

Petzel

Peter Plagens, "Passion and Talent in Large Doses," *The Wall Street Journal*, October 25, 2013.

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Passion and Talent in Large Doses

Exhibitions of Wangechi Mutu, Thomas Eggerer and Karl Wirsum

By PETER PLAGENS

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Thomas Eggerer's 'Giro' (2013) at Petzel. *THE ARTIST AND PETZEL, NEW YORK.*

Thomas Eggerer: Gesture and Territory

Petzel

456 W. 18th St., (212) 680-9467

Through Nov.

To riff on the old western movie line, "It's quiet out there—too quiet": It's smart in there—too smart. Which is to say that the new painting exhibition of Thomas Eggerer (b. 1963 in Germany) is so filled with inside moves that only somebody intimately familiar with the dekes and feints of contemporary painting could truly appreciate it.

His 11 large new pictures consist for the most part of loosely sketched figures of

early adolescent boys seemingly occupied with some sort of campground labor, semi-subsumed by simple, colorful brushy backgrounds à la Willem de Kooning in his late-1950s landscapes, only thinner and brighter.

Mr. Eggerer used to paint more fully realized people in photographically derived settings, and these pictures represent a big change for him—a scaling back of finished figures into a style more ambivalently situated between representation and abstraction. Despite their contrived offhandedness, Mr. Eggerer's pictures are visually snappy and beautifully installed in Petzel's generous space.

The big problem, however, is the feigned provisional drawing: It looks neither sincere enough to indicate real feeling, nor insincere enough to be clever. Mr. Eggerer has outsmarted himself.

<http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702304069604579155514083185316>