



GALERIE SARDINE

## FARRELL BRICKHOUSE

Farrell Brickhouse's paintings have unfolded with sustained conviction alongside the shifting terrain of painting in New York over the past five decades. This exhibition takes the form of a survey of the last 20 years of the artist's work, not as a retrospective in the conventional sense, but as a way of situating a body of work that has persistently resisted easy alignment with dominant tendencies, even as it has absorbed and refracted them with unusual clarity.

Working at a measured remove from the cycles of visibility that often define the city's art world, Brickhouse has developed a practice grounded in attention: to story, to structure, to the slow accrual of meaning within the painted image. His paintings occupy a space of near lyricism, one of sustained looking and feeling, where gesture is held in tension with restraint and composition unfolds as a sequence of decisions that feel both intuitive and exacting.

To consider this work within the broader history of painting in New York since the early 2000s is to recognize a set of parallel conversations. While the period has been marked by returns to figuration, the reanimation of abstraction, and an ongoing dialogue with the legacies of late modernism, Brickhouse's paintings move along a more oblique path. They remain attentive to these currents without being determined by them. One senses in them a deep engagement with painting's internal questions rather than with the external pressures of style or trend. Seen together, the paintings trace their own position within the broader landscape of contemporary painting in New York.

Running through the work, however, is something both more expansive and more intimate. Brickhouse's paintings carry the tenor of a kind of romanticism, not in any sentimental register, but as an ongoing attempt to describe a life as it is lived, felt, endured, and remembered. His images unfold as a sequence of episodes and encounters, at once personal and archetypal. Figures recur,

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situations echo, motifs repeat with variation. A man in a boat, a body in motion, a figure returning something to the earth, another poised in recognition of those who came before. These are not illustrations of events so much as tableaux of experience, condensed moments in which the specific and the universal begin to blur.

The paintings draw from a lived trajectory that moves between worlds: the hardness of an early life shaped by the codes and pressures of East New York, the physical and solitary rhythms of working at sea in Montauk, the improvisational, materially driven life of a downtown studio, and his proximity to the experimental theater scene in New York. These experiences do not appear as narrative in any direct sense. Rather, they surface as an underlying structure, a kind of mythic thread that binds the work together. What emerges is a language of emblems—figures and forms that carry meaning beyond themselves while remaining grounded in the contingencies of a particular life.

There is, too, a sense of inheritance that runs through the work. A recognition that to paint is to stand, however provisionally, on the shoulders of others. This awareness does not manifest as quotation or pastiche, but as a continuity that feels carried rather than cited. The work acknowledges its precedents while insisting on its own terms, locating itself within a longer arc of making without relinquishing its immediacy.

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