

runner

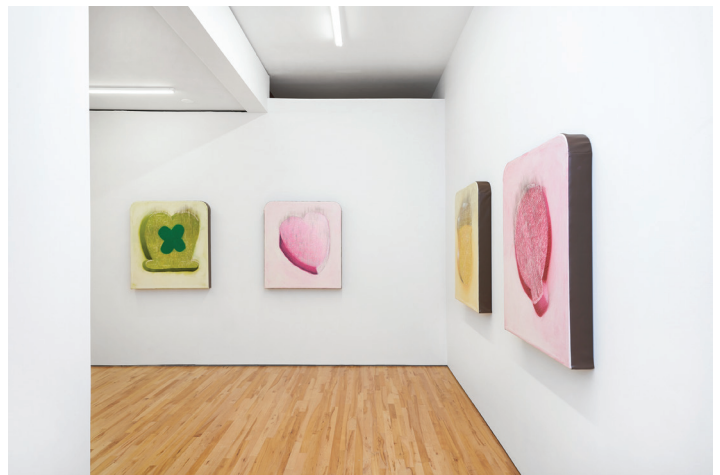
Speed Bump: Tim Johnson at No Place

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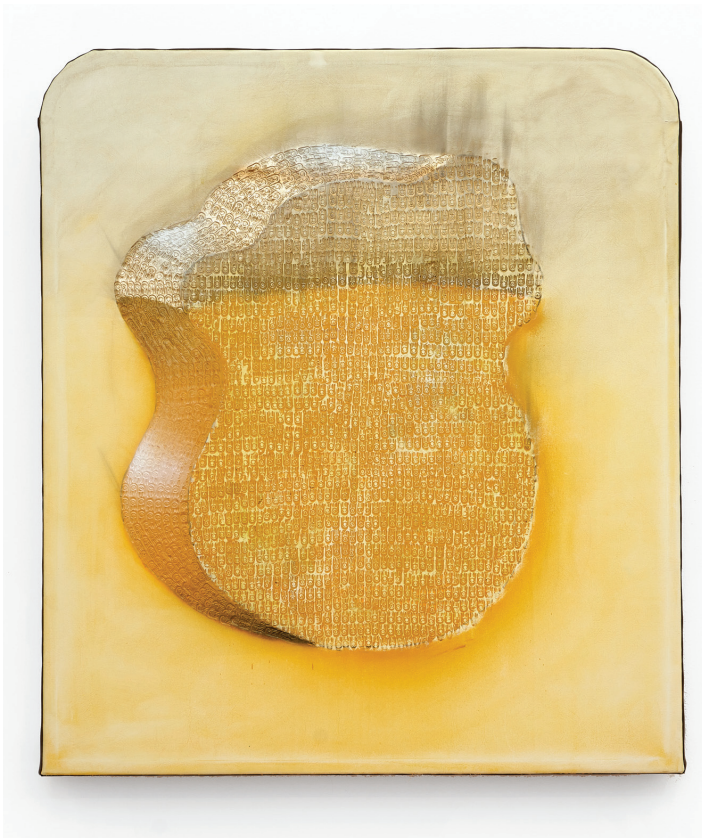
Tim Johnson's approach to art-making based on nostalgia and sensorial memory is at play in his most recent solo exhibition, *Speed Bump* at No Place Gallery in Columbus, Ohio. This show employs various techniques to encourage a person, who was at one point a kid, to re-enter the very specific experience of a morning public school bus ride. Despite not being able to touch the work, the texture witnessed visually could evoke the familiar feeling of running fingers across the seat as soon as we realize that the material was manipulated by a hot lighter. This sensation can shoot us into the moment that then brings about the *sounds* of kids laughing or the *smell* of the engine that accompanies the breeze coming through the open window. This texture and the shape of the panels to resemble oversized bus seats functions in tandem with the imagery painted onto them to access yet another sense, *taste*. Each individual Lucky Charm marshmallow shape is highlighted on a large scale throughout the exhibition, floating weightlessly, with colors bleeding into the background like it had been in the milk too long. This work could remind us of the surreal experience of suddenly recalling lost memories of our past that we have abandoned out of necessity in order to grow up.

Speed Bump at No Place



By participating in the revival of default aesthetics that come with childhood, Johnson recalls the work of Mike Kelley of course, as well as many younger contemporary artists who are practicing today. It has been increasingly common for artists to reference elements from their distant memories and many critics attribute this tendency to the search for meaning and the opportunity for trauma processing. Johnson does this by pairing specific mass produced forms in a seemingly abstract way and inviting visitors to generate their own *individual* narrative in relation to the work as a method of interpretation. Interestingly though, these connections many times end up highlighting the agency of objects and images within the *collective* consciousness as similar reads come up from viewer to viewer.

Subtle hints of punk youth emerge through the use of a lighter in *Speed Bump* similar to the marker used on the pant pocket fabric in *Tranquilizer*, Johnson's solo show just before this one at A.D. in New York City. In *Tranquilizer*, you can also find him using non-traditional materials to further drive our sensorial connection with the artwork; blue jean pockets removed and used as a canvas for the decoration of their own form to highlight its familiarity with a butterfly. *Tranquilizer* feels mildly conflicted in its use of the form of the butterfly which is generally associated with weightless freedom, as visitors are presented with the work in a constricted basement space. It begins to make sense when comparing it to an archaeological butterfly display and then registering the surgeon-like subtractive process that was taken



Pot of Gold



Balloon

to reach their actual outcome as a work of art in a contemporary art space. There are many artists that use acute repetitive processes to produce their work, which could function therapeutically just as much as it does creatively; Agnes Martin or Yayoi Kusama are just a couple of examples. And not only do their individual works contain this precise focus but many times so do their exhibitions as a whole. Johnson's exhibition at A.D. mirrors the most recent one at No Place in that both shows have utilized the impact of multiples with slight variations amongst the group. Their installation on the large white wall pays homage to the history of painting, allowing them to benefit from the tradition of close observation attributed to things that are placed within the art context, however the preference of the rectangle is negated by

Johnson in order to more effectively communicate through form, blurring the line between painting and sculpture and the line between art and commonplace.

Timothy Johnson (b. 1988 in Chicago, IL) is an interdisciplinary artist living and working in Detroit, MI. His work employs memory and relationships to found objects. Through multimedia works he presents an uncanny world refracted through his own connection to the everyday.



Hearts



Clovers



Moon



Horseshoes



Rainbow



Stars

No Place is an artist-run gallery located at 1 E Gay St. in Columbus, Ohio. Established in 2012, No Place occupied a former mechanic shop in Merion Village and derived its name from a sign that once hung over the door - 'No Place Like Home'. In 2021 the gallery relocated to a space in Columbus' downtown area where it remains today.

No Place endeavors to exist as a conduit for a wide range of contemporary visual art to the Midwest, and seeks to present work that is vital to a broad audience. In consortium to regular exhibition programming, No Place is host to an expanse of DIY music shows, sound installations, talks, and events. The No Place project indulges associations to the definition of utopia, and aspires to foster an integral community, while showcasing artists on a national and international scope. The exhibition space has been lovingly built from re-purposed and up-cycled materials and walls from neighboring art institutions. No Place is guided by the practice of re-imagining exhibition space, as well as the understanding and utilization of these resources: the economy of space, an earnest curatorial vernacular, as well as a comprehensive structure that invites greater discourse and participation.

Noplacegallery.com

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All images courtesy of No Place Gallery