



SOJOURNER TRUTH PARSONS

Crying in California

September 16 – October 8, 2016

Night Gallery is pleased to present a solo exhibition with Sojourner Truth Parsons titled *Crying in California*. This will be her first solo exhibition at the gallery.

Sojo and I sat down to talk about her exhibition. The first question I asked her was “Is it about your personal life?” She laughed and said no. I wasn’t sure I believed her, although she sounded very confident when she said so. She told me how each painting undergoes a manipulation of texture and color to arrive at a feeling of memory, heartbreak, struggle, or newness. Each painting is built up until it vibrates at the same frequency as the emotions she feels. “But then you can’t make a painting about an emotion you don’t feel, right?” I asked her. She supposed I was correct. “So these paintings do, in fact, reflect your current emotions?” I was trying to get her to admit that the show was all about her personal life. Yes and no, she said. The painting of the black dog, for example, is supposed to be a picture of everyone when they are hurt. But you can’t make a genuine painting of a disembodied feeling so Sojo imagines everyone she knows and how they are when they are hurt and uses that as a frequency guide for the painting.

“And what about the dogs?” Sojo laughed again. “I’ve never painted a person with a face.” She said. “It’s too literal, too hard to be ambiguous with feeling.” We attach much simpler emotions to animals. When a dog is a carrier of a feeling it becomes more like a caricature, a simplified feeling you can laugh at. The funny thing about dogs, Sojo said, is that when you are with them sometimes they feel so much like humans and other times they feel so much like dogs. “Like the television show *Bojack Horseman*?” I asked. She had never heard of the show and it makes sense because Sojo’s paintings are not like television episodes. There is not always a main character. Sometimes they are just the setting or the music or the intro or the end. They all belong to the same world but take up different space.

- Mieke Marple

Sojourner Truth Parsons (b. 1984, Vancouver, BC) has had solo exhibitions at Tomorrow Gallery in New York, Phil Gallery in Los Angeles, and Katharine Mulherin in New York and Toronto. She has also been included in exhibitions at Foxy Production in New York, Galerie Sultana in Paris, and Cooper Cole in Toronto, and her work has been covered in *The New York Times*, *Artforum*, *Art-agenda*, and *Carla*, among other publications. Parsons currently lives in Los Angeles.