

MIER

“Leidy Celeste Nicole”

Artforum

By Joseph Akel

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The specter of language forever shrouds invocations of the body. And if seeing is believing, “Leidy Celeste Nicole,” a group show curated by Lauren Cornell, conjures the manifold spirits of discourse to bold effect. Ostensibly a show about painting and its permutations, the exhibition offers a mordant meditation on the body in contemporary culture. More concerned with alterity than identity, the artists here collectively concern themselves not so much with the results of identification as with the process itself.

In a departure from earlier figurative paintings, Leidy Churchman’s looped *NEW VIDEO*, 2011, along with the remains from the work that are exhibited in the back of the gallery, implicates the body by highlighting its absence. Filmed from above, an obfuscated Churchman smears paints and arranges objects upon a floor-bound surface, utilizing various implements (a pitcher’s glove and rubber snake, among others) to do so, effectively reducing the corporeal artist to an apparatic extension. Celeste Dupuy-Spencer’s paintings, populated by a cast of preternatural characters, sit as a counterpoint to Churchman’s abstracted bodily eidolon. Whether depicting a ghoulish group tarot reading (in *Tarot Reading*, 2010), or the remains, literally, of a dinner party (in *Ceviche and Peruvian Meat*, 2011), Dupuy-Spencer’s compositions point to the intimate, unspoken apparitions that inhabit our daily lives. Meanwhile, Nicole Eisenman’s *WWTD*, 2010, crudely shows a dismembered female torso graphically foregrounding an anatomical utility. Eisenman’s stenciling of the alphabet, cardinal numbers, and words like **YES** and **NO** on the fleshy trunk points dialectically to the body’s inscription and dislocation within language. Depicted or not, the bodies here amount to more than the sum of their parts.