

# ARTFORUM

## Chuck Nanney

JENNY'S

4220 Sunset Boulevard, Suite B

July 20–September 7, 2014



Chuck Nanney, *telepath*, 2014, acrylic on plywood and pine, zinc hinges, 14 1/4 x 74 1/2 x 3/4"

Chuck Nanney's first solo exhibition in over ten years is a spare tableau redolent with magical thinking. In "Body Parts & Oracles," the wraparound whiteness of this new gallery's single room is dotted and dashed at various heights by small colorful blocks, tall vertical sticks, and diminutive decorative wings that angle off the walls to toy with fantasies of architectural liftoff. But as much as the latter are wings, the oblong protrusions presented here are also pink tongues and purple thumbs, stiff schlongs and saggy sideways sacs, skin flaps and mottled scabs punctuating the space and erogenizing it with abstract anatomies. Nanney retains all of the handmade, low-budget, biomorphic queerness that so marked his practice of the 1980s and '90s.

Anchored in place or hinged with utility hardware, the works exercise a Calder-inflected distinction between stability and mobility throughout. Where bulbous flipper shapes (called "lingums" [sic] and "nubs" in titles) are the "body parts" of this new corpus, the "oracles" are those small painted rectangular blocks scattered all over that conjure manual things like a Tarot deck or smartphone in size. Several slightly larger panels bare runes that border on legibility and suggest the letters of a monogram or logo but turn out to be sigils, coded markings embodying magic spells cast by the artist. One refers in its title to "secret love," another to forgetting, while yet another constitutes part of a low-hanging landscape composition named *telepath*, 2014.

Everything is symbolic; everything is condensed. Smallness is a way to cultivate ruminative intimacy in viewing. And a sunny aesthetic disposition as willfully bright and happy as Nanney's reads both as gaiety incarnate and a sly way to cover up a lifetime of sadness and trauma survived in the shadow of AIDS.

— Sarah Lehrer-Graiwer