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Art Review: Feodor Voronov "Relics" at Mark Moore Gallery

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Feodor Voronov "All the Right Moves," 2013 acrylic, marker, ballpoint pen and spray paint on canvas 62 x 96 inches (courtesy of the artist and Mark Moore Gallery / October 1, 2013)

Feodor Voronov's 10 new paintings at Mark Moore Gallery begin simply: Each starts with a word or a phrase the 32-year-old painter prints, in big block capitals, on raw canvas.

Then things get messy. And so animated you won't want to look away.

Voronov makes some letters look three-dimensional, as if they were carved from stone, built of bricks or blown up like balloons. The visual kick of graffiti comes to mind, but so does the frilly silliness of doodles, particularly those of daydreaming grade-schoolers. Razor-sharp lines emanate from other letters, suggesting, as cartoons often do, the sounds of spoken words. With the precision of architectural renderings, they also call to mind less coherent utterances, like grunts and gasps, as well as the eardrum-splitting sounds of glass shattering, objects colliding, gears grinding and fingernails grating across chalkboards.

Still other letters are surrounded by such brightly painted patterns that the words they spell out appear to be silent gaps in Voronov's cacophonous compositions, little islands of respite amid the every-which-way energy of his dissonant pictures.

To give yourself over to the visceral to-and-fro of these rambunctious abstractions is to feel as if you have entered an echo chamber on the brink of exploding.

Titled "Relics," Voronov's second solo show suggests that what we think of as normal is built on a shaky foundation on the verge of collapse. Street signs, graphic advertisements, corporate logos, team emblems and text-based Conceptualism get caught up in the perfect-storm swirl of his paintings, which prefer the stutter and stammer of DIY thinking to the cool smoothness of accepted messages.

If the Russia-born, L.A.-based artist were called on to rewrite the King James Bible, it might very well read: "In the beginning was the word; after that, chaos."

(Mark Moore Gallery, 5790 Washington Blvd., (310) 453-3031, through Oct. 12. Closed Sundays and Mondays.
www.markmooregallery.com)

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