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Zio Ziegler's 'Fourth Wall' Captures One Instant in a Practice of Restless Vigor

By Gretchen Giles, October 3, 2018.



Installation view of 'The Fourth Wall.' (Courtesy of Marin MOCA)

According to a quick survey of his one-man show at the Marin Museum of Contemporary Art, here's what Mill Valley-based artist Zio Ziegler is interested in at this very moment: mouths, eyes and other physical orbits; Basquiat's use of blue and black; Pacific Northwest totems; the brown linen back of Francis Bacon's canvases; Mesoamerican narrative art; de Kooning's yellow palette; and the actress Tania Raymonde (his fiancée and the character Brittany Gold on *Goliath*).

He also checks his street art origins, Cubism, and the notion of a "metasapien," which Ziegler allegedly told middle-aged museum staff is his take on man's self-referential nature but which the kids know refers to self-important internet trolls.

And that's just today. Tomorrow, it's fairly guaranteed to be a new collection of different somethings (Raymonde hopefully still included). Just now 30, Ziegler is clearly afire with all the many things there are to do in this one single life that each of us gets.

The darling of tech's emerging art collector's market, Ziegler began his career as a designer and street muralist. Today his paintings line the walls of such corporations as Lyft, Facebook, Google, Medium, and the mega-like. His designs for Vans shoes are legendary and his work with the Arte Sempre brand of skate culture clothes is hot.

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In *The Fourth Wall*, Ziegler's first solo museum show, Marin MOCA offers us a chance to catch him just where he is now. Composed entirely of pieces made over the past two years, Ziegler updated some of the "older" works for this exhibit, grabbing a brush to overlay finished canvases with new gestures, some of which aren't still quite dry.

On view are mostly oversized canvases hang with a smattering of smaller framed gouaches. Ziegler's big paintings are divided between untitled works devoted to a busy-scape of shape and color and those he calls "Sculptural Busts," that offer a puzzle of shape and color that slowly realize into full facial forms. Only a few of the canvases have full titles, and two of them are over-the-top love letters to Raymonde, replete with the script "I love you forever" written carefully onto one.

Because I made an effort to, I know that Ziegler works out of his Mill Valley home without an agent or gallery representative, recently shot a film with Raymonde, has an international exhibition schedule that would slay an older person, just launched a design collection with the bicycle company Giro, and not long ago partnered with Pottery Barn Teen under the Arte Sempre brand.

I also know he's unafraid. He'll paint a wall, a swimming pool, or a VC investor's \$300,000 British automobile with equal confidence and aplomb. It's hard not to admire the sheer dynamism and self-confidence that he shows as he approaches both canvases and unusual surfaces.

What no one needs to look up are the restlessness and vigor that are evident everywhere on Marin MOCA's walls. Ziegler builds with his own vocabulary of forms—a string of beads, an eyeball, a toothy jaw-like swoop of paint—and a designer's sense of color. He works so swiftly there are unpainted gaps on many of the canvases. And he works so obsessively, even the stretcher's sides are covered with paint. The oversized primitive figures of his street work have largely vanished, the figurative animals are now gone.

The question remains whether this largely abstract exhibit would be as interesting if it weren't for Ziegler's raw potential and palpable energy. Catch him in this particular now, because tomorrow is certain to look different. And frankly, I'd like to see it.