

The logo for 'New American Paintings' is a black square with the words 'New American Paintings' written in white, sans-serif font. 'New' is on the top line, 'American' is on the second line, and 'Paintings' is on the third line.

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CONSIDERING PAINTING'S SHELF LIFE WITH BORIS OSTEROV

Since painting began to migrate from church walls to stretched linen, a painter's niche within the art market had been carved. Not only was canvas friendlier to 16th century Venice's damp boulevards, it also fit snugly on the walls of those with a few florins to spare, as it still does today. While contemporary speculators of our global art market are often praised for the integral role they play in driving new ideas and experimentation, the fact remains that painting makes up nearly three quarters of art sales today. And so those looking to make a florin for themselves often find extra incentive to take up the brush and canvas.

What Boris Osterov knows is that celebrating painting's status as the core economic driver of the art world doesn't mean that his works need to join the ranks of the Undead fair fodder. Conceived as "Shelf Paintings" his recent works underscore the importance of the shallow white rectangle as platforms upon which meaning, value, and heaps of colored linseed mud can be hoisted. The dimensions of each canvas vary widely, though they tend to extend out from the wall by at least four inches, leaving plenty of room for their contents to be held down by gravity. While in some cases the works edge back into a more traditional modality, we suspect that any color making it onto the front of the canvass did so by accident.

In other works (below) the artist identifies a state of purity within freshly-squeezed tendrils of paint, taking the form of elongated cylinders that reveal the tubes in which they were packaged or else poopy soft serve swirls plopped cleanly onto the surface of the canvas. Taking visual cues from the ever-rotating swirl of neatly-packaged color found at sushi bars, the viewer is invited to consume each of these "marks" individually. Taken as a whole, they serve to transform the exhibition space into a veritable art store.

Ultimately, Osterov's canvasses are an invitation into the sprawling hotdog eating contest that is the contemporary art market—a grotesque spectacle of consumption where onlookers find themselves as complicit as those stuffing their faces. A step beyond institutional critique, he never rebukes us for taking part but simply holds up a mirror so that we might get a better view.

You can see Boris Osterov's most recent paintings at Lubov, 373 Broadway #207 New York, NY, through January 8th.

- *Brad Fiore*

<https://newamericanpaintings.com/blog/considering-painting%E2%80%99s-shelf-life-boris-osterov>