

REVIEWS

inheritors do) where Bush left off, precisely by veering away from relying on the centrality of painting as the sole medium for abstraction.

Nowhere is this tension regarding inheritance between past and present dramatized more rigorously than on a wide expanse of wall (painted a dark tint of blue to give off a wildly melancholic and oceanic feeling) where a group of three paintings from Bush's "Sash" series are aligned toward one corner. Immediately next to this trinity, but slightly below the line that frames them, is a vinyl wall drawing by Granados. It feels like a parent and child in conversation with one another, set in isolation against a difficult-to-conceive expanse. What philosopher Rebecca Comay has suggested appears to ring true here: "The intentions of the past [generations] become legible only retroactively; a promise can be grasped as such only belatedly in the light of its eventual betrayal; a possibility is registered as such only in light of its nonrealization; a hope becomes palpable only in its shattering." This beautiful duet between artists registers this hope as one about the promise of filiation within and across the history of art. —**RICKY VARGHESE**

BRENDA DRANEY

Fogo Island Gallery

In Brenda Draney's *Waiting Room* (2017), a woman in a red dressing gown hovers with her arms open, looking as if she is falling backwards into the chair beneath her. Nearly a third of the canvas is left bare—unpainted—and becomes, to the viewer, the walls to this minor scene. The floor is an uneven gradation of institutional green—a drab blue-green recedes into a darker, murky shade. The brushstrokes surge upwards as they change colour, making the ground uncertain and alive. Nothing is still, everything is suspended: almost calm, almost composed, almost serene—but not quite.

It was two years after this first painting, made during a residency at Fogo Island Arts in 2017, that Draney began the works that would comprise her exhibition "Smelling Salts." The worlds she creates in these paintings, all made



Brenda Draney *Atlas* 2019
Oil on canvas 1.23 x 1.52 m

in 2019, are topsy turvy scenes that feel slightly surreal, like a misremembered dream—or an institutional nightmare. In *Orderly*, someone leans over what could be a gurney near an eerie spray of yellow light coming from beneath a set of tall doors. The figure seems both close and far; scale is a little unhinged. Again, nothing is still. Not the brown-red helicopter that appears to come from above in *Lift*, or the newborn surrounded by gloved doctors' hands, umbilical cord dangling, above a bright-red stomach in *Carrie*.

Everywhere, Draney uses the most minimal of shapes and colours to bring these scenes to life. Oddly, the lack of resolve gives them more weight: they become intimations and suggestions that we can place within our own personal register of strange and unsettling events or spaces. The paintings in "Smelling Salts" could be snapshots of an institution—a huge hospital equipped with psychiatrics, geriatrics, emergency and obstetrics. In most of the paintings, the interior walls, smartly left as unpainted canvas by Draney, make plain the dreadful feeling of rigid enclosure that can permeate such settings.

Another Promise is the only exterior. A dispersed line of buildings in the distance sits on a horizon of black ground. From one building a weak rainbow arcs into a muted blue sky. In "Smelling Salts," Draney's new series of paintings evinces a distinct helplessness, even a suffocating closeness. These are not spaces of wellness; one comes to understand that although institutions may sometimes be good, they can also hold situations of despair, sadness and confusion—ones that we only wish we could wake up from. —**YANIYA LEE**

RYAN PARK

Forest City Gallery, London

The only paintings in Ryan Park's "7 Days a Week" are two acrylic-on-canvas reproductions of cigarette posters, for Marlborough and Newport, executed with exacting formal precision. They look like they could be oversized cartons, save for the vendors' interventions—updated prices squeezed in with sharpie or pasted askew over top the old—that confirm their referents: signs, the kind now prohibited in Canada, but which persist as marketing remnants from the heyday of tobacco advertising. These canvases announce what appears to be Park's project. His is a practice that makes objects with all the import of straitlaced formalism—clean lines, minimal compositions, flattened surfaces—but uses that same formalism as the vehicle for something else, as a way to document the marginal, incidental (and often imperceptible) authorship of labour and indulgence, capital and convenience.

The other works in "7 Days a Week" refer to small vices (smoking, gambling, sweets) that form big industries, but Park's interest is in the human gestures that activate them. *Selections 1-49* (2015–17) is a series of 49 pigment prints on paper (one for each possibility in a 49-number lottery) taken from discarded lotto "selection slips." Each arrangement (for this exhibition, Park presented two sets of six numbers) ostensibly formed a complete "ticket," but idiosyncratic markings across the numerals—quick ballpoint-pen-like scratches, strikethroughs and scribbles—suggested multiple players whose respective mechanical box-ticking was here made large and painterly. *24 Flats* (2018) was, ironically, the most three-dimensional of the works on view—solid concrete-cast blocks about the size of a 24-can flat of pop, with delicate inset aluminum rings that traced out their contents—were placed in corners throughout the gallery. And *7 Days a Week* (2017), from which the exhibition takes its title, is a double-sided light box that displays its titular message in big red type set inside the outline of a one-gallon milk jug. Out of context, the words are playfully non-prescriptive, referencing both non-stop labour and perpetual pleasure. Each side of the light box shows the same sign photographed at two different times of year, marked by subtle differences in shadows made by nearby foliage. With this, Park poses a bit of a visual joke, in which this sign-as-advertising, and its message of perpetuity, paradoxically becomes an index of a precise time and place.

Seeing these works together lent vocabulary to the most compositionally complex of the exhibition, which was also the most recent: *Landscape* (2019) is an ink-jet print on adhesive textile showing sun-bleached signs for Ben & Jerry's and Breysers ice cream, complete with idyllic cloud-and-sky graphics