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179 Canal St, Ste 3B/4D
New York, NY 10013

Hard Color

Dylan Ahern | Catherine Birk | Jan Dickey | Hank Ehrenfried | Will Kaplan | Victor Perez | Matt Richards | Chunghee Yun

June 20th, 2025 – August 2nd, 2025

Opening reception June 20th, 6-8pm

Press Release

D. D. D. D. is pleased to present Hard Color, a group exhibition featuring work from artists working in painting and sculpture.

The role of color, as a formal and symbolic device, holds significant presence in the contemporary art practice. Often scoffed at as frivolous, indulgent and commercially attractive, the supposed siren call of color persists nonetheless, piercing through the protestations of connoisseurs, who are so often predisposed to a subconscious puritanism.

Yet can there then be real power and purpose beyond the sensuousness? The artists in this exhibition reckon with this question.

The two sculptors take an antagonistic approach to color. Dylan Ahern's work, made of aged banana peels, finds abjection through imitation, the mutation of color, and its eventual dissolution. Sapping the colors of his usually intensely chromatic work, Matt Richards imagines the cartoon form as Greek sculpture, or at least our collective assumption of their pure white form. In this reconstitution the work exposes the ridiculousness of this false purity, and the farce of its consequent aesthetic and cultural seriousness.

The painters in the exhibition understand the presence of color as an inevitable fact of the medium. Hank Ehrenfried's work hide and fold the subject matter such that intensity of chroma, and their traces, are teased at like secrets too dangerous to reveal and too mysterious to understand. Jan Dickey's work depicts color as a material presence, their weight exerting a strong force on the integrity of the picture plane. Chunghee Yun inverts the eroticism of color into one of sexual deviance, and melds the affects of seduction and violence. In Catherine Birk's work, color transforms and pushes against the compositional and physical systems that hold the paintings together, constituting a formalist allegory of the transgender experience. Victor Perez uses the directness of color to caricaturize violence without disaffecting the force of its depiction. Working within collage and sculpture, Will Kaplan utilizes the effusive colors of found images and found objects to construct work with deep investigational and architectural logic. Within the two dimensional and the imagistic, the careful use of color can generate sites of transformation, mutation and subversive meaning-making.

Artist Biographies

Dylan Ahern (b. 1993, New York, NY) is an artist who uses a wide variety of media and found objects to create sculptural abstractions. He often relies on process to dictate the eventual form of his works, favoring chance over precision. These process oriented modes of making, such as burning, melting and congealing, reflect the artists interest in disease, endurance, and transformation. Ahern holds a BFA from the University of Hartford (2016) and an MFA from the Virginia Commonwealth University (2022). In 2024 he was an artist in residence in Radio28 in Mexico City, and most recently, he participated in Rondo, also based in Mexico City. Since 2022, Ahern has held teaching positions at various institutions such as the Virginia Commonwealth University, the University of Richmond, the University of Houston and the Kinder School for Visual and Performing Arts. He is an upcoming artist in residence at Stoveworks in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Catherine Birk (b. 1994, she/her) is an artist and researcher currently based in Chicago, IL. Her interdisciplinary practice brings transgender studies, queer theory, and critical theory into the expanded field of painting. Catherine earned her MFA in Painting at the University of Wisconsin - Madison (2024), and BAs in Studio Art and Art History from the College of Charleston (2016). Solo exhibitions include *My mother is a horse.*, at the Chazen Museum of Art (Madison, WI). She has exhibited in group shows nationally, including at Redux Contemporary Art Center (Charleston, SC), Trout Museum of Art (Appleton, WI), Arts + Literature Laboratory (Madison, WI), Real Tinsel (Milwaukee, WI), and D. D. D. D. (New York, NY).

Jan Dickey is a painter, writer, and curator based in Brooklyn, NY. He earned an MFA from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa and a BFA from the University of Delaware. Dickey has participated in residencies including the Sam & Adele Golden Foundation (NY), ARTnSHELTER (Tokyo), Kimmel Harding Nelson Center (NE), and Vermont Studio Center. In 2025 he will attend the TUR residency in Riga, Latvia. He has presented solo exhibitions across the U.S. and internationally in Japan. His solo 'Passing Through' at D. D. D. D. took place spring 2023. Dickey's work has been reviewed and featured in *Two Coats of Paint*, *ArteFuse*, *Impulse Magazine*, *Whitehot*, and *Art Spiel*.

Hank Ehrenfried (b. 1992, New Jersey) is a painter and currently resides in Oklahoma City. He holds a BFA in Fine Art from Carnegie Mellon University (2014) and a MFA in Painting from Pratt Institute (2019). He has exhibited nationally and internationally with solo exhibitions at Vardan Gallery (Los Angeles, CA) AuxierKline (New York, NY), Quappi Projects (Louisville, KY) and Welcome Gallery (Charlottesville, VA), as well as group exhibitions at Fierman (New York, NY), Fredericks & Freiser Gallery (New York, NY), Semiose Galerie (Paris, FR), and Turley Gallery (Hudson, NY), among others. His work has been written about in publications such as *Whitewall Magazine* and *Two Coats of Paint* and has been featured in *New American Paintings*. Ehrenfried has completed residencies at The Macedonia Institute in Chatham, NY and Trestle Art Space in Brooklyn, NY. He is currently an artist in residence at Artspace, Untitled in Oklahoma City. He will be a Visiting Assistant Professor of Painting at University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma in Fall 2025.

Writing artist **Will Kaplan** collages found images with observational drawings to probe boundaries between people and their surroundings. After graduating from Skidmore College in 2017, Kaplan has lived and worked in Queens. His exhibition reviews have been published in *Two Coats of Paint*, *Artpsiel*, and *Copy*. His work has appeared at Spring/Break Art Fair, the New Art Dealers Alliance, and Pete's Candy Store. He has staged several solo shows including *Remergency* at Bob's Gallery (2023), *StoryRots* on Governors Island, and *Both Sides Now* (2024) at Living Skin.

Victor Perez (B. 1986, Orlando, Florida) makes paintings whose images fluctuate between satire and vulnerability while provoking reflection on masculine gender paradigms and power dynamics. Depictions of punishment, shame, domination, and repression are explored through a comically morbid lens. Caricature teeters on the edge of dysmorphia. Slippages occur and the comedy of the cartoon can falter into the discomfort of the real. Perez earned his MFA from Hunter College in 2021. He lives and works in Brooklyn, NY.

Matt Richards is a multi-disciplinary artist working in sculpture, video, music, and puppetry. He received his BFA from the Columbus College of Art and Design and his MFA in sculpture from the Rhode Island School of Design. His work was most recently exhibited in 2023 as a part of an exhibition entitled "Disengno in Motion", at Marymount Manhattan College, which surveyed artists who explored animation as an extension of the traditional plastic arts process. He currently lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.

Chunghee Yun was born and raised in Seoul, South Korea, and is currently based in New York City. She is a painter exploring psychological tension and emotional ambiguity in intimate relationships, focusing on gendered power and the blurred boundaries between self and other, desire and repulsion. Bodily encounters are reimaged through symbolic transformation, exploring women's interior psycho-sexual landscapes. Yun holds a BFA from Hunter College (2020) and an MFA from Virginia Commonwealth University (2024). She has exhibited at Harlem House Gallery, Peep Projects, Page Bond Gallery, Kent State University Downtown Gallery, and Field Projects, and has been featured in *New American Paintings* №176 (2025, Northeast) and №166 (2023, South). In 2025, she was an artist-in-residence at ChaNorth.

For more information, please e-mail contact@d4dd4.pictures