



Dario Escobar

By R.C. Baker, Wednesday July 10, 2013

Josée Bienvenu Gallery
529 West 20th Street
212-206-7990, joseebienvenugallery.com
Through July 19

In previous work, Dario Escobar has re-chromed bumpers extricated from crashed trucks, letting chance determine the forms of his sculpture. This serendipitous exploration continues in his new series of fascinating paintings. In small blacksmith shops—still ongoing in Guatemala City, where Escobar lives and works—such wares as gates, railings, religious figures, and furniture are propped against back walls and spray-painted. Escobar attaches blank canvases to these makeshift spray booths and regularly visits the establishments to see how the accumulated layers of paint applied by various workmen are progressing, and to determine when to remove the canvas. Punctuated by the stark silhouettes of actual-size objects, space and scale shift amid hazy, overlapping geometries. In their blurry immediacy, these engaging paintings hark back to David Smith's magnificent spray-enamel works, which the abstract-expressionist sculptor created by employing studio detritus as stencils. Other antecedents include surrealist photograms and Jim Dine's outlining of workaday tools in primary colors. Escobar expands on this panoply of art history with his own conceptual disappearing act, relying on a changing cast of collaborators and the ghosts of utilitarian objects to create images of absence.