

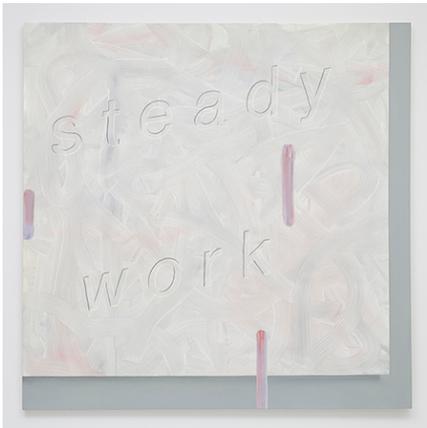


NEW YORK – GREGORY EDWARDS: “STEADY WORK” AT 47 CANAL
THROUGH FEBRUARY 23RD, 2014
February 5th, 2014



Gregory Edwards, *Steady Work* (Installation View), via 47 Canal

Gregory Edwards' approach to abstraction is oddly figurative. For his latest solo show at 47 Canal, entitled *Steady Work*—the Brooklyn artist's first since his solo debut in 2011—Edwards riffs on the inspirational sloganeering of the self-help genre. Featuring single words or short phrases painted amidst garishly colored, textured backgrounds, the show's six works perhaps most strongly recall the increasingly vintage aesthetic of MS PowerPoint slideshows and WordArt.



Gregory Edwards, *Steady Work* (2013),
via 47 Canal

The exhibition's paintings are hardly short of compositional and thematic similarities: with two exceptions, they are composed around vertical stripes and gradients, in relation to the painted title of each work. The effect of these large canvases is to seemingly both monumentalize and ridicule the ethos these phrases espouse.

Information (all works 2013), for example mimics an artlessly assembled presentation slide with its vivid, clashing greens, yellows and blues, deflating the painting's title, which sits boldly, but oddly compressed, at the bottom of the work.

However, it is the two works that break from this rigid, horizontal structure that are perhaps the exhibition's most accomplished. *Inner child* consists of a pink-grey background of uniform, textured brushstrokes, and implies depth between its two layers through what might as well be Photoshop's drop-shadow tool. On top of this sit

the words 'inner child,' rendered transparent and once again mimicking the familiar and ubiquitous tropes of digital imagery. In utilizing visual gestures such as these, *Steady*



Gregory Edwards, inner child (2013),
via 47 Canal

Work suggests a productive friction between the materiality of painting and the increasingly rapid, technologically-enabled distribution of images.

In Edwards' hands, painting emerges not so much as the material resistance to digital images as much as a way of complicating this very opposition.

While Edwards has previously worked with familiar motifs such as question marks, venetian blinds and leopard print, which subtly conflated abstraction in painting with the abstraction of mass production, *Steady Work* goes one step further, highlighting the present day image economy's compression of emotion and ideology into soundbites. In the office are three more canvases not listed on the exhibition checklist, but which are indeed part of the show. The three works are smaller than the canvases in the main

room, and each consist of the word 'New' written twice vertically up the painting, overlaid with multicolored, gestural scribbles. This intrusion of painterly cliché suggests the creeping insincerity endemic to today's language.