention should suffice to put our most intimate feelings on the same plane as exterior objects or events; from the moment they become observable they join the rest of observed things... [Consciousness'] multiplied movements, its intimate struggles, perturbations... do these things leave anything unchanged?"<sup>13</sup>

Perhaps this loss—or surplus—of visible salience hinges on the distinction between a "thing" and an "object", as it has been mentioned in nearly every text here quoted. Loosely, the difference is that the object has a name and a reified status. It is specific. The thing is an unbranded and discrete entity that emerges from the Real, equally concrete and vague. Again, this is relevant only to the extent that Halvorson's observational paintings are objects that evoke, if not demonstrate, how we see things. What's important is the connection between the problems of the beholder (identification, naming, mastery and gazing over the object and so forth) and the loosening of these tightly owned modes of encounter with humor or a "face off" of sorts: a confrontational face of ambivalence, indifference or mischief (a blank stare, a vitalistic and momentary misrecognition of the painting). There's a projected anxiety in the idea that a piece might actually look back and make an ugly face, or, even worse, give you the cold shoulder. As Wittgenstein remarks, "...I don't make queer expressions

or noise; but I do if I see a door or a face."<sup>14</sup> And Mitchell puts it this way, "When (a thing) takes on a single, a recognizable face, a stable image, it becomes an object; when it destabilizes... it becomes a hybrid (like the duck-rabbit), it requires more than one identity...It signals the moment when the object becomes the Other, when the sardine can look back..."<sup>15</sup>

Contemporary notions of the real have lost that previous, perhaps mythical notion of reality with its generous allowance for what cannot be represented. The ineffable and the unknown, in our culture, are just as likely to be taken as placeholders or spaces left for the repressed and the secretive. Like science fiction, the magical thinking and vitalism of a Wikileaks reality is a displaced uncertainty in the belief in what is visible, a mistrust of appearances that asks, "What is being withheld?" and "What am I not being shown?" rather than "What is visible, what is visual but not yet visible, and what is not visual?"

Gustave Courbet, a definitive realist, when asked why he never painted angels, answered that he'd never actually seen one. He said this at a time when angels were as common in art as animals are in entertainment today. Then again, Courbet's realism also included painting many of his figures from popular magazine advertisements and illustrations. To be un-realistic does not mean reproducing angels and animals or nature or anything else that no longer exists. Observational painting is, and has probably been since Courbet's definition of the genre, not really realism.

Which leads me to my final point, that Halvorson is actually an alternate-reality kind of realist, one who stakes her practice on the profound unreality of our world view. Halvorson's works must take place as painting in all its radical duplicity, because this duplicity is acted upon by our expectations and experience, foregrounding our own syncretic beliefs and contradictions, as the dualities that underpin a dynamic of visual and epistemic uncertainty. Forget illusion and naïveté. In any readymade commodity there's a hidden discrepancy in the space obscured between utility and magical thinking. Why shouldn't painting be seen as an attempt to make this visible? The tree is not in the acorn, as an essentialist might believe, the tree is in the ecosystem; if the image is the brief suspension of observer in the object, at least in a dynamic sense, "realism" is neither a world view, nor a verisimilitude. Rather, realism exists in our inability to forget that the thing encountered never required an observer in order to exist in the first place, except as a reified object. Like Bruno Latour's assertion that microbes didn't exist until Pasteur discovered

them, Halvorson's act of representation is of a projection of what drew her interest to the object, which she then mistakes for a real actor in the process by which her painting is acted upon.<sup>16</sup>

Halvorson, in her selection of what to paint, in the alignment of her selection and the shape of the object it is to become (the canvas), the slight tilting of the plane, the recession and procession of brush marks between plane and face—and her belief that this inanimate object in turn recognizes her—that she chooses to paint and, at the same time, is chosen to paint by what caught her attention, as if it made a furtive gesture, a salient sign or even a facial expression, as is the case of most superstitious accounts, ghost stories, hallucinations, and religious experiences. It happens alone with no witnesses, and we are asked to believe the account, as if she invented what she discovered, or discovered what she'd invented. Wherever this painting "from life" might locate its very unreal subject, this unreality is now ours to encounter.

#### Notes

- 1 Certeau, Michel De. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Berkeley: University of California, 1984. P. 185-187
- 2 Nochlin, Linda. *Realism*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971. 45-56
- 3 Wittgenstein, Ludwig, and Cyril Barrett. *Lectures & Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology, and Religious Belief*. Berkeley: University of California, 1966. 31
- 4 Mitchell, W. J. T. *What Do Pictures Want?: The Lives and Loves of Images*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 2005. 53
- 5 Mitchell, 50
- 6 Schneider, Norbert, and Hugh Beyer. *Still Life: Still Life Painting in the Early Modern Period*. Köln: Taschen, 1999.
- 7 Smithson, Robert. "Tour Of The Monuments Of Passaic", *Robert Smithson, The Collected Writings*. Ed. Jack D. Flam. Berkeley: University of California, 1996.
- 8 Alpers, Svetlana. *The Art of Describing: Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1983.
- 9 Mitchell, 156-157
- 10 Lefebvre, Henri. *Critique of Everyday Life*. Trans. John Moore. Ed. Gregory C. Elliott and Michel Trebitsch. London: Verso, 2008, 120-121
- 11 Nochlin, 45-56
- 12 Crary, Jonathan. *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture*. Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1999. 39-42
- 13 Valéry, Paul. *Selected Writings*. New York: New Directions, 1950. 92
- 14 Wittgenstein, 31
- 15 Mitchell, 156
- 16 Harman, Graham. *Prince of Networks: Bruno Latour and Metaphysics*. Prahran, Vic.: Re.press, 2009. 123





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## Biographies

### *Artist*

Josephine Halvorson is an artist who works in various locations, and is based out of western Massachusetts and Brooklyn, NY. She recently wrote an essay about a painting that couldn't be made, titled *Shame: The One That Got Away*, which was published in *ArtJournal*. In 2013 Halvorson curated an exhibition about the liveliness of the wall, called *I Am The Magic Hand*, at Sikkema Jenkins & Co. Her work has been exhibited internationally and is represented by Sikkema Jenkins & Co., New York and Peter Freeman, Inc., Paris. Halvorson is the recipient of several grants and awards including a U.S. Fulbright Fellowship to Vienna, The Tiffany Foundation Award, and a NYFA fellowship in painting. Halvorson has lectured widely on her work and is a critic in the MFA program in painting at Yale University.

### *Writer*

Tom McGrath is an artist who has been exhibiting painting-related work in New York and internationally since 2002. He has written about, interviewed, or reviewed the work of numerous artists including Ryan Johnson, Kristopher Benedict, Dana Schutz, Peter Saul, Peter LaBier, and numerous others for exhibition catalogues, magazines, and various publications including the now-defunct *ArtLies*. His own work has itself been subjected to writing in such locations as the *Bomblog*, *The Paris Review*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *Art Fag City*, *Artforum*, and *Time Out New York*. McGrath is visiting faculty at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, where he teaches, among other things, a course titled "Technology and Painting."

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And a note: The work in this exhibition was made while The Cooper Union, the artist's and writer's alma mater, still provided full-tuition scholarships to all admitted students. The artist dedicates this exhibition to the spirit of Peter Cooper's vision of a free life, independent of dogma and debt.

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