

Mohebbi, Sohrab, *Critic's Pick: Meg Cranston*, *Artforum*, April 2013

ARTFORUM

Meg Cranston

LAXART 2640 South La Cienega March 2–April 20



Meg Cranston, “Emerald City,” 2013, oil on canvas, acrylic latex paint. Installation view.

In her latest installation, “Emerald City,” 2013, Meg Cranston has painted two walls of the gallery emerald green. A portrait of Kate Middleton, fabricated in China, is installed on one of the painted walls facing the entrance. The gallery’s third wall is left white, except for a small monochrome painted the same hue that beams across the room. Here, it’s as if Cranston has taken the color emerald green as a readymade.

While the market economy used to rely on circulating goods through advertising, it is now more preoccupied with choreographing moods, gestures, and, inevitably, color. In December 2012, Pantone held its semiannual secretive two-day conference, which is more akin to a papal conclave, and announced emerald green as the color of 2013. “Appropriate for every occasion,” said the company of the chosen color, citing it as lively and radiant. Yet, Middleton, pictured in Cranston’s portrait, seems to have been the one to set this year’s tone by wearing an emerald pleated gown in November 2011, a year before Pantone determined the latest chromatic zeitgeist. As such, the readymade seems to have expanded from the thing itself to the context within which a product is circulated and interpreted—more specifically, from a royal figurehead to a globalized culture.

As Cranston mentions in an interview, she is not necessarily concerned with a critique of our corporate-curated environment. Rather, it is the symbiotic relationship between individual identity and branding that is her subject matter. In this exhibition, she questions what creative autonomy entails when a choice like an artist’s palette or the color one wears is not as autonomous as it seems.

— Sohrab Mohebbi