

# ARTFORUM

## Dana Powell

ALLEN & ELDRIDGE

55 Delancey Street, Located below James Fuentes

July 18–August 18

Refreshingly, Dana Powell's twelve oil-on-linen paintings here are titled to succinctly convey their subjects: for example, *Pale pool* or *Smoke screen* (all works 2017). The approach is confident, allowing the viewer to engage visually without superficial complication. Subjects include seemingly benign situations, such as the white cloud in *Puff* or earth's celestial companion in *Daymoon*, both delicately rendered and modest in scale. *Test site* and *Hotbox*, however—a picture of an explosion and closed elevator doors leaking smoke—complicate matters with their deadpan representations and grim humor.

*Night drive*, *Lot*, and *Ghost drive* depict the cinematic isolation and unease of road journeys undertaken in the dark. This is particularly strident in the latter piece, wherein the car's headlights are all that pierce the pitch black of night, illuminating the highway and a wisp of something occupying the right lane. These shadowy paintings, along with *Hotbox* and *Test site*, cast the artist's more picturesque images in a less comforting light. Why is the water in *Pale pool* rippling? Is someone out of the frame swimming? Drowning? And are the bright flashes in *Rockets* celebratory fireworks or distress flares?

Only *Punch*, made to appear as if a fist has been put through it, mounted on a strut behind a cutout section of wall, is overdone and unconvincing in its supposed violence. Otherwise, the tight effectiveness of this exhibition is due principally to the sly, undermining influence Powell's sundry narratives have on one another.



Dana Powell, *Ghost drive*, 2017, oil on linen, 9 x 12".

— [Darren Jones](#)