

## Disbelief – An Interview with Dan Byers



Having recently arrived from a trip to the United States, elements of the political climate were pretty unsettling and fresh on my mind. The newly opened exhibition at i8 gallery, *Seeing Believing Having Holding: A Late Summer Show of Five American Artists* organized by Dan Byers, immediately spoke to this sense of being unsettled and of the disconnection between what you read in the news and the reality of the situation. The title of the exhibition spoke to this sensation especially. Even the added addendum – a late summer show of five American artists – implied that it was the end of a season (or an era) and it was now time to return to a new arrangement of our basic sense perceptions with the help from the studios of artists working in a variety of mediums from all over the US: Kelly Akashi (Los Angeles, CA) Kahlil Robert Irving (St. Louis, MO), Michelle Lopez (Philadelphia, PA), B. Ingrid Olson (Chicago, IL), and Daniel Rios Rodriguez (San Antonio, TX).

In an interview with the Dan Byers, he filled me in on how these nuances inspired the exhibition.

Dan Byers: I think you are definitely picking up on things I was thinking and feeling. That is how the show came about: through an intuitive sense of artists I was interested in and a broad confusion between sight and touch. When Börkur and I first started talking about the show we were going to do something political that touched on the situation in America. However, the exhibition became something that addressed in very visceral terms what it feels like to be in America right now, which is really scary, unsettling, and destabilizing.

I walked back from that feeling towards work that was more metaphorical in the way it contains those confrontations and engagements but perhaps not explicitly engaging in them. The idea of 'late summer' came up because these summer group shows that are usually an opportunity to be light and playful. It certainly has that bit of late



Michelle Lopez: C3PO, 2008

summer, like you said, a feeling of harvesting and getting back to organizing all the changes that happened over the summer, but it also has connotations of late empire and this moment where the shadows are longer and there is this anxiety that starts to creep in. It's a bit playful that I'm putting 'American artists' in the title. I was hesitant because a lot of artists don't like to be identified by their nationalities. It always has problematic connotations but at the same time, it is five young American artists from all over the country. As an American and an American curator, it feels important for me to let people know that there are things happening all over the country and that it's a big country and people are doing things all over the country, responding to a specific vernacular and responding to what is happening. That is all part of a subtext to the show.

Art\*zine / 29 août 2018  
*Disbelief – An Interview with Dan Byers*  
par Erin Honeycutt

GALERIE CHRISTOPHE GAILLARD  
[www.galeriegaillard.com](http://www.galeriegaillard.com)