

KRISTINA TSOLIS – REAY

SIGHTSEER

15th of October - 7th of November

Painting as private, beautiful musings about giants of art and art history; this private experience of making paintings; succulent, simple, feeling, strange coordinates of vision, a manifest presence of a love of being in the manifest presence of art.

The small grandiose. Forging an identity in the presence of other art.

But more: The public experience of seeing art with others, of being a pilgrim but also a tourist, a friend, mother, someone experiencing other people experiencing art.

Tsoulis-Reay's work revels in the sides of ourselves that are reverent, ribald, mysterious. These paintings are love letters from places that knock us down; places that are populated with others like ourselves, and others who are just there having fun.

Tsoulis-Reay folds these experiences of awe and banality together in beautiful paintings with creamy touch, deep feelings about all the things going on while we are looking at art in public. She makes us make larger claims on our experiences.

These paintings are deliriously mysterious; they drive away the bad spirits that sometimes make us feel that we're the only ones who really know what's going on with art. She lets us see that we're all in this together in the beautiful alchemical stew. We want them...

Jerry Saltz

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Kissing a sphinx. Standing idly in a sea of human hair while serpents entangle Laocoön. Pinching the Parthenon. A problem of scale and distance, experience and presence: a problem painting can address.

Painting adds, as it were, another lens. Tsoulis-Reay's snapshot-size paintings triangulate a new path, a third way. They fuse the arbitrary drift of the contemporary with the cryptic past in a way that moves beyond the traveller and their destination. There is an element of self-consciousness in this. It raises, traces, and allows consideration of alternate possibilities to exist within the snapshot, cracking it wide open. These possibilities exist in the larger accumulated appearance of the assembled marks, which resemble their source, sure, but also exceed it.

Snapshots prove that we were some place where people have been, or that we are some place where people go. They swallow experience as they themselves accumulate; they become empty signposts, recalling the act of remembering itself more than a specific experience of an actual place. Snapshots resonate with the idea of travel. A belief that drifting through eras of human history is as easy as geographic movement. Such movement dislodges history and makes it accessible again. The sphinx reveals its mysteries in a flash.

Paint sets the vantage and scale of the snapshot sliding. We're here and now, but also there and then. Tsoulis-Reay's paintings pull us very close even as they open out onto a world of unknown and foreign terrain. Faces we have never seen before. Faces we know by heart. A patchwork collection of hues so perfect they fool you into thinking they are working together. Each brushstroke recasts happenstance as consideration. The work of a seer, rather than a restatement of sight.

Painting is suggestive in a way that foregrounds the linguistic qualities of sight. It doesn't just give a language to forms but connects us to a past with a full etymology of surfaces, shapes, and substances: a place where we start to get at something beyond the picture that is also inside of it, a kind of bright reflection of what the circumstances of being were, what they might yet be, there and elsewhere.

Ian Epstein