

Zach Bruder : *Edening On*



January 7 - February 11, 2018
Opening reception Sunday, January 7, 6-8pm

Magenta Plains presents *Edening On*, an exhibition of new paintings by New York-based painter Zach Bruder. Bruder's metaphorical approach to painting and long-term interest in image collecting results in inventive compositions in which both pictorial and illusionistic space play a role. Often humorous and allegorical, his paintings involve animals, architecture, and anthropomorphism.

Bruder revels in history for what it reveals and what it hides within it. His canvases revive and repurpose familiar motifs, referencing folklore while finding new metaphors in simple objects and creatures. His loose, yet confident application of paint borrows equally from modernism and illustration, illuminating his subject matter in the vein of Sigmar Polke or Charles Burchfield. The source material—archetypal and drawing from classical and vernacular mythology—is culled from the artist's extensive archive of historic imagery.

In *Knaves All*, two black cats perch on glowing candlesticks, perhaps referencing Act III, Scene I of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, in the moment when Hamlet's personality is breaking down and more truths are being revealed: "We are arrant knaves, all. Believe none of us." Bruder finds meaning in words, and his titles take the form of idioms or quips, constructing layers of nuance into every painting. This playful approach lends itself to verbifying "Eden" into the action-verb, "Edening." But what does it mean "to paradise"? This is precisely the sort of question that Bruder sets up for the viewer to answer.

Addressing mythologies both cultural and personal, the works offer multiple interpretations of religious and social narratives and urgent responses to the societal and political moment in which they were produced. In *Who Is Minding The Shop?* a tiny, green demon smoking a pipe skulks off with a miniature painting behind the back of much larger, suited figure, a visual narrative which could be the portrayal of a lack of civic accountability in our times.

Through his unique blend of humor and earnest depiction, Bruder not only uses stories as manipulative tools but acknowledges them as sources of comfort. The act of painting functions as a personal codex, just as useful as referring to an encyclopedia for answers or a Bible for solace. His artistic process becomes a spiritual practice to decipher the world around him. The image itself is synthesized from something deeply personal, an artifact of Bruder's imagination.



Zach Bruder (b. 1984 in Cleveland, Ohio) received his BFA from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2006. Recent solo exhibitions include *Hardscrabbled*, Harlan Levey, Brussels, Belgium; *Monument Around*, galerie l'inlassable, Paris, France; *Plant in Repair*, Gregory Lind Gallery, San Francisco, CA; and *Unwelcome Guest*, LaMaMa Galleria, New York, NY. Selected group shows include *The Present Tense: Zach Bruder & Louise Bourgeois*, Ratio 3, San Francisco, CA; *Tennis Elbow*, The Journal Gallery, Brooklyn, NY; and *Record Lines This Summer*, Magenta Plains, NY. Bruder lives and works in New York City. This is the artist's first exhibition at Magenta Plains.

MAGENTA PLAINS

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