



CHASON MATTHAMS

Chason Matthams' focus is on capturing the ephemeral experience of consciousness and pointing to its fragmentary nature. While at first glance his paintings seem to be contemplative experiments in mimesis, prolonged looking reveals threatening undertones. Matthams' employs specific combinations of colors, angles of perspective, and exhaustive detail to anthropomorphize each of his subjects, rendering them just barely sinister. Flitting between mechanical and organic objects, Matthams' exacting brushwork is the connective thread leading our eye through every sumptuous detail.

Matthams graduated with a BFA in Fine Art from New York University in 2004 and an MFA from New York University in 2012. Previous solo and two person exhibitions include Independent New York with Stan VanDerBeek, Magenta Plains, New York, NY (2023), Glimpse, Magenta Plains, New York, NY (2022); two, Tyler Wood Gallery, San Francisco, CA (2013, 2019); Advances, None Miraculous, Thierry Goldberg Gallery, New York, NY (2015); and A Hell for Rainbows, Thierry Goldberg Gallery, New York, NY (2019). Previous group exhibitions include Beyond the Pale, Interstate, Brooklyn, NY (2014); Break Out, Frédéric de Goldschmidt Collection, Brussels, Belgium (2015); and Cynthia Daignault's The Certainty of Others, Flag Art Foundation, New York, NY (2017); L'IM_MAGE_N, Ashes/Ashes, New York, NY (2017); Stockholm Sessions, Carl Koystal, Stockholm, Sweden (2021); and Nature Morte, The Hole, New York, NY (2021), Blossom, Tong Art Advisory, Shenzhen, CN (2021), and Rainbow Country, VSOP Projects, Greenport, NY (2023).

Born in 1981, Pacific Grove, CA
Lives and works in New York, NY

Interior Design
September 25 2023

INTERIOR DESIGN

Ries Hayes Expands Its Offerings With This Striking Office

Words: Lisa Di Venuta
Photography: Stephen Kent Johnson

Thad Hayes has been in the business for decades. But Ries Hayes was only just founded in 2021 by him and coprincipal David Ries—and is already making a name for itself with apartments in New York and seaside homes along the Massachusetts coast. Thanks to a referral from an architect on a project in the latter category, the fledgling studio is now bringing its functional, timeless appeal to the commercial sector, starting with a 7,500-square-foot workplace in Manhattan for Valar Ventures. “They came to us because they didn’t want a typical office rollout,” Ries says of the venture capital company cofounders, who also share a mutual affinity for mid-century Scandinavian furniture.



In the other founder's office, 1970's swivel chairs by Gardner Leaver stand on an 18th-century Karabagh rug.

Yale University Radio
December 13 2022

Yale University

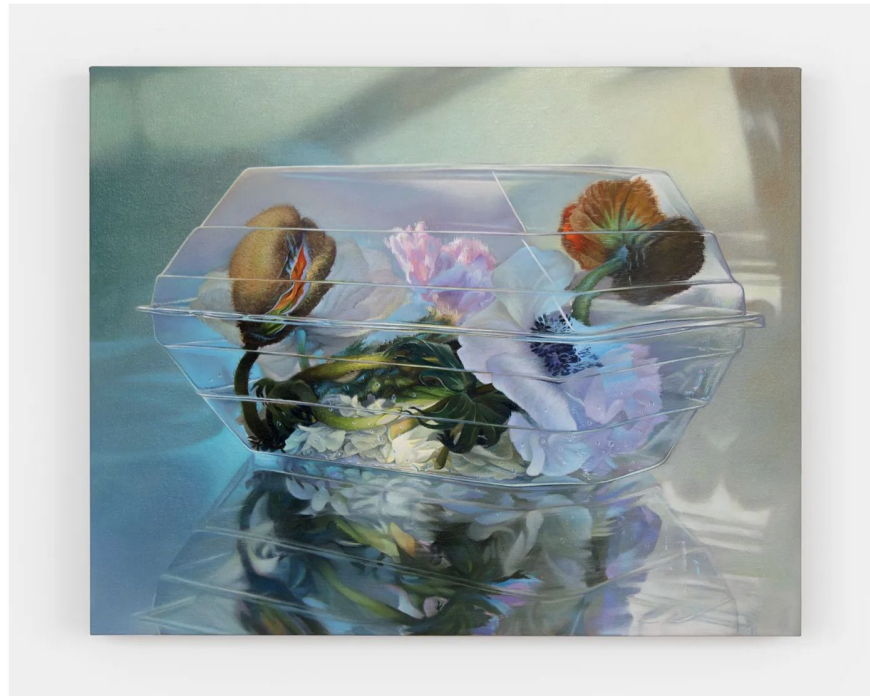
Chason Matthams

By **Brainard Carey**



Chason Matthams' focus is on capturing the ephemeral experience of consciousness and pointing to its fragmentary nature. While at first glance his paintings seem to be contemplative experiments in mimesis, prolonged looking reveals threatening undertones. Matthams' employs specific combinations of colors, angles of perspective, and exhaustive detail to anthropomorphize each of his subjects, rendering them just barely sinister. Flitting between mechanical

and organic objects, Matthams' exacting brushwork is the connective thread leading our eye through every sumptuous detail.



Chason Matthams, *Corsage* (aqua, blue, pink), 2022, Oil on linen over panel, 24 x 30 in., 61 x 76.2 cm. Courtesy the artist and Magenta Plains, New York.

Matthams graduated with a BFA in Fine Art from New York University in 2004 and an MFA from New York University in 2012. Previous solo exhibitions include *Glimpse*, Magenta Plains, New York, NY (2022), *A Hell for Rainbows*, Thierry Goldberg Gallery, New York, NY (2019); *Advances, None Miraculous*, Thierry Goldberg Gallery, New York, NY (2015); and Tyler Wood Gallery, San Francisco, CA (2019, 2013). He was included in *Blossom*, a three person exhibition with Ted Pim and Marisa Takal organized by the Tong Art Advisory at the Artron Art Centre, Shenzhen, CN (2021); and his work was included in [Artforum's "Portfolios" feature](#) in March 2020.

Previous group exhibitions include *Stockholm Sessions* at Carl Kostyál, Stockholm, Sweden (2021); *Nature Morte* at The Hole, New York, NY (2021); Cynthia Daignault's *The Certainty of Others*, Flag Art Foundation, New York, NY (2017); *L'IM_MAGE_N*, Ashes/Ashes, New York, NY (2017); *Break Out*, Frédéric de Goldschmidt Collection, Brussels, Belgium (2015); and *Beyond the Pale*, Interstate, Brooklyn, NY (2014).

The book mentioned at the end of the interview is *The Master and His Emissary: The Divided Brain and the Making of the Western World*, a 2009 book written by psychiatrist [Iain McGilchrist](#) that deals with the specialist [hemispheric functioning](#) of the brain.



Chason Matthams, *Untitled (RED, Sebastian rig - slider)*, 2021, Oil on panel, 72 x 60 in., 182.9 x 152.4 cm. Courtesy the artist and Magenta Plains, New York.

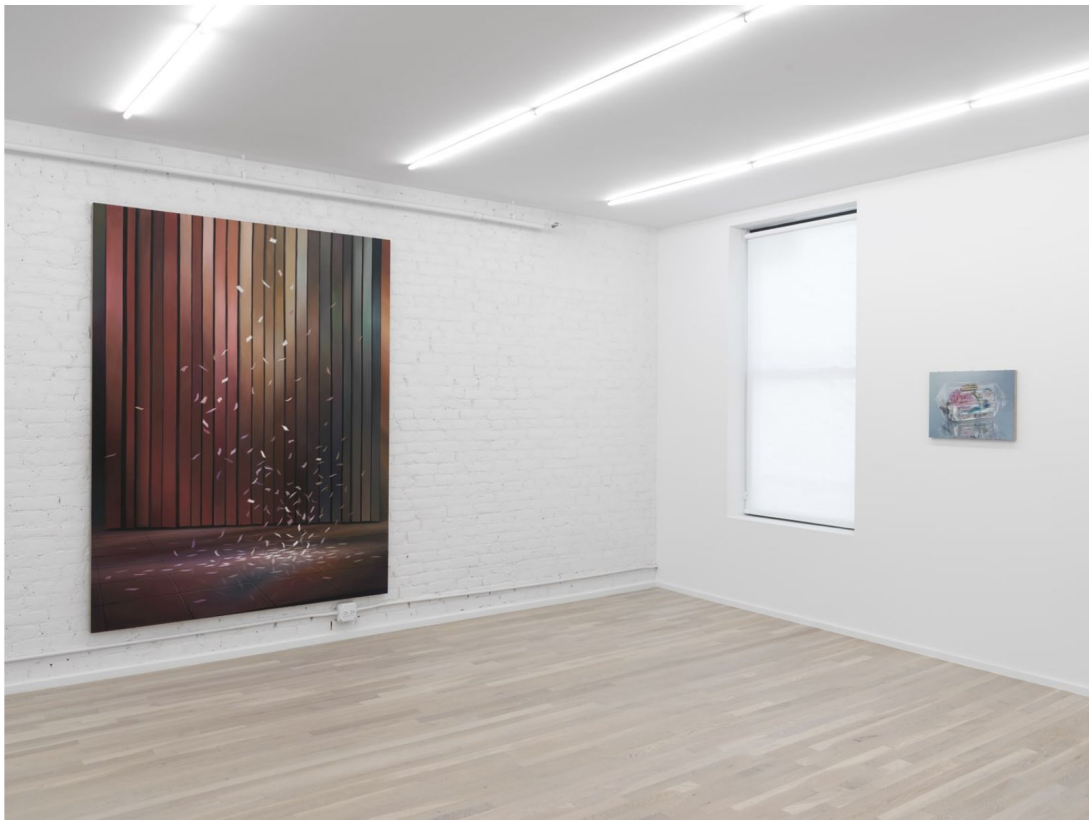
Whitewall
September 19 2022

whitewall

Chason Matthams on Cameras, Corsages, Confetti, and Color

Chason Matthams's exhibition "Glimpse" fills the walls of Magenta Plains with a series of canvases ranging from intimate to large-scale, demonstrating the painter's meticulous gaze on a handful of unassuming objects. Hyper-realistic and vibrant in carefully-selected colors are a series of cameras, corsages, and falling confetti, their depiction transforming the viewer's perception of everyday items into an experience worth contemplating. While taking in Matthams's seemingly invisible brushstrokes and pristine eye for light and hue, one can't help but feel that these objects carry an emotional weight.

Whitewall caught up with the artist to learn more about the show, open in New York now through October 22.



Installation view of Chason Matthams's "Glimpse," courtesy of the artist and Magenta Plains.

WHITEWALL: What was the starting point for your upcoming show, "Glimpse?"

CHASON MATTHAMS: Often after finishing a large body of work I will copy a historical painting with the hope that its ethos carries through to my next body of work. This always results in the bizarre sensation of feeling like you are having a conversation with a kindred spirit long dead and perhaps nudges my river of thought from the last few years in a particular direction. For better or worse, I never have a starting point for a show though. For me, the idea has to emerge and slowly form behind my back. Anytime I sit around thinking and come up with an idea, it just falls flat or I end up fighting it while making the actual paintings.

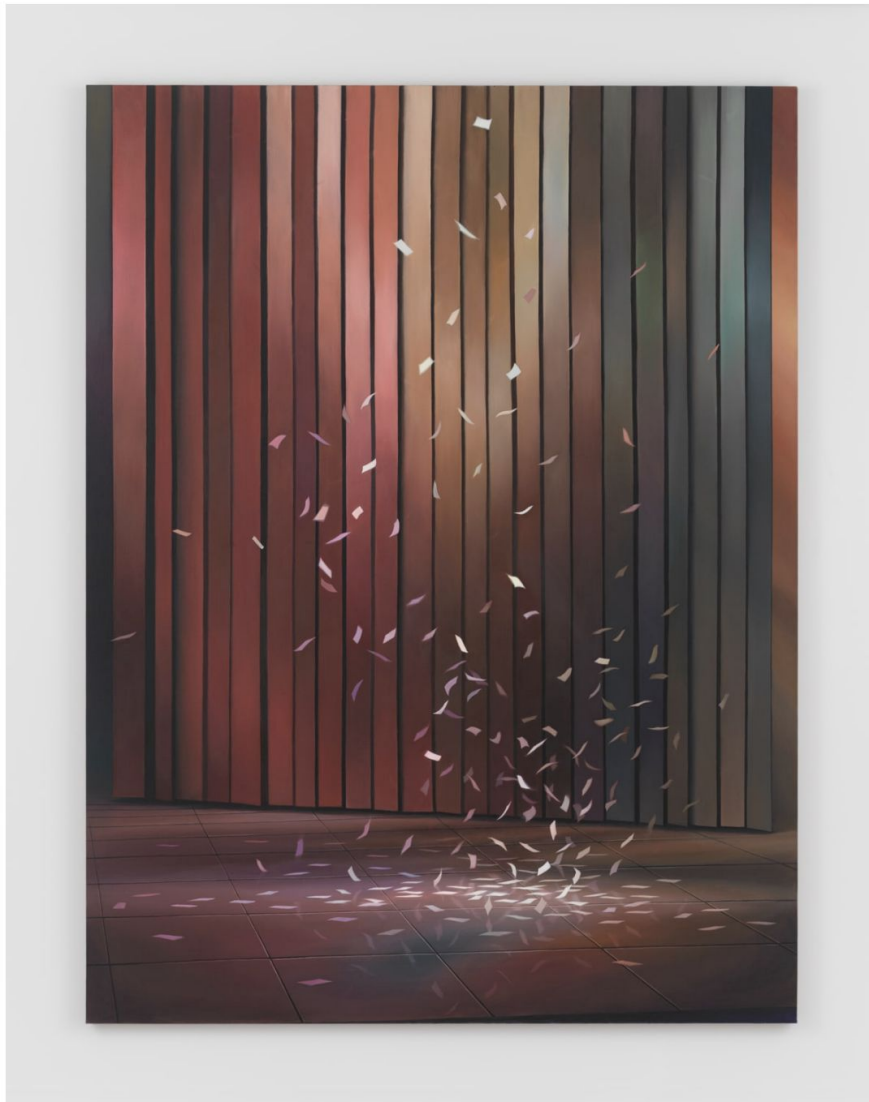
WW: What are the themes and inspiration behind this show?

CM: This grouping of works is the most limited arrangement I've come to. There are three subjects: cameras, flowers and one painting of confetti. The connective thread is that they are all attempts at catching some sort of ephemeral moment in the most static and still way possible. For me, each painting also has the feeling of being both celebratory and mournful, depending on the particular day I walk into the studio.

WW: What is it about cameras and corsages that are intriguing for you to depict?

CM: I keep returning to the cameras and corsages because every time I paint them they work anew as excellent prompts that reveal where I am at. I find it much like returning to a favorite book that you have read throughout your life. Each time you project onto it differently or a theme emerges that you completely passed over the decade before. In a way, repainting the same subjects and rereading a beloved book have the same spirit to them.

Here, I am thinking about Giorgio Morandi, Maureen Gallace, or Peter Dreher who painted an ordinary empty glass over 5,000 times in his life. Each camera can be seen as a metaphor for how I am processing the world in that particular moment. In the same way, each arrangement of flowers marks the way I might be celebrating or mourning the events of that particular time. To me, both indicate this tragic, pathetic, beautiful thing we have to do—which is look out at our vast, bottomless, ever-shifting environment and squeeze it through the narrow tubes of our body in order to momentarily navigate it.



Chason Matthams, "Confetti," 2021, Oil on linen, 82 x 62 inches; courtesy of the artist and Magenta Plains.

WW: *Confetti* is similar in theme to your other included works, but the scene is very different. What's the role of *Confetti* within a collection primarily composed of works depicting cameras and corsages?

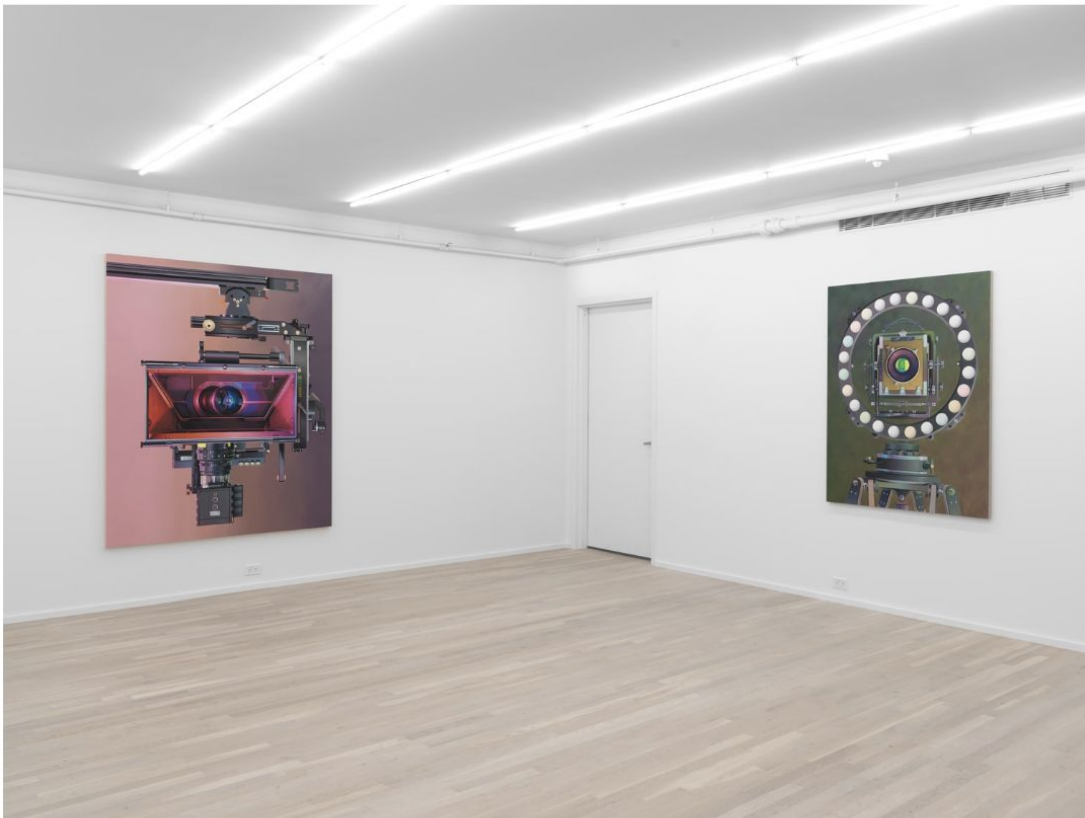
CM: To be honest, even though the painting was started years ago, the confetti is too new a subject for me to entirely wrap my head around. The biggest difference for me is the open space it creates. The corsages and cameras have a real sense of confinement to them; they are literal boxes. Where even if the confetti is confined to a stage, there is a greater sense of movement to it.

Maybe the confetti is an event marking the occurrence or end of something, allowing for an emotional release and a way of moving on? Though without an audience, its emptiness could suggest the way so many parts of life unceremoniously pass by us or fade away without acknowledgement? While the corsages and cameras might be marking events we choose to focus on, maybe the confetti is more about feeling states that pass by too quickly or the memories we forget to hold onto? I'm looking forward to attempting the next iteration in order to work through some of these thoughts.

WW: How do your previous experiences working with Comedy Central and creating movie posters connect to your current works?

CM: I was a background artist working on a few animated shows, mainly "Jeff and Some Aliens". The assignment there was to create an environment in which the dramas and calamity of the characters could unfold. In designing a character's home, you would want to make it specific to them of course, but not too distracting as to take away from a character's storyline. In a way, the paintings I am making do the same thing; they are specific yet empty enough for various narratives to play out.

For the posters and illustration work that I have done, you really are in service of the film or the writer, and the finished work should reflect their idea. In this way, the finished product is a depiction of a previously arrived at idea. This has been clarifying for me as I do not want my paintings to do that. I want the paintings to be totems that contain the history of an idea being grappled with, the product of an ongoing thought process. I am drawn to artworks that embody a way of being and doing, instead of illustrating an idea or agenda.



Installation view of Chason Matthams's "Glimpse," courtesy of the artist and Magenta Plains.

WW: So much of your work places a heavy emphasis on color choices. How do you utilize color to evoke the intended emotions and effects you're aiming for?

CM: Color is a hell of a thing. I should probably only make grisaille paintings. The last show was actually called "A Hell for Rainbows", the conceit being that "hell" for a rainbow would be taking away its full spectrum and forcing it into a specific palette. It is always wild to me that I can set out to make a hellish painting, but then you walk over to your tubes and pick up indigo instead of ultramarine as a way to cool down the warm pigments, and all of sudden hell is less hot and shifts into a warm, womb-like embrace. Color is squirrely in the paintings like that, too. Sometimes I walk into my studio and a camera is focused on the sun rising and other days it turns into the fires burning.

WW: Can you tell us about your studio? What's a typical day like for you there?

CM: I am very routine-oriented. I like the stillness of repetition and the ripples in the water that are revealed because of it. For the sake of my tender little ego, I'll go over a more ideal day rather than the ones interrupted by lethargic dread. For those days, you can replace 2-4 hours of working with your classic doom scrolling and pouring over images of trivial significance and momentary distraction, which you know, is also part of the "work".

For almost ten years now, I wake up and edit a photograph I've taken in nature and post it on Facebook, of all places. I read a study that said even looking at a picture of nature has psychological benefits. Living in New York City, I hope that is true. After establishing that peace, I obliterate it by reading the news and responding to emails. Then it is time for meditation, 16 pull ups and a run or calisthenics to try and get it back.

I cherish being in a state of flow and try to create spaces for it all day, thus painting. Depending on the size, each painting takes between 2 weeks to 2 months, so while some days I'll stretch or gesso a canvas, most days are straight painting. I don't keep any comfortable chairs in the studio, so it is hard to "hang out" in there. I try not to do a lot of thinking in the studio either because that often leads to more thinking and less doing.

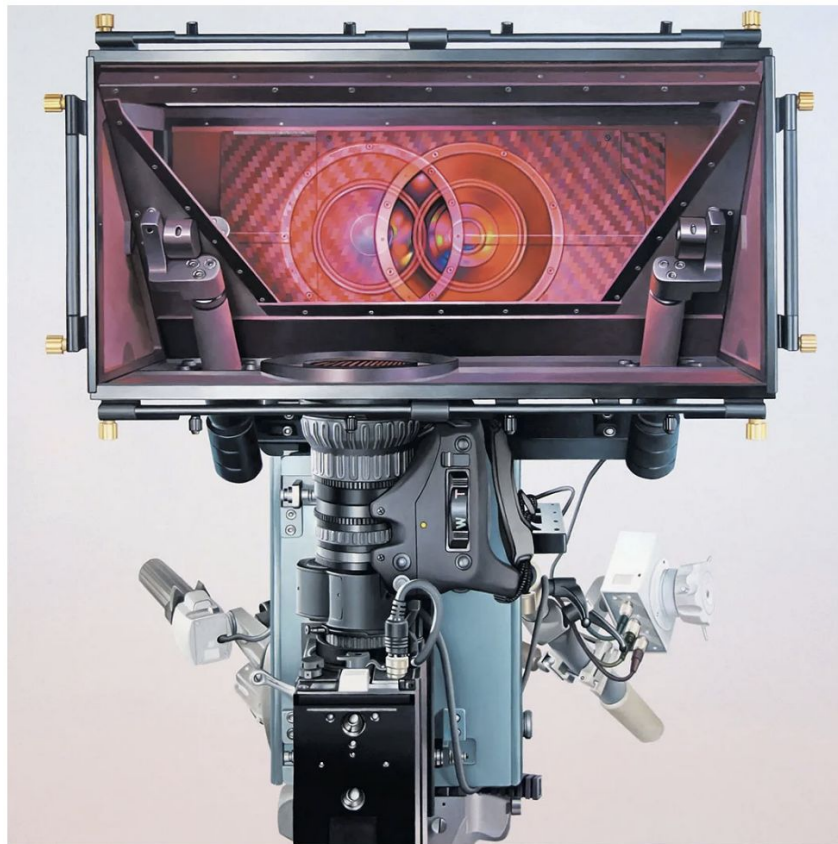
Music is better for flow states but at some point I burn out and need the distraction of a podcast or audiobook. I save my favorite album for the last hour of the night. Before leaving, I will take a picture of the painting so I can compare it to the previous day to track my choices. Every night I come home and do 16 more pull-ups and eat a slice of carrot cake. I feel very fortunate to have days like this.

Artforum
March 2020

ARTFORUM

PORTFOLIO: CHASON MATTHAMS

By Alex Jovanovich ☒



Chason Matthams, *Untitled (3D, red)*, 2020, oil and acrylic on panel, 40 × 40".

BRAD PITT'S NOSE IS WEIRD. Its bulbous tip seems vaguely clitoral in Chason Matthams's 2011 oil painting of the star. It also reminds me of a Cézanne apple, trying to unfurl itself in every direction against its two-dimensional prison. Pitt's chapped, full lips are tightly pursed, and his sallow, putty-like face is veiled in a thin layer of grease. His irises are a cloudy blue. And it appears as though someone has dislocated his left eye by digging their grimy thumb into the squishy area beneath it, just above the zygomatic bone, forcing the orb to sink deeper into its socket. Pitt's not exactly handsome in this portrayal, but he's not exactly unhandsome, either. The portrait is off-putting but affecting—tender, even.

Matthams based his painting on a photo of a waxwork replica of Pitt. The artist believes the effigy, which he found through a Flickr account, might be languishing somewhere in a touristy Russian museum. He's not sure. But one thing he is absolutely certain of is how a gaze—whether fueled by affection, pity, fear, or rage—distorts the object of its attention, remodeling it according to how we want to take it in, psychically and, yes, even physically. Think, for instance, of those Hollywood actors and actresses who go under the knife in order to look younger, tighter, and sexier for their insatiable fans. The film industry feeds on novelty and insecurity, of course. Yet it's the power of our desires—to kiss Brad's cheeks or caress his muscular arms, to stroke his thick blond hair or bust up his pretty white teeth—that shapes and reshapes people like him, along with anyone else we choose to scrutinize and contemplate with great intensity.



Chason Matthams, *12th Street New York* (detail), 2012, acrylic on canvas, 9 × 24'.

In this presentation, Matthams renders movie cameras—mechanical oculi—with astonishing technical facility and a fervent devotion. I am fixated on *Untitled (multiple lenses, orange and red)*, 2019, which depicts a vintage model from Eumig, an Austrian manufacturer of AV equipment. (The company, now defunct, is famous for the *Volksempfänger* [People's Receiver], a type of radio popular in the Third Reich: ALL OF GERMANY HEARS THE FÜHRER WITH THE PEOPLE'S RECEIVER, announced a Nazi broadside from the 1930s.) The full-frontal severity of Matthams's subject is almost pornographic: Its soft-focus lavenders, powdery pinks, satiny grays, and lurid gingers call to mind the prurient colorways of a *Hustler* spread. I marvel at its precise facture, but there's so much going on here beyond mere skill. Matthams captures a quiet violence, a latent evil, that unsettles as it seduces. I stare at his ravishing, villainous camera, and I'm pretty sure it stares right back at me—or *into* me, with more than a little ruthlessness. It makes me feel vulnerable and exposed. But I do rather enjoy the sensation.



Chason Matthams, *Wax Mannequin Brad Pitt*, 2011, oil on canvas, 40 × 30".

The New Yorker
May 2019



ART

Chason Matthams / Gracelee Lawrence

Two solo shows are united by a beguilingly creepy edge. Matthams's photorealist paintings depict isolated objects: deflated Mylar balloons, a bust of Hercules, corsages in their coffinlike plastic florist containers. The hyper-detailed, glistening quality of "A Hell for Rainbows," as the suite of canvases here is titled, complements the sanded surfaces of Lawrence's charmingly perverse 3-D-printed sculptures, on view in the gallery's lower level. The mannequin-smooth body parts and Brobdingnagian food items have a matte-pastel finish. A boulder-size shallot with a human navel is called "To Eliminate the Risk of Uncontrollable Feelings"; in "An Acute Sense of Physical Famine," two asparagus spears tiptoe away on their fingertip bases.

—*Johanna Fateman*

Artforum
August 11, 2015

ARTFORUM

Chason Matthams

Thierry Goldberg Gallery
Thierry Goldberg Gallery
109 Norfolk Street
August 11, 2015 - September 13, 2015
By Alex Jovanovich ☒



Chason Matthams, *Large Warm Playback*, 2015, oil on linen, 40 x 60".

Here is an artist happiest in the graveyard we call Google Images, promiscuous in his desire to absorb everything: stupid and brilliant, sickening and funny, banal and beautiful. Lots of people do this kind of looking now—gluttonous, glazed over, staring—and try making it into something. But few have the chops or intelligence to metabolize this modern habit into such febrile and gorgeously unhinged art.

Chason Matthams can paint like a motherfucker. Or a fatherfucker—he doesn't care. His pictures look like a synthesis of Ingres, Ub Iwerks, and Norman Rockwell, fed on a steady diet of GHB and Nickelodeon. They radiate a sinister, fraudulent light. Though fussed over and finessed within an inch of their lives, these paintings act out—they are nasty, irritating, visceral. It must have something to do with the temporal space one's shunted into while in their thrall. The sweat equity involved in his careful and tender rendering of so much mass-cultural excreta—by his hand and no other—mesmerizes.

Behold the cyclopean head of Miss Montag—*Heidi*, 2010—orange as a new Birkin, scraped out of a Malibu afternoon and pasted onto a dead field of bluish gray, every bead of moisture around her collagen-enhanced lips flashing like little knives on a face that got lifted beyond reason at twenty-three. She is weird, "sexy," and hopelessly broken, a casualty of reality television and more than a little self hatred. Let's blame it on *Large Warm Playback*, 2015, a creepy, sensuously detailed portrait of a high-definition studio camera aimed into a nethersphere of seedy purple light. It's dead and alive simultaneously, as good paintings are, and exactly like us as we sit there, camera-like, vacant and watching.

SFAQ
September 2, 2015

ART OBSERVED

NEW YORK – CHASON MATTHAMS: “ADVANCES, NONE MIRACULOUS” AT THIERRY GOLDBERG THROUGH SEPTEMBER 13TH, 2015

September 2nd, 2015

In our daily lives, we are constantly bombarded with imagery, navigating through the chaos of web pages, textbooks, etc. These images are being infinitely reproduced and distributed, passing through our perceptual filters to either be kept indefinitely or to be ignored entirely. This summer, Miami-born artist Chason Matthams works with Thierry Goldberg to put on his first New York solo show, *Advances, None Miraculous*, delving further into the chaos to create non-linear narratives from this image detritus, making comparisons that might otherwise be ignored.

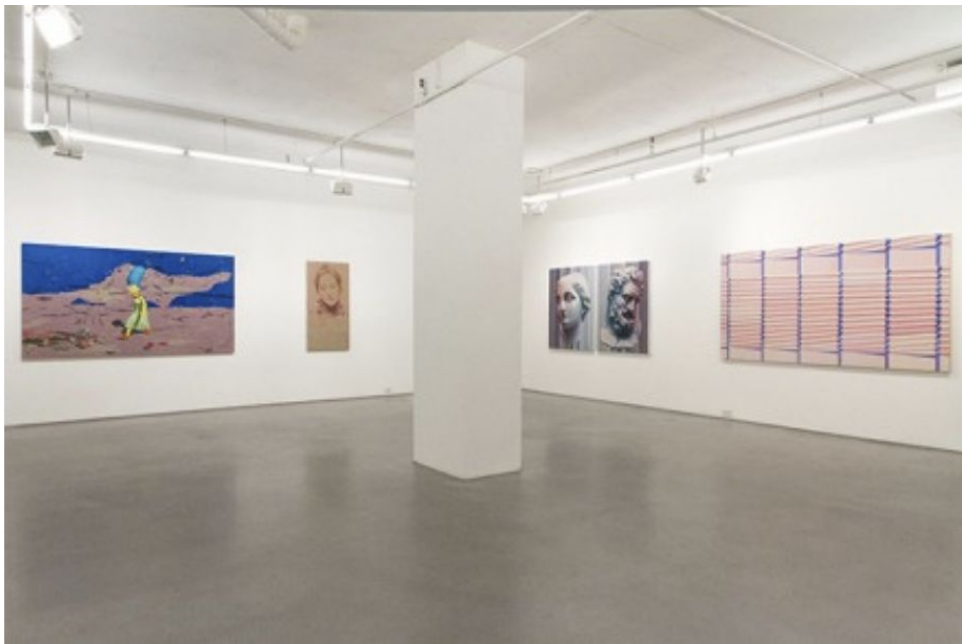
Matthams constructs these narratives by appropriating or alluding to various tropes and figures of historical and pop cultural imagery. He finds most of his images online, a relatively open aesthetic space where he encounters his subjects out of context, with no discrimination between time periods, artistic style, or elevated notions of the creator as artist, designer, etc.

In this exhibition, comprised of Matthams’s large-scale paintings, we can see his exploration of storytelling as he takes cues from collage and photo manipulation, perhaps best represented in his piece *Donald Duck and Leonardo Da Vinci’s Flower Study*, in which he places the images side by side, floating in the negative space within the frame. Encouraging the viewer to see the similarities between the gentle curves of Da Vinci’s flower stems, and the contours of Donald Duck’s body as it is frozen mid-fall in a wooded area, Matthams makes subtle ties between the craft of illustration and depiction, tying various contextually rooted images to shared formal elements.



Chason Matthams, *Donald Duck and Leonardo Da Vinci's Flower Study* (2015) via Thierry Goldberg

Playfulness and discontent go hand in hand in Mattham's works, as he experiments with various vantage points, as in pieces like *An Uninvited Audience (The Peanut Gallery)*. In this painting, various cartoon characters are seated in a theater being watched through a camera lens. While we can assume the characters were previously focused on the performance, they are now looking towards the camera, confronting the viewer and making them part of the narration. The question becomes, rather, which audience Matthams refers to, either the figures on canvas, or the viewers themselves.



Chason Matthams, *Advances, None Miraculous* (Installation view), via Thierry Goldberg

Matthams suggests that his viewers look at the paintings as a way of making peace with the chaos they often face when it comes to the consumption of imagery, hoping that those who come with an anxious mind leave feeling less overwhelmed by the endless intake of images placed into a certain harmony here. He states in his artist's statement: "what I hope comes across is not just how convoluted the construction of the narrative and the links between the paintings are but also how fruitful their construction can be. I hope that the commitment to the continuous deconstruction and reconstruction of the illusion lends itself to a less anxious present."

Mattham's exhibition can be viewed at Thierry Goldberg gallery through September 13.

SFAQ
November 1, 2013

SFAQ / NYAQ / AQ

REVIEW: CHASON MATTHAM SOLO EXHIBITION AT TYLER WOOD GALLERY, SAN FRANCISCO.

Chason Matthams presents a group of tiny paintings – photorealistic, surreal and abstracted – in his solo exhibition at [Tyler Wood Gallery](#), San Francisco. Without a linear narrative to connect them, the works have to speak for themselves. Visitors are confronted with disconnected pictures in the narrow, sunlit space on canvas and panel. Using images from photographs he takes himself or finds online, Matthams paints lonely disheveled urban places, slices of pie in plastic to-go containers and video equipment set in a void.

It's hard to make sense of this world, but I question if that's what the artist intended. He asks, "Does the... contextualizing of my work lead the audience and me somewhere? Or do I kid myself that I can possibly make sense of it while in the experience?" Questioning whether the stories told through his art will lead to new possibilities or just learned truths, he creates an uncomfortable position for himself.

Exploring process, choice and storytelling, he uses the shorthand language of the internet and visual cues from digital photo editing. In "Disrupted Playback," Photoshop drag and drop mishaps share space with television static and an empty frame in which the subject has been removed. "You Must Never Tell" shows a pair of left- and right-eye images next to the stereoscope that transforms them into a three-dimensional scene.

"Model txtng w/ cropped background of Edmund Tarbell's 'Preparing for the Matinee'" is a work divided in two and edged by a thin, white line. One half shows a woman in profile, eyes focused on something hidden from the viewer; the other shows Tarbell's young subject adjusting her hat before going out. Tied to the bastardization of language in the age of Twitter and SMS, the title of the painting speaks to a life mediated by internet culture and visuals. Both women are shown in an abbreviated way, removed from their surroundings. Using a cropped composition and grid overlay in this disjointed pairing, Matthams references the experience of opening multiple windows on a computer screen.

"Residuals" stands out from the rest of the show. A plaster bust that crops up in other paintings appears on a plum backdrop beneath a glaze fuzzed with resin. The effect is nearly moldy, as if this picture of antiquity was obsolete or irrelevant. Nonetheless the finish lends the work presence.

This exhibition is on view through November 2nd, 2013