Jay Payton & Arthur Simms – *The Tornado Swept Through the Plains*
27.11.26 – 16.01.27

The Tornado Swept Through the Plains, a two person exhibition by Jay Payton (b. 1992, Atlanta, GA) and Arthur Simms (b. 1961, Saint Andrew, Jamaica), takes its title from a 2026 drawing by Simms. In it, dense accumulations of ballpoint pen corral into a tidy rectilinear framework, while a bulbous form comprising thick applications of marker originates in the lower left corner and gains mass as it reaches the top of the page, indifferent to the otherwise gridded composition. The eponymous image of a pregnant pillar of air tearing through the horizontal plane is flipped into aerial terms, emphasizing trajectory over form, motion over illusion. Movement heavily informs both Simms' and Payton's approach to work in two dimensions. Arthur Simms, known primarily for sculpture—much of which is mounted on wheels—maintains a rigorous drawing practice during residencies abroad, allowing ongoing examinations of the artist's formal concerns while affording portability and ephemerality. Jay Payton's paintings begin on their ground, worked from multiple orientations as his substrate crinkles and folds, paint pooling in its grooves to create his allover compositions. *The Tornado Swept Through the Plains* is an exhibition of works by a pair of artists whose paintings, drawings, and sculptural works maintain a deep engagement with the realm of objects.

Jay Payton's paintings and multimedia works testify to the physicality of their making. *The Plight of Man* (2026) collapses the categories of montage and assemblage. Printed images referring, alternately, to creation and violence, are formally unified under a fibrous skein: the result of pushing a string mop over a layer of glue, the densely webbed surface indexes friction between physical labor and material resistance. *Warm-blooded* (2026), like all of Payton's paintings, is executed on the ground before being stretched and mounted to a wall, allowing viscous paints to settle and accumulate on the fabric, at times settling into incidental folds in the surface. Payton moves paint with cardboard scraps, their corrugations occasionally stamped among more occlusive marks, attesting, alternately, to stasis and gesture. The work's orientation is decided last, after the work has been developed from multiple angles: painting in the round. In ***Carbine, Caliber 5,56*** (2026), Payton finally separates the literal object from the painted substrate, contrasting how they operate as signs: a printed handgun metonymically refers to violence, while a fleshy red impasto painting provides visceral illusions of its index.

Arthur Simms' drawings, like his sculptures, telegraph transience and mobility: while wheels recur in his sculptures as both formal and functional devices, his drawings are modular in organization, portable in scale. The drawings on view in *The Tornado Swept Through the Plains* were created during the artist's residency at the Emily Harvey Foundation in Venice, Italy. Their titles refer not only to significant sites in Europe, but also to the navigation thereof (*I Walking, Waiting for the Boat, Parisian Map*). Simms' works on paper underscore the operations of gesture and line within his sculptures. As in Payton's work, labor is telegraphed through mark making: Simms' heavy application of ballpoint pen burnishes his surfaces, recalling the repetition and exertion of his signature binding technique. Simms also maintains from his three-dimensional practice his integration of readymade materials: hair, napkins, postcards.

Having begun his career as a painter, Simms' first hemp piece was the result of wrapping his last painting: *Lucy Fradkin Meets John Delapa Or Gregor*, 1989—1992. This maneuver illuminates the status of two dimensional works in both Payton and Simms' work: they have a front and back, and can be circumnambulated and observed from all angles. As with sculpture, painting and drawing can be coeval with the quotidian, contemporaneous with our ontological experience.

Text by Katherine Siboni

Jay Payton lives and works in New York. Recent solo exhibitions include Sant´Andrea de Scaphis, Rome (2026); 15 Orient, New York (2025); Seaview, Los Angeles (2025); and Gern en Regalia, New York (2024; 2021). Recent group exhibitions include Reena Spaulings, New York (2025); Derosia , New York (2025), Silke Linder, New York (2025); Wattis Institute, San Francisco (2020); and Art in General, Brooklyn (2019).

Arthur Simms lives and works in Staten Island, NY. Recent solo exhibitions include Karma, New York (2026; 2023); Kunstmuseum St. Gallen, Switzerland (2024); Sammlung Museum Brandhorst, Munich (2024); Martos Gallery, New York (2024; 2022); and San Carlo Cremina, Italy (2023). Recent and upcoming group exhibitions include The John Michael Kohler Arts Center, Sheboygan, Wisconsin (2026); The National Academy of Design, New York (2025); and Gallerie Nazionali di Arte Antica in collaboration with Aïshti Foundation, Palazzo Barberini, Rome (2024).