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David Snyder

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09.18.13-11.02.13 *Michael Benevento*

Ectoplasm is of course gross. Leaking from the ears, noses, and throats of Victorian spiritualists caught in scattered pictures, this proven fakery globbed and congealed, providing for the credulous visceral evidence of afterlife, the slimier the better. Though not the first thing glanced in David Snyder's current exhibition, a huge slathery snotball of ectoplasm fills the main gallery of the show. A painting, *Portrait of a Nugose* (all works 2013), hides just behind the goo-heap—get close enough to try and read its subtle lines and the piece begins to joggle and shift, a crack in its veneer revealing, like all ectoplasmic mysteries, the ramshackle mechanisms and jerry-rigged contraptions that animate this monstrosity. Less easy to catch are the individual legs that hold it up off the floor, each socked and shod in a different boot, sneaker, or cordovan.

The first room of the show primes a shiver for the kinetic freak-out that follows. Though less ectoplasmic than the main attraction, it's much spookier even without the goo. Approaching a duo of bare-bulb-lit paintings, stepping close enough to snatch a better peek of its abstractions, one sees the low ceiling rock and quake, clicking some human self-preservation instinct to get the fuck out post-haste.

A few doors down in the gallery's other venue, armies of variously shaped, patterned sheets appear to be stiffed up with something (ectoplasm, glue, cum?), so that each exhibits its own pathetic individuality (goofy ghosts raiding a diversity of linen closets). They all watch the flickering light of a hidden video, *Cents and Incantations*, tucked behind a wall that the viewer can access. The story is a bit mysterious on first gander but no less compelling. Amid tabletop ritualists and a wild-eyed realtor, two suburban gravediggers argue about this and that while stuffed animals get cryptically thrown across the yard behind them, almost too fast to see—ghosts even spookier than anything caught dead in a sheet.