

Eleven
Rivington

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CHRIS CACCAMISE IN NEW YORK

By Chris Bors



Chris Caccamise is an artist worker bee who creates paper sculptures of familiar phrases and objects and then paints them in bright, solid enamel. I used to occupy a studio down the hall from his at the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council's Swing Space, and I witnessed firsthand the meticulous craftsmanship that goes into his art. Caccamise designs each fragile sculpture without pretension or bravura, and the works beg close inspection and appreciation. They are a welcome throwback to art made by hand.

His third New York solo exhibition, at Eleven Rivington, is a natural continuation of his previous shows, with the work as eye-catching as ever. Enamel paint, which gives the objects an artificial sheen, is often used in model kits and craft projects, so it seems perfectly suited for Caccamise's craft-inspired practice. *Carrying Case* (2007) may be the most personal piece, referencing his experience as an art handler for Matthew Marks gallery. This mini suitcase meant to house a sculpture by Marks artist Tony Smith is an instantly likable object that references the inner workings of the contemporary art world. Similarly, *Moratorium on Skull Art (Bob Nickas)* (2008) also relates to the art world, as writer and curator Nickas told Caccamise that he believes no more art should be made on the subject of skulls for a while. Nonetheless, one imagines that Nickas would be pleased by the artist's woven-paper homage to his plea. Caccamise's sculptures using appropriated phrases, such as *Lost in Space No One Can Hear You Scream* (2008) — a reference to both the 1960s television show *Lost In Space* and the 1979 film *Alien* — rebel against the way society envisions signage. His renderings are playful, intimate, and one-of-a-kind, while those we see around us are mass-produced, commercially driven, and full of clichés.

Below are five shows in New York that Chris likes:

1. Gustave Courbet at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, through May 18

"The things I like about this show are the large white asses, the weird scale, and the amazing strangeness of these paintings. You would never take notice of these aspects unless you see many of Courbet's paintings together. Then you realize that the playfulness is ever-present."

2. Greg Smith at Susan Inglett, through April 19

"Greg Smith forces us to reconsider aspects of our lives that we take for granted by dissecting them and showing their splayed innards in a humorous way. Here he reinvents animation using ping-pong balls, hand-colored asterisks, and a large machine made of crudely assembled lumber and pipes, and creates a video that I could watch hundreds of times without becoming bored."

3. Gallery Update at White Columns, through May 2

"'Gallery Update' at White Columns presents a number of artists launched or fostered by the gallery over the last three years. For me, Carter's work is interesting and beautiful in the way that it takes simple gestures in painting

and sculpture and uses them to hint at hidden layers of meaning concealed by the banalities of the everyday.”

4. WACK!: Art and the Feminist Revolution at P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, through May 12

“In college I had Martha Rosler as a teacher. At the time I really had no idea who she was; I knew only that she was a famous artist. But she was a very tough teacher, and I remember more things that she told me than almost any other teacher I had at that school did. This is a great and very important show.”

5. Kanishka Raja: Indian Yellow at Envoy Gallery, through June 7

“Kanishka Raja's installation in the entryway to the gallery is really great. It strikes me as a totally unexpected transformation of an otherwise uninteresting space.”