

The Drip is a new body of work by Los Angeles based Italian artist SMART. As a collection these paintings can trace a line through SMART's personal history. This begins with a memory of being bought to a family friend's studio when he was a kid - Instead of looking at the canvasses he was transfixed by the floor. Covered in drips and drops of colour, he gazed on forms made through the exhaust from the work at the easel: excess in colour and material.

Born in Florence SMART is vocationally a Graffiti Writer. SMART is not his government name: it is a pseudonym that was given to DORK in 1994 by one of the great canons of the New York Writing world, IZ THE WIZ – The Master Blaster.¹ SMART has been making work for over 30 years, both illegally and legally. His natural ability with form and colour has lead him to collaborate with artists such as Chris Ellis 'DAZE', Todd James 'REAS' and Stephen Powers 'ESPO' to name a few and to work with brands such as Moschino, Laruicci, Adidas and Reebok. He is a member of the infamous Rockin' It Suckers graffiti crew.

This new series of paintings has been percolating for close to 10 years. Far from the smooth lines his letters are known for: *The Drip* is a series of paintings operating in a world away from Graf. The works are all contained on paper and canvas, they are controlled, not seeking to simulate the result of past activities SMART is known for. Their great similarity to the past is they are (much like Graf should be) totally excessive.

The mechanics of SMART's painting uses gravity as the mark making tool. He paints on the flat, dripping sequences of colours onto a surface to build the composition. The subsequent paintings are familiar, but strangely opposed to the immediate impression they give of abstraction, the paint produces forms, chained without lines: A kind of Pointillism.

SMART's motivation for *The Drip* is rooted in that childhood memory of the studio floor, the compositions produced are investigations into 3 states that accompany the action that surrounds a night of writing illegally. The Night's Sky (the stars, nebula, galaxies, the roof of the writer's studio), Lines (that the spray can produces, fat lines, skinny lines, contrast) and The Sunrise (fades of vibrant natural colours, optimism). This is his first exhibition in Ireland.

¹ For people that don't know what Graffiti Writing is I think it is important to explain a little about its background and a little about its parallels...

In the same breath Andy Warhol was soothsaying the future in Stockholm and at about the same point the social revolution of the West had sealed the valued possession of the individual as a social necessity within their new world, the vocation of writing your name was birthed. From the bowels of the most city-like city in the world, New Yorkers began to write their names on walls and trains throughout the 5 boroughs. Rapidly this movement of expression formed: developing vernacular, history, hierarchy and identity. Generations of thousands of Writers usually last only through the teenage years: SMART has lasted for at least 30. The most prolific Writers are crowned Kings.

The goal of Graff and for the Writer is for their NAME to dominate in the city. The same exact goals of a business but for a name. *Apple* is King. *Ford* is God. The driving force behind capitalism: monopoly, survival and domination over all others. The chasm of difference being Writers have no material gain, just memories, props and bragging rights. This deeply sympathetic art form has since been embraced the world over but always looked upon as the ugly brother to culture: the black sheep of the art world. A cancerous growth on society.

- It is the Salon des Refusés In Transit -

The atmosphere it produces within public urban space is (wrongly) attributed to menacing undertones of a looming state of nature. The true attribution of this menacing state of nature is the failure of the hegemonic system itself that then blames those seeking positivity through expression: making work. Zero tolerance is presumed the only measure. Unfairly, Writing was attached by politicians and cultural cabbages to political campaigns, developing a successfully negative projection of writing on society. This negativity only began to ease in the early 2000's when trends in advertising and product design sought to exploit this pure culture to sell products – it was in their campaign pitches that the term 'Street Art' developed: Graffiti Writing was presumed too negative for gaining those lucrative advertising accounts.