



NEW YORK

Ajay Kurian

47 Canal // November 6–December 22, 2013

INSIDE A LARGE aquarium made of green Plexiglas, a wood model of a fantastical city opens and closes vertically, like an oversize pop-up book. The motion makes a menacing sound while creating a green reflection on the gallery's ceiling and exposing the tank's base, full of sand and weeds. Entitled *Pop-Up Baum (Empire)*, this piece directly relates to *Master Slave Complex (Proleptically Speaking...)*—also a tank full of rubble, sand, and greenery that are joined by an inconspicuous monitor showing colorful abstractions.

Kurian's show is dominated by these two installations (all works 2013), along with *Comfort Zone #1*, a busy environment

at the gallery's entrance, lit with LED lights and made of candy, moss, and epoxy.

These pieces all reflect on environmental evidence of nuclear waste and the signs our society has developed to warn future generations of its presence.

The rest of the works—holes piercing a wall fitted with kaleidoscopelike refractors, a copper-wire ball placed on the floor, an ostrich egg on a plastic shelf—convey a sense of unease and echo the artist's interest in ecology and materiality. But unlike the large-scale installations, which together form a coherent vision, these pieces make a less lasting impression. Said vision, however, does not lack ambiguity—

never easily decipherable, these sculptures mirror the exhibition's title, "proleptic." Prolepsis means a space between meanings in time, describing a thing before it exists.

One small object is more telling than the others: *Bad Seed*, a circular aluminum plate etched with the words "Danger. Poisonous radioactive waste here. Do not dig or drill." The (beautifully written) press release discusses the creation of the atomic bomb and the extended half-life of nuclear waste—"a promise of time longer than human history may as well be forever"—but the world Kurian draws is not postapocalyptic. Rather, it is weird, haunting, urgent, and still very real. —Orit Gat

Ajay Kurian
Comfort Zone #1, 2013. Plexiglas, candy, custom M&Ms, reindeer moss, branches, epoxy clay, tchotchkes, copper wire, LED lights, aerogel, 15½ x 51¾ x 11 in.

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Christian Marclay

Paula Cooper Gallery // November 22, 2013–January 18, 2014

IN HIS FIRST show at the gallery since 2011, when crowds lined 21st Street to see *The Clock*, Marclay once again turns to pop culture and high culture for material. With a series of 17 new paintings and works on paper titled "Actions," the artist stages a tongue-in-cheek interrogation of Abstract Expressionism—what Harold Rosenberg christened Action Painting. The archetypal drips and splashes of heroicized painters from the 1950s are recalled by Marclay's gestures, which he overlays with screen-printed onomatopoeias appropriated from comic books. Words like *splooosh*, *blorsh*, *pla-doosh*, and *splorch* mimic the sounds that wet paint might make when it hits a canvas, but they also bring an element of Pop art's cool irony to the staid tradition of midcentury abstract painting.

The quirky exclamations poke fun at Rosenberg's analysis, which celebrated "the painter's muscles" and positioned the male artist as a gallant gladiator and the canvas as his "arena in which to act." In Marclay's *Actions: Whupp, Shlump, Sloosh*, 2013, imprints of the artist's bare feet track back and forth across the lower half of the painting—the residue of another playful action that disrupts the hallowed arena.

The suite of smaller acrylic-on-paper works that populate the front gallery, whose size accentuates the words printed on them, are stronger than the group of Pollock-size works in the back room, which highlight Marclay's less-than-masterful painting technique. Although these canvases certainly fit in well with the current market trend favoring large abstract works, they pack a witty, critical punch that makes them more self-aware than the neo-Neo-Expressionist Oscar Murillos of the world. —Ashton Cooper

Christian Marclay
Actions: Whop Swoooooosh Splsh (No. 1), 2012. Screen-print on acrylic on paper, 49 x 35 in.

