



Van Hanos, *The Mothership*, 2014, oil on canvas, 48" x 79".

BERLIN

Van Hanos

TANYA LEIGHTON

Kurfürstenstrasse 156

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In his first exhibition in Germany, Van Hanos poses the question of what can painting be today? His answer is spread across six canvases, each easily shifting between Photorealism, Impressionism, Pre-Raphaelite abundance, or, as in *Kids at Play* (all works 2014), translucent layering reminiscent of Sigmar Polke. While his control of these techniques is impressive, the stylistic disjunction is indispensable to Hanos's total concept. By working in various modes of representation and refusing allegiance to any, he negates the medium's alleged death and shows that painting, like people, can evolve with time and experience.

His painting *A* fuses art-historical tropes such as that of the reclining nude to a contemporary situation, wherein an African American man seated on a couch raises himself up to look at a photo on the artist Jamian Juliano-Villani's phone. With camera cables bundled on the floor of the surrounding room, the painting seems to recreate the tableau of a photo shoot. Curiously, sofa cushions printed with the man's recumbent, naked body, including his sock-covered feet, are set behind him. Dualities and mirroring effects abound here, doubling a houseplant to the left of the couch and a fixture on the floor, creating a series of A-shaped motifs throughout. Another painting titled *The Mothership* is a synthesis of Photorealism and flat, cartoonish figuration. Minutely rendered root vegetables and a metallic salad bowl float in the center of the composition, while naively drawn figures toil in a field under the bowl or chop off a branch in a tree above. In the background, a sun graphic juxtaposed with crosses, circles, and tubes evokes old etchings of alchemical emblems as if alluding to the near-mythical hand of the artist, most potent when it resists definition.

— Hili Perlson