

MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY

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PRESS RELEASE

Paul Sietsema

October 15, 2020 – January 23, 2021

Matthew Marks is pleased to announce **Paul Sietsema**, the next exhibition in his galleries at 1062 North Orange Grove and 7818 Santa Monica Boulevard. The exhibition includes fourteen new paintings and two works on paper, all on view for the first time.

One group of paintings depicts various forms of currency — silver-dollar coins and torn dollar bills, pound notes, and euros — rendered in enamel paint over a found support. Each work takes an existing painting by an anonymous artist as its base. While these found canvases share the appearance of certain avant-garde movements from early in the last century, they are in fact from the decades that followed. Anonymous and unmoored from the histories they cite, they are aesthetically adrift. The torn banknotes appear to wrap the found paintings like ribbons, partially obscuring the abstraction or still life lying beneath. In other canvases, coins scattered across the surface seem to be embedded in the paint of the found work, protruding from it in relief. “As physical currency falls into obsolescence,” the artist has commented, “the aesthetic and symbolic qualities of bills and coins push them into the realm of collectable objects, valued now for their cultural rather than monetary worth.”

In another group of paintings, images of rotary telephones with their receivers off the hook are rendered in monochromatic shades, “an image that can be read as portraying an open or closed line of communication,” as Sietsema has said. Painted in a photorealistic manner, each telephone and its spiral cord are shown coated in a pool of paint. The color of this paint is taken from the phone itself, its palette bringing to mind an era before this device was rendered a relic.

Hung throughout the exhibition are three large paintings on canvas, each depicting a museum poster for a Picasso or Miró exhibition. The continuous stream of exhibitions by historical figures such as these makes it difficult to place each show within a specific decade, but the poster’s era-specific color and graphics, and the antiquated form of the silk-screened poster itself, offer a clue. Sietsema has silk-screened an image of each poster onto the canvas and overprinted it with its own background color to create a monochrome. The slight shift in the image each time the screen is pulled causes the original image to bleed through the layers.

Two works present full-page advertisements from *The New York Times* of Picasso paintings rendered by hand in ink on paper. One advertisement announces an auction, while the other publicizes an exhibition titled “Picasso’s Picassos” at a commercial gallery. Across each advertisement Sietsema has painted dollar coins sliding in dripping gray paint. The gray matches the newspaper’s ground, camouflaging the coins in the paper’s content.

Paul Sietsema (b. 1968) lives and works in Los Angeles. He has had one-person exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the Museo Reina Sofía in Madrid, and the Kunsthalle Basel, among others.

Paul Sietsema is on view by appointment at 1062 North Orange Grove and 7818 Santa Monica Boulevard from October 15, 2020 to January 23, 2021. To make an appointment, please click [here](#). For additional information, please contact Ted Turner at 323-654-1830 or ted@matthewmarks.com.