



moniquemeloche presents

Ben Murray
Centerville

April 5 - May 31, 2014

Opening reception
Saturday, April 5th, 4-7 PM

Ben Murray
Hoop, 2014
Oil on canvas
72 x 93 in.

Ben Murray's atmospheric images depict banal objects as transformed by the effects of memory, mood and painterly improvisation. For his first solo exhibition at moniquemeloche, Murray presents recent, large-scale oil paintings posing as vernacular symbols of experience from the artist's suburban Indiana hometown, the land formerly known as *Centerville*.

This centrally located town has a complicated history. Claimed as Wiggins Point in 1835 when Jeremiah Wiggins came upon a clearing of land along the Sauk Trail by the Potawatomie Indians, it was renamed Centerville after only three years - when Jeremiah died and because of its central location in the east-west trade route. Forty-seven years later, in 1885, when the first Post Office was established in the area and because another Centerville, Indiana previously existed, the land's name had to change once again.

It was briefly Merrillville and finally Merrillville after the brothers Dudley and William Merrill, who were some of the earliest settlers. Merrillville officially became a town in 1971 and a major destination point for the white flight from Gary, Indiana for the following two decades - the time of Murray's youth.

The paintings display the layering of attempts to claim images in stages of constant flux. With his time living in Indiana informing the work, Murray proposes to insert himself as an active member in the dialogue of the town's erratic timeline informed by his own personal history. Placing the memory-derived work in the context of this historical setting, the artist intends to acknowledge the complicated relationships that image-making within painting has and can have for how we see and edit the past.

Ben Murray (American b. 1977, lives Chicago) received his MFA from the University of Illinois, Chicago in 2013 and his BFA from the Herron School of Art, Indianapolis in 2011. He was a 2014 Artist In Residence at the Bemis Center for Contemporary Art in Omaha, Nebraska and a 2012 MFA Resident at Ox-Bow in Saugatuck, Michigan. He has recently exhibited at Northwestern University, Kaplan A.I.R Exhibitions, curated by John Neff; UIC Gallery 400, and "Revisiting Undomesticated" at Design Cloud, Chicago.

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