

ARTFORUM

CRITICS' PICKS



Scott Anderson, *French Exit*, 2016, oil on canvas, 40 x 32".

LOS ANGELES

Scott Anderson

CES GALLERY

711 Mateo Street

April 9–May 14

Near the bottom of Scott Anderson's *Salsa Wash*, 2016, what appear to be a yellow apple, a black tomato, and a plaid pear congregate atop translucent blue and flumes of opaque green. They are the most recognizable elements in a work that is otherwise tantalizingly unresolved in its figurations. For instance, two polygons cut out of a brown ground suggest ambling slippers. The incoherent forms that consume the rest of the painting—hairy teardrops, black leaves, cerulean triangles—are open to anyone's interpretation, and that's the fun. Given the title, this work's imagery is both as distinct and as ambiguous as the flailing limbs of a pair of dancers, also not unlike the titular chopped-up bits of vegetable matter served with tortilla chips.

These paintings ostensibly depict food culture, with cute titles such as *Oligarchs at Olive Garden*, 2016, or *Holding Food-Court*, 2015. But their visual specifics are often hard to discern. In the latter work, powder blue, lime green, strawberry red, and banana yellow flesh out a lavishly intestinal and architectural landscape revealed by an open door. In *French Exit*, 2016, it looks as if several bathroom doodles and *New Yorker* cartoons got drunk inside a stack of construction paper with shapes and silhouettes clipped out. Across several works, such as *Farm To Table Dinner Theatre*, 2016, significant fill-ins of black order the chaos. From afar, they have a graphic sharpness that contrast with their jumbled appearances close up. Returning to the gastronomic, these animated surfaces resemble a spread on a grill. Defined by irresolution and incongruous segmentations, where extensive layering repeatedly frames preserves of comparatively bare canvas, each work is made from both the raw and the overdone. In any one painting, a section freezes while another one melts.

— Grant Johnson