



CHICAGO
"New Work From Kansas City"
at Carrie Secrist Gallery

Count me among those who believe that when the next big thing happens in the visual arts—and please, let it be soon!—it's going to come from someplace like Liverpool or Bergamo or Nanchang or Kansas City. While the rule for recent centuries was that it helped artists to live in New York, Paris, London, Tokyo, etc., that such cities were hotbeds of cultural discourse, providing a milieu where artists would collectively thrive (and that places like Kansas City were provincial outposts guaranteeing mediocrity), today places like LA and Berlin seem so burdened by the art market and art world careerist histrionics as to render them mannerist and curiously conformist, and to discourage individuality or personal vision.

Let's not burden these three artists from Kansas City with too much responsibility for the future of the visual arts. This exhibition was not about all of Kansas City, it simply showed three artists who interest Carrie Secrist, and whose independence and willingness to hunker down on visual ideas that intrigue them reflects their experiences in a city that's not unlike Goldilocks' porridge. Kansas City is just right, not too hot, not too cold, it has great museums and art schools, it's urban and has a solid art community, but it's decompressed, a place where you can pursue your visions at your own pace, where you don't worry too much about Documenta or the Turner Prize, or who did or didn't get reviewed in *art ltd.*

Anne Lindberg is a fastidious oscillator. Her patiently and somewhat obsessively drawn works made of thousands of hand-drawn, parallel vertical lines of graphite and colored pencils reflect that Midwestern work ethic, that mania for strict control and yet idiosyncratic effect that marks so much art from this region. Paul Anthony Smith, originally from Jamaica, performs what he calls "picotage" on photographic prints, using a ceramic tool to scrape and pin-prick away, also obsessively, also hundreds or thousands of times, mostly at the figures in these curious images, making them gritty and ghostlike, reintroducing ambiguity and mystery into the specificity of photography. And Kent Michael Smith slathers on clear resin like he's got it on tap, layering fragments of colorful abstract shapes within this viscous shiny aqueous ooze that makes his work transparently sedimentary; you see disparate pastel-like layers embalmed in a syrup as in some primordial pool that makes good abstract compositions. They are three fine artists working away in a place that's anything but provincial—after all, there's a Manhattan in Kansas too.

—JAMES YOOD

"BOUNDARY," 2013, **Kent Michael Smith**
 ACRYLIC, GLITTER AND RESIN ON PANEL, 16" X 16"
 PHOTO: COURTESY THE ARTIST AND CARRIE SECRIST GALLERY