

# *Althuis Hofland Fine Arts*

## ***Street Paintings***

**Deborah Brown**

20 May - 24 June

In *Street Paintings* Deborah Brown shows us corners, fences, sidewalks, street carts and shop displays that are typically overlooked. Their presence so obvious alongside our own and therefore assumed until they disappear or are replaced (neither are uncommon in an ongoing urban expansion and gentrification of New York City, the protagonist of this body of work). These paintings are pointing us to familiar but structurally invisible spaces, they become a documentation of sites that may not remain forever, and amplify the beauty of everyday urban compositions. In broad colorful strokes Brown not only captures these liminal cityscapes but by emphasizing her unique view of them—odd perspectives often including Brown's and Brown's dog's shadows—we are reminded of their own singularity. Subtly reminding us that the carefully arranged year-of-the-rabbit-ornaments, hardware store bins, and designed patterns signifying commercial and residential locations all inform the community of a specific locale.

In addition to *Street Paintings*, several paintings from Brown's *Haunted House* series are presented in the exhibition as well. These still standing town houses are located in East Williamsburg, Brown's home base, amongst an increasing number of apartment and office buildings and hotels. Wearing time as people do they appear as ancestors of the neighborhood, their mystery echoed by their deserted allure despite their occupancy. But, there is something to be said for the particular time of day that Brown seems to grasp and possibly accentuate, pulling the light almost into surreal colors and angles, providing a natural spotlight for spaces that are usually left in the dark.

Although people are mostly absent in both the *Street Painting* and *Haunted House* series (they appear in silhouettes, shadows and behind windows), the underlying narrative of these bodies of work explicitly refers to various micro, and often marginalized, communities. Together they become surreptitiously allegorical for the metaphysical nature of every lived-in environment.

The paintings do not so much reveal underrecognized segments of society, everything is after all already there in plain sight. Instead, they facilitate widening our perspective, shifting it, questioning it. In this exhibition we follow Brown on a walk, with her dog, through her neighborhood; the way Frank O'Hara walked to the San Remo. Not showing us new existing things along the way, but way of seeing anew.

- Lara Schoorl

*Deborah Brown lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. She received a BA summa cum laude, Phi Beta Kappa, from Yale University and an MFA from Indiana University. Upcoming and recent exhibitions include: Bonhams Hong Kong (2023); Carl Kostyál, Milan (2023); adhesivo contemporary, Mexico City (2023); Asia Art Center, Beijing (2023); Hall Art Foundation, Schloss Derneburg Museum, Germany (2021-22); Gavlak Gallery, Los Angeles (2022); and Harper's Gallery, East Hampton, NY (2022). Her work has been written about in The New York Times, Art Forum, Art in America, ARTnews, Artnet, Hyperallergic and ART-Das Kunstmagazin. Brown has been a tenured professor at Carleton College and a visiting artist and lecturer at Penn State University, Hunter College, Pace University, Columbia University, Maryland Institute College of Art, Yale University and Art Omi. Her work is included in museum and private collections around the world.*