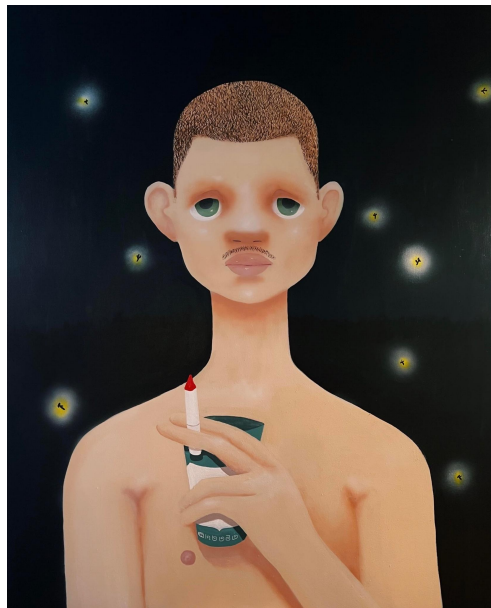


Xanadu Ben Evans

Opening Reception: Thursday, September 7, 6 - 9 PM.
2683 S La Cienega Blvd
Los Angeles, CA 90034

Allouche Gallery, Los Angeles presents “Xanadu”, a solo showing of works by Los Angeles-based artist, Ben Evans. In this new series of paintings and mixed media works, we step into Evans’ world of voluptuous, melodramatic and reflective subjects. Pulling from his surroundings, Evans’ paintings evoke longing and desire with an ominous stillness among the vibrance of California. Bringing into question the glossy perfection of idealized California, “Xanadu” plays off themes of abundance, leisure and isolation in the neo-noir narratives.



Ben Evans. *Lightning bugs*, 2023. Acrylic on canvas. 68 x 56 inches.

Describing his works as “pensive and campy” Evans’ main source of inspiration is derived from the everyday in his intimate encounters. Leisure meets romance as figures smoke cigarettes on tennis courts and stand dazed among palm trees. Evans boils it down to “a realm of cartoon-sized imagery that exists between reality and fantasy”. The drama, exaggeration and performance of old Hollywood is right at the surface in his fantastical paintings.



Ben Evans. *Three palms*, 2023. Acrylic on canvas. 40 x 36 inches

From Edward Ruscha's paintings of Hollywood signs and commercial logos to David Hockney's idealized and empty pool scenes, artists continue to question the dreaminess and glamor of California. There is a sentiment of intangible emptiness that links these three artists, as their pensive works evoke desire and yearning. Edward Ruscha's painting "Trademark #5" flashes the Twentieth Century Fox logo in blazing colors, with a roughness that contradicts the plasticity and sheen of Hollywood. The sign acts as a monument to the myths and dreams of Los Angeles. In an environment that strives for perfection, feelings of bewildered ineptitude and craze have surfaced through the visibility and roughness of his brush strokes. While Ruscha focused on the significance of the commercial sphere, David Hockney used the recurring swimming pool motif in his idyllic and vibrant paintings.



Edward Ruscha. *Trademark #5*, 1962.



David Hockney. *The Splash*, 1966

This importance of place carries through Evans' portfolio, as his series of tennis paintings play off of performance and superficiality. The liveliest sense of motion coming from the stagnant figures is breathed from the smoke streaming from half-finished cigarettes. Speaking on his choice of tennis courts for his scenic snapshots of California, Evan states "I'm always looking for spaces that feel otherworldly and the tennis court feels like a surrealist landscape that's color-blocked and flat."

Evans' work peers through the post-modern digital lens, as he creates a language of his own recurring imagery. The unique aesthetic merges surrealism with camp and pop, and creates an animated realism that is simultaneously flat and flesh. Relatable moments of quiet slowness are elevated as they are no longer insignificant but rather fleeting and beautiful moments of deconstructed self.



Ben Evans. *Tennis painting #71*, 2023. Acrylic on canvas. 60 x 48 inches.

Ben Evans was born in Charlotte, North Carolina in 1995. Evans went on to study at the Pratt Institute in New York and has shown in various solo and group shows in New York, Los Angeles, Paris, Australia and Italy.

For all inquiries, please reach out to losangeles@allouchegallery.com.