

Sikkema Jenkins & Co. is pleased to announce *In bed and abroad*, a solo exhibition of works by Louis Fratino. This will be the artist's third show at the gallery, featuring a selection of paintings produced 2022-2023. *In bed and abroad* opens Friday, October 27, 2023, with a public reception from 6-8 PM, and will be on view through December 9, 2023.

Louis Fratino's work seeks the potential for connection and queerness in the itinerant moments of daily life. The transposition of these instances into painted image reveals a quiet and discerning honesty, capturing a montage of memories, sensations, and atmospheres. Following a thorough contemplation of domestic and interior settings, the paintings of *In bed and abroad* emphasize an outward turn in Fratino's gaze and his evolving search for intimacy and subjectivity within the public realm.

Fratino's scope of references encompasses art historical lineages from antiquity to Modernism. These formal and conceptual impressions helped the development of Fratino's public space paintings. Indian painter Bhupen Khakhar has been influential in his approach to figuration and narrative, particularly in the depiction of ordinary individuals and day-to-day experiences. The entangled crowd of a dance hall echoes the introspective density of Max Beckmann's Weimar-era tableaus. Edward Hopper's characteristic arrangement of light and shadow is conjured by a shadowed theater audience, while the glowing form of the dancer onstage recalls the watercolors of performers by Charles Demuth. Fratino views these affinities as sources of inspiration, engaging in an affective dialogue across queer perspectives and artistic generations.

*In bed and abroad* sees Fratino further considering the physical and psychological dimensions of the public sphere. An aspect of the subjects inhabiting his recent canvases is their unfamiliarity to Fratino outside of his immediate circle of connections: strangers in a public shower, couples strolling beneath the cherry blossoms, the hushed theater audience, their shrouded features tinged in a silhouette of blue light emanating from the stage. Although unidentified, the figures retain a sense of intimacy through the lens of Fratino's own recollections, sustaining such discrete observations beyond a singular time and place.

This expansion of subject and setting subsequently bears influence on the compositional character and materiality of the paint itself, a shift that Fratino enjoys leaning into. Diffused edges, heightened horizon lines, varying architectural relations, and monochromatic washes of lighting enhance the breadth of Fratino's painted worlds and the viewer's perspective into them. The varying appearances and body types seen in *Arci bellezza* (2023) and *YMCA* (2023) constitute distinct physiognomic departures from Fratino's frequent subject, a male personage inflected with shades of his own self-image. In *Plums and cherries* (2023), the autumnal color palette paired with the fluttering cherry blossoms makes ambiguous any certainty of season. The scene is less a representative depiction of place than it is an evocation of senses and imagery: a synchrony of residual memories, traces of past and present, composed in painted memorial to unceasing impermanence.

Louis Fratino (b. 1993, Annapolis, MD) received his BFA in Painting with concentration in Illustration from the Maryland Institute College of Art, Baltimore, MD (2015). He is a recipient of a Fulbright Research Fellowship in Painting, Berlin (2015-16) and a Yale Norfolk Painting Fellowship, Norfolk, CT in 2014. His work is included in the collections of the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA; Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, CA; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX; RISD Museum, Providence, RI; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, NY. Fratino lives and works in Brooklyn, NY.

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**UPCOMING EXHIBITIONS**

ZIPORA FRIED

DECEMBER 14, 2023 – FEBRUARY 3, 2024