

Kevin Ford: *SOFT GHOSTS* at Kate Werble Gallery

Review by Ernesto Renda

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A giant thumb, two conch shells, an electrical outlet. These are a few of the unconnected subjects of a new exhibition of paintings by Kevin Ford, now on view at Kate Werble Gallery. For all their simplicity, Ford's compositions are not always legible. This is unmistakably *BIG IMAGE* painting, but the details and articulations of certain moments in each picture are what may distinguish this work not only from contemporaries like Katherine Bernhardt or Austin Lee, but also his own earlier works, which were more of a blunt Guston-like figuration. The paintings are made with a combination of careful brushwork and larger airbrush "clouds".

The press release mentions the level playing field for images on the internet, where a meme can hold the same visual weight as a history painting or a news headline. We are led to assume, then, that a cropped image of a marble torso (*Cut*, 2019) and a picture of a thumb (*Thumb*, 2020) etched themselves into Ford's mind's eye for different, formal reasons, but they all hang together now as projections of the painter's visual memory. For fun, we are invited to draw connections between them as amateur analysts poking around in his mental visual library, identifying formal obsessions and extrapolating a painterly identity from so many ghostly "after-images".

Kate Werble Gallery is located at 83 Vandam Street, New York, NY and is currently closed to the public, all works can be viewed at the gallery website.



