

Something lurks in the mundane and Greg Burak tiptoes around it. He clarifies nothing, yet illuminates plenty- like shining a flashlight on an amalgam of innocuous matter. This allows the viewer an encounter with dubious freefall. One is hard pressed to identify the narratives contained within these frames. What are these moments verging on? What are they tending toward? There are moot tensions that leave the viewer at a loss for resolution.

Perturbations are masked by inoffensive subjects, accessible only by true consideration of motive and intimation. So much is contained in the hands. In this respect, Burak harnesses the gesture. Sleights of hand culminate in something inscrutable. Easy equations have no place here, one plus one equals C. Burak sets up a story, but refuses to tell it. The works therefore brush up against the fractured narratives of Surrealism while maintaining a stronghold in the ecosystem of figuration. Burak's people are entirely his own; his hands, his noses, his mouths. The figures populating these paintings are devoid of particulars. Faces are rendered without details, expressions are barely-there. Language intervenes as titles proclaim that an appointment looms or a switch is to be made. Still, the preternatural endures and the viewer must arbitrate what may be red herrings or easter eggs.

The works on view are brimming with strange ambiguities and formal considerations. The slightly blurred edges are reminiscent of Fairfield Porter's paintings as both artists engage with the "wooly" Vuillardian lineage. Burak excavates his own territory as smooth surfaces and indeterminate narratives are pronounced in his compositions. He certainly romances AbEx flatness while grounding the works in obtuse figurations. His thin paint application alongside muted tones contribute to a notable softness. The recurrent foliage which recalls that of Alex Katz, with pronounced economy of line though diffused by Burak in favor of a certain sense of wistfulness.

The frescoes of Piero della Francesca are clear reference points as strange placidity and studied constructions generate remarkable meditations on humanity and spirituality. Burak thus conflates agnosticism and religiosity on the same imaginal field. The narrative value of the former is positioned in conversation with the formal precepts of the latter. There's also a veneer of genre painting, though these works are not so simple. Warm interiors become theaters of deception. A sleight of hand here and a foreboding gaze there; Each of these paintings barter in defying the gaze. There is something liberatory in the realm of uncertainty after all.

Burak's ominous domestic interiors are the product of reconstituted everydays. What lurks beneath the quotidian? There are suggestions in mere details, but certainly no conclusions. Any sense of calm is tenuous; there is no respite from ambivalence, merely compliance to it. - Text by Reilly Davidson

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Greg Burak (b.1986) Haverstraw, NY. Lives and works in Queens, NY. The artist received his B.F.A. in Painting from the Maryland Institute College of Art, Baltimore and his M.F.A. in Painting from the Henry Radford Hope School of Fine Arts, Indiana University. Burak's first solo exhibition, *Visitations*, was at Fortnight Institute in 2018. Recent group exhibitions include Patel Gallery, Toronto, Canada, curated by Kim Dorland; *Paraiso Perdido*, Thierry Goldberg Gallery, NYC; *Hunters in the Snow*, 303 Gallery, NYC, and *Nine Lives* at Fortnight Institute. Greg Burak is represented by Fortnight Institute.