

SVETLANA

77 Madison Street
New York NY 10002

Tyler Dobson
Coke Joke

November 3 — December 2, 2018

Gallery hours: Thursday – Sunday, 12-6pm
Opening Reception: Saturday, November 3, 6-8pm
For more information: info@svetlanagallery.com

Tyler Dobson shows clever paintings about drugs and traffic shortly after the spectacular collapse of his own gallery. Below, a press release by the artist.

Coke Joke (To my people in New York)

In 2010 there was a gallery in Brooklyn called Real Fine Arts that was just about a year old. Around that time, Tyler Dobson did a show there of four hand-painted New Yorker jokes without their punchlines. Later, in 2012 as the gallery became more popular, Tyler asked Michael Krebber to paint on these jokes, because he felt they had failed anyway. They ended up being reproduced in a catalog for his retrospective in Bordeaux. John Kelsey kind of dissed on them by including a reproduction of one in an Artforum text called Next Level Spleen. Those works never sold, but Carol Greene was nice enough to make custom foam core boxes and even stored them for a while.

A lot of time went by and there were a lot of parties. A lot of art was sold, too.

In 2017, Tyler was still working at Real Fine Arts along with Ben Morgan-Cleveland, but it was about to close. The party was finally coming to an end. Something had changed in New York. It seemed no one wanted what they had anymore, although their artists continued to exhibit and get great press. Tyler didn't know what to do. Everything felt like it was being thrown into a compost of rotting excess and unsold art. And it was all soaked in booze.

He went to the YMCA a lot. On the way, he'd pick up cans that had been crushed by the freightliners passing through the warehouse/film studio area of Greenpoint. This was where he and the gallery had lived for about ten years. Of course, when he started to do it, he was reminded of Yuji, who also picks up trash. They used to say "Yuji don't touch that!" — like when their own parents told them not to pick up used gum or garbage from the street. Now Yuji's work sells for hundreds of thousands of dollars. So in 2017, Tyler made his first Coke can painting. A very flat can glued to the center of an 18 x 14-inch blood red field.

In 2018, Real Fine Arts closed and Tyler went back to the Maine Coast where he was from. Life seemed like it was over. But he kept tinkering in the studio. Then he got the idea to show some old (2010) never-exhibited Joke paintings with some new Coke paintings. It would be called "Jokes and Cokes," or something like that. Hehe. He planned to have the show at 47 Canal that summer, but then it got pushed back to September. This was fine because he really wasn't ready to go back to the hell that he had just left behind.

Then later in the summer, his show was canceled a second time. 47 Canal was no longer using their original space, where the show was supposed to be. There was a lot of pain, still lingering, from the closure of his own gallery. He felt hopeless. He wondered if he would ever have a show again.

Finally, he just asked Bosko and John if he could do the show at their gallery. He had been in their first show with some photos and the second iteration of his mannequin avatar Glen, who wore a Superman jumpsuit for that one. The first Glen was shown on Whitney Clafin and Dave Miko's bed, in a room where he once lived too. They seemed to love the idea and said yes. This brings us up to date, to the opening night of Coke Joke. Only, instead of showing that old shit, he made it all new for 2018.