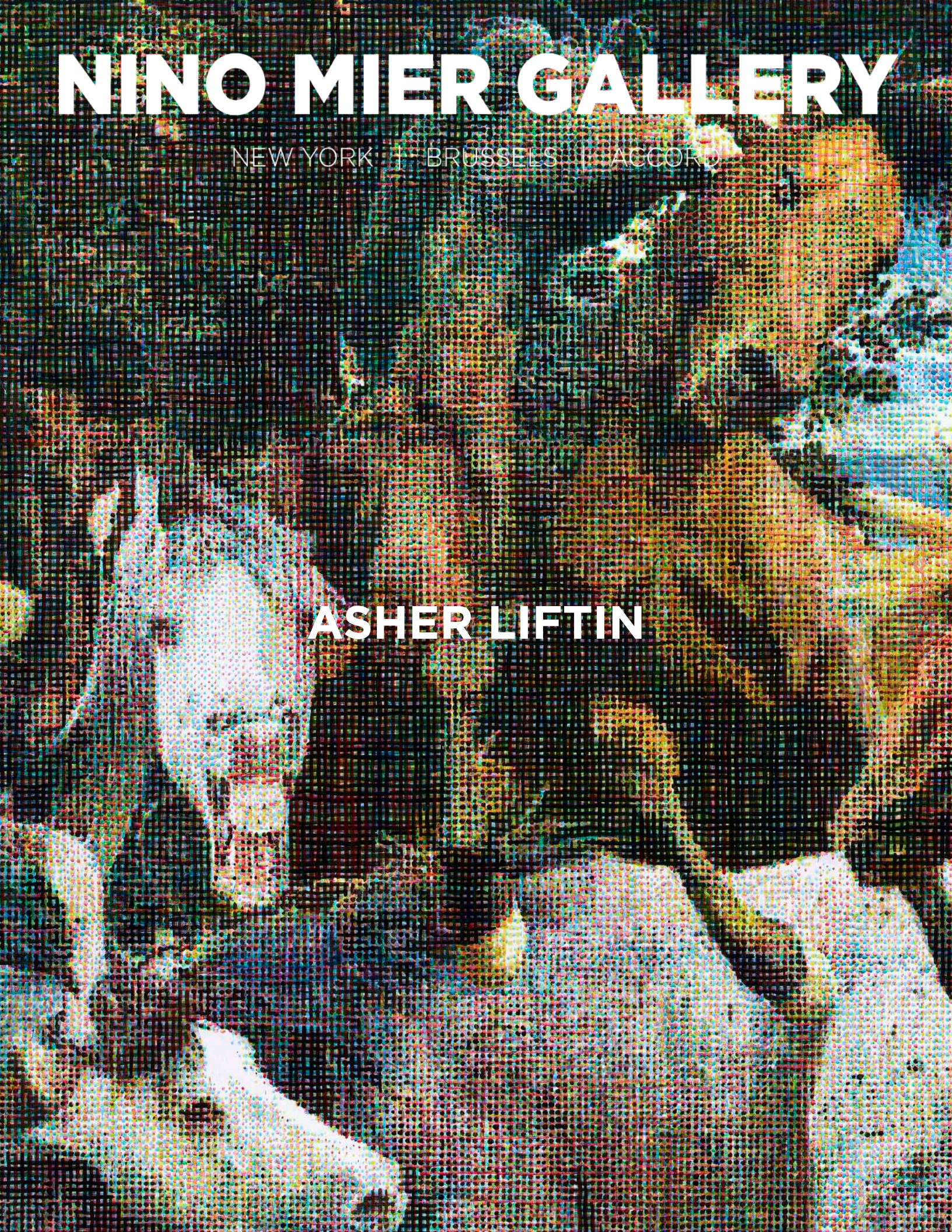

NINO MIER GALLERY
NEW YORK | BRUSSELS | ACCORD
ASHER LIFTIN

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BIOGRAPHY

ASHER LIFTIN



b. 1998, New York City, NY
Lives and works in New Haven, CT

Asher Liftin's work celebrates technicality and process with an honest appreciation for and understanding of historical image making. A scholar of art and cognitive science—recently graduating from Yale with a B.A. in the former and B.S. in the latter—Liftin reflects on the relationship between image creation and image perception across his practice. In school, the artist explored how the brain generates meaning out of two-dimensional visual stimuli, realized now in his algorithmic approach to painting. Liftin's work performs for the mind's eye, enhancing optical truth with appreciation for the likes of Chuck Close and pointillism's progenitors. Neutral tones, networked around and throughout Liftin's carefully plotted dot matrices, lend the works tapestry-like tactility, further homeaging neo-impressionism and Seurat's chief theoretical influence: tapestry restorer and pioneering color theorist Michel Eugène Chevruel.

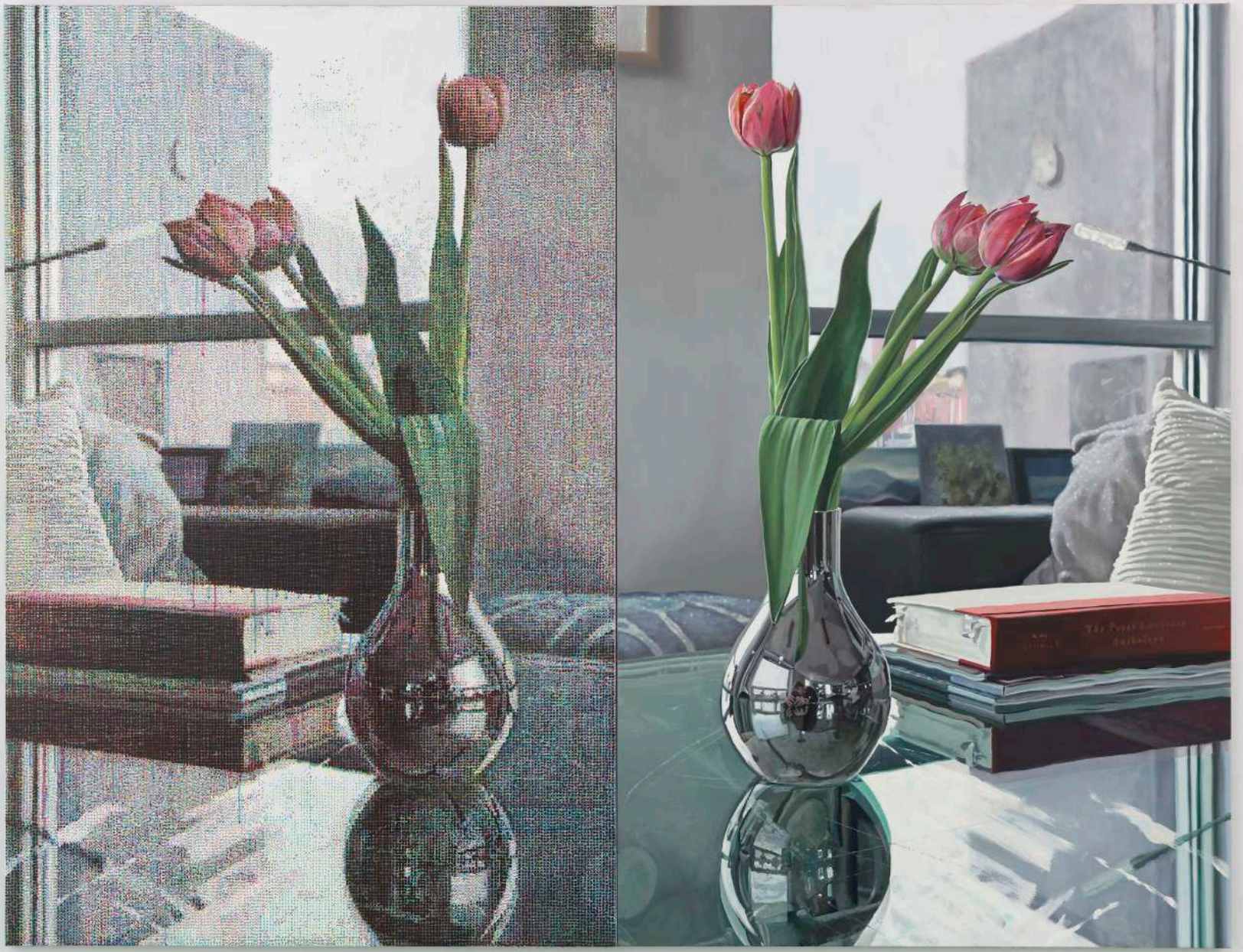
Asher Liftin (b. 1998, New York, NY; lives and works in New Haven, CT) graduated from Yale University in 2021 with a B.S. in Cognitive Science and a B.A. in Visual Art. Liftin has held solo exhibitions at Nino Mier Gallery, New York, NY; Alessandro Albanese Gallery, Milan, IT; and Aisling Gallery, New Haven, CT. The artist has also participated in group exhibitions with all of the above as well as Venus over Manhattan, New York, NY; Winter Street Gallery, Edgartown, MA; PALO Gallery, New York, NY; MoCA Westport, Westport, CT; The Graduate Hotel, New Haven, CT. Liftin created original artwork for Wes Anderson's major motion picture, Moonrise Kingdom, and was a 2020-21 Franke Fellow. Permanent collections include The Yale University Art Gallery and Thyssen-Bornemisza National Museum.



sample selection does not reflect current availability



Cat's Cradle, 2025. Colored pencil and giclee print on paper. 86 x 90 1/4 in (suite), 218.4 x 229.2 cm (suite)



Knight's Move, 2024. Oil paint, acrylic ink and acrylic paint on linen. 78 3/4 x 59 in (200 x 150 cm) (ALI24.042)


SCHMIDT



The Large Glass, 2025
Acrylic ink and acrylic paint on linen
70 x 61 in
177.8 x 154.9 cm
(ALI25.014)

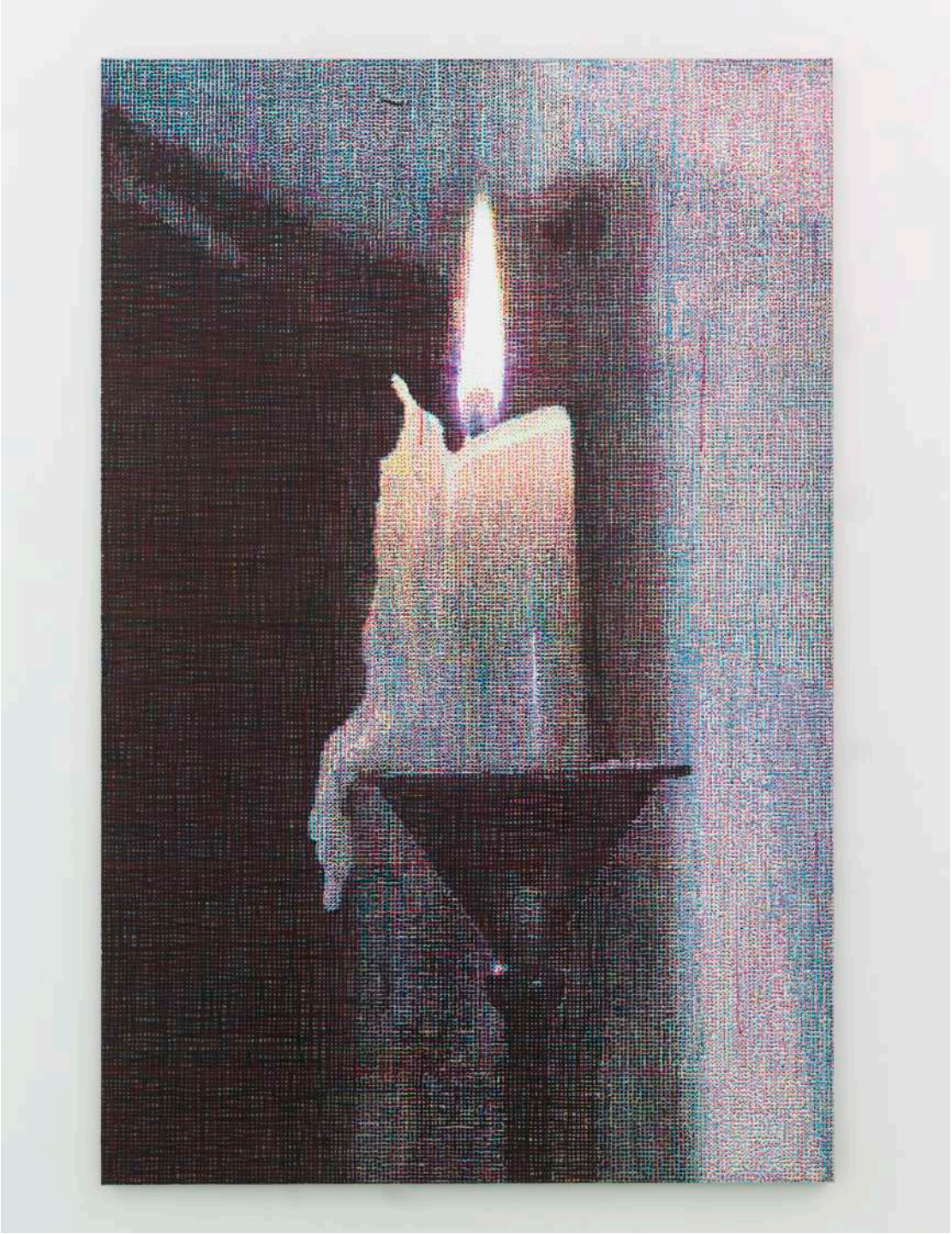


Reveal, 2024
Signed, titled, and dated on verso
Acrylic ink, acrylic paint, and oil pastel on linen
66 7/8 x 49 1/4 in
170 x 125 cm
(ALI24.035)

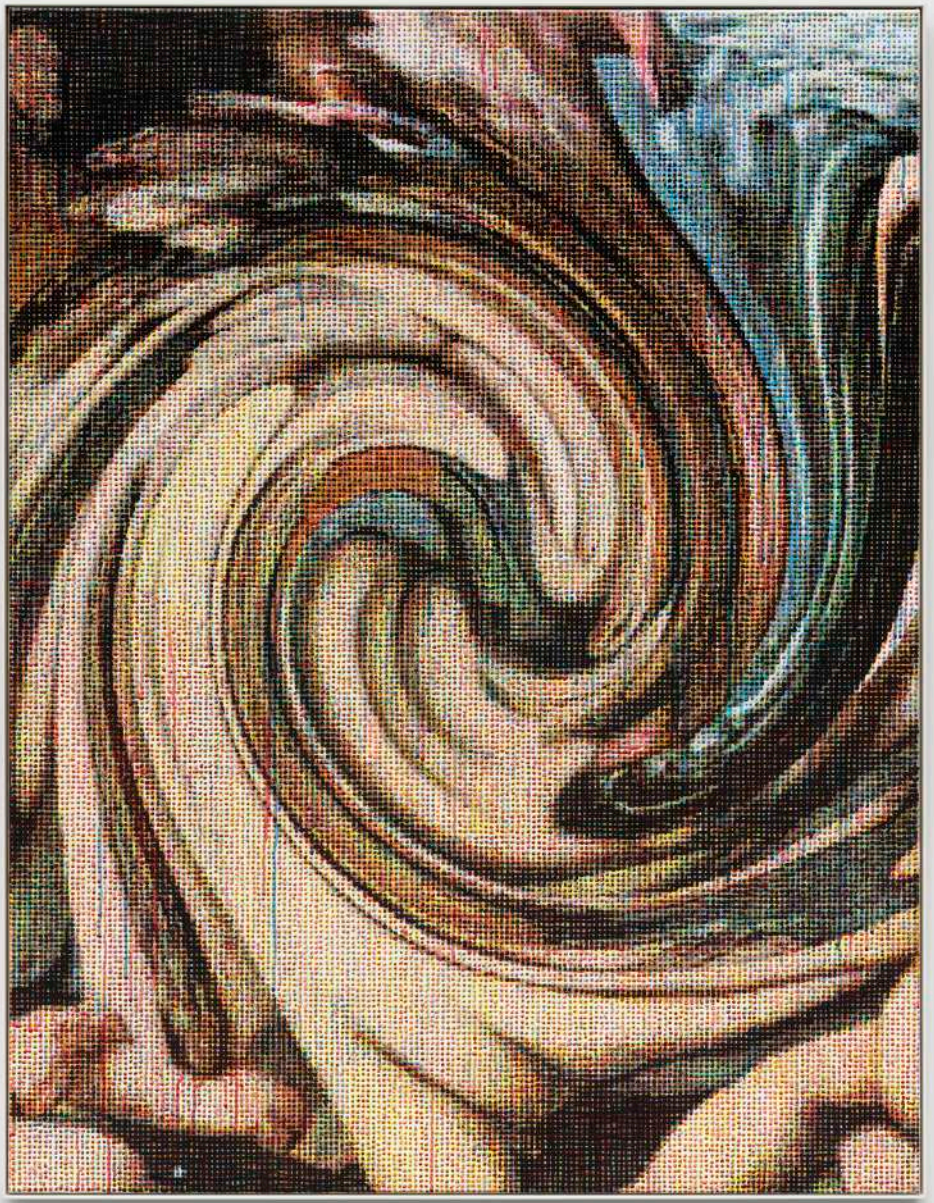




Lily, 2024
Colored pencil on paper
18 1/4 x 15 1/4 in (framed)
46.6 x 38.7 cm (framed)
(ALI24.017)

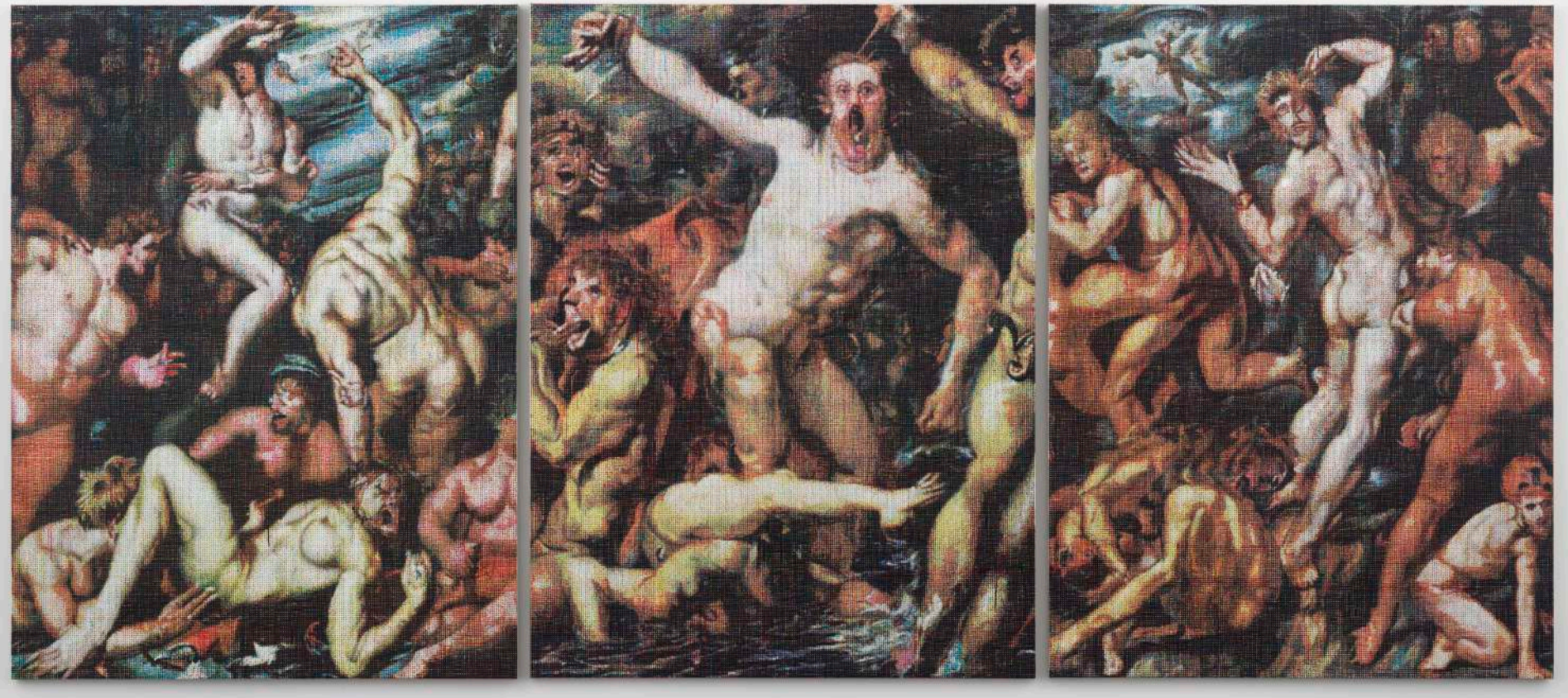


Icarus, 2024
Acrylic ink and acrylic paint on linen
78 3/4 x 51 1/5 in
200 x 130 cm
(ALI24.027)

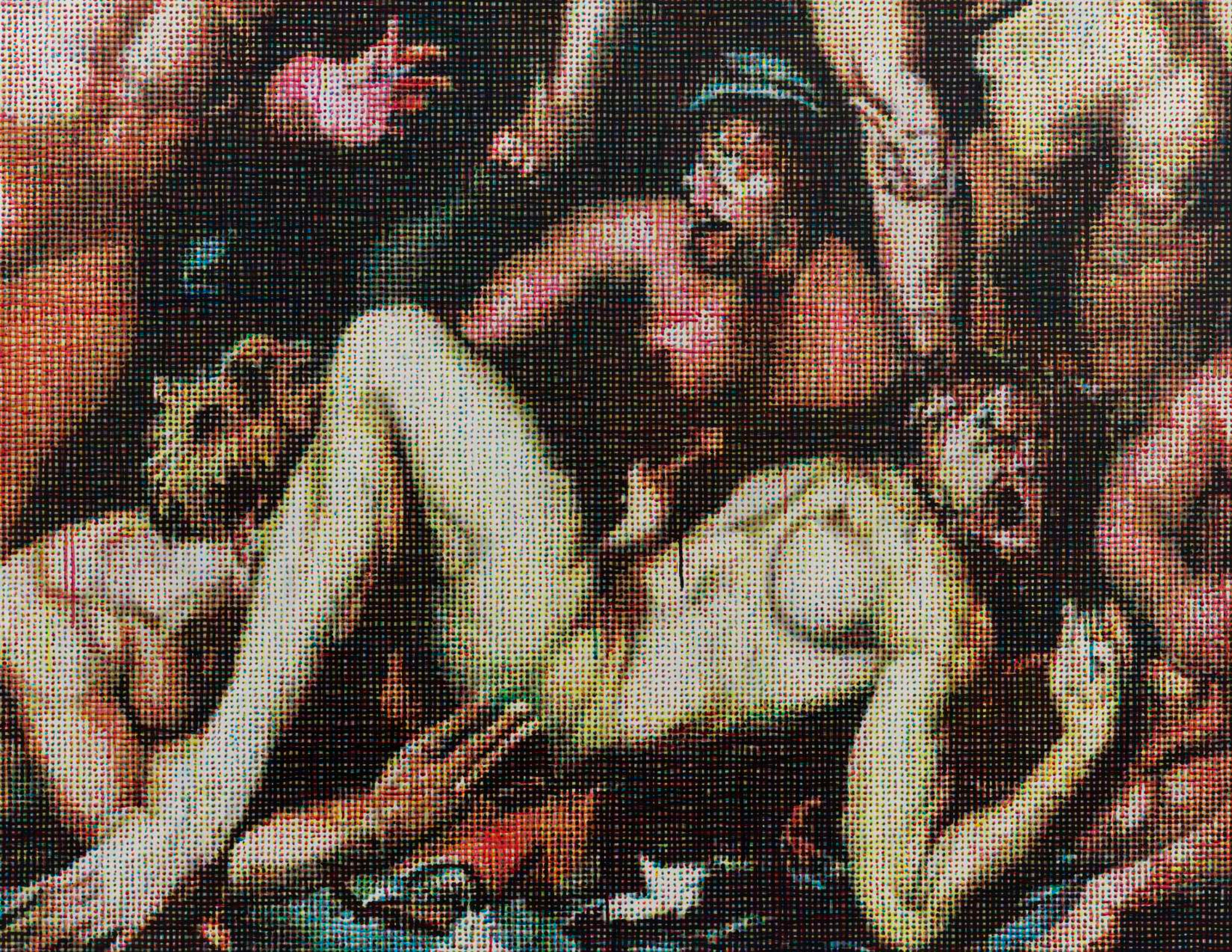


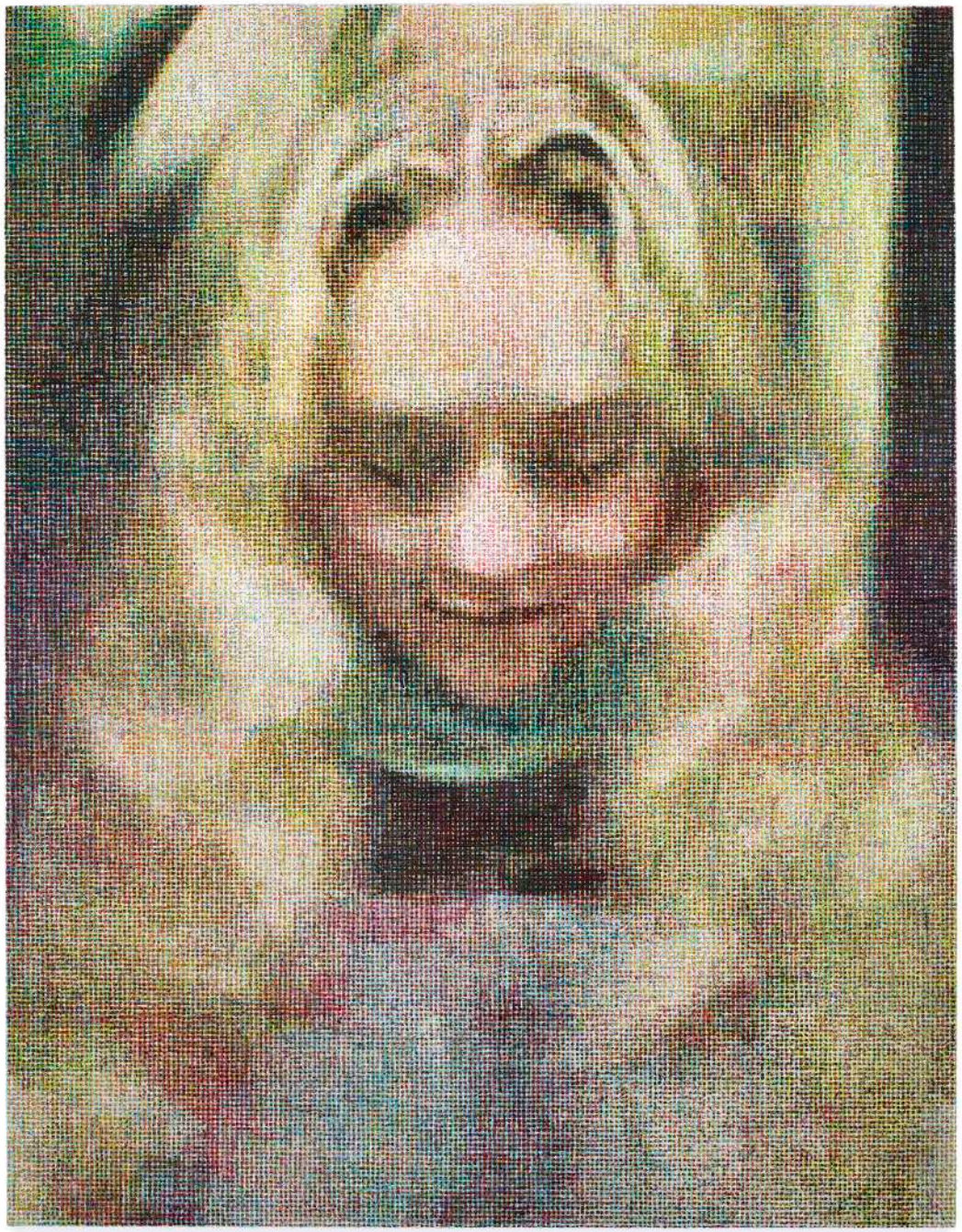
Bathers, 2023
Acrylic ink on canvas
51 5/8 x 39 7/8 in (framed)
131.1 x 101.3 cm (framed)
(ALI23.006)



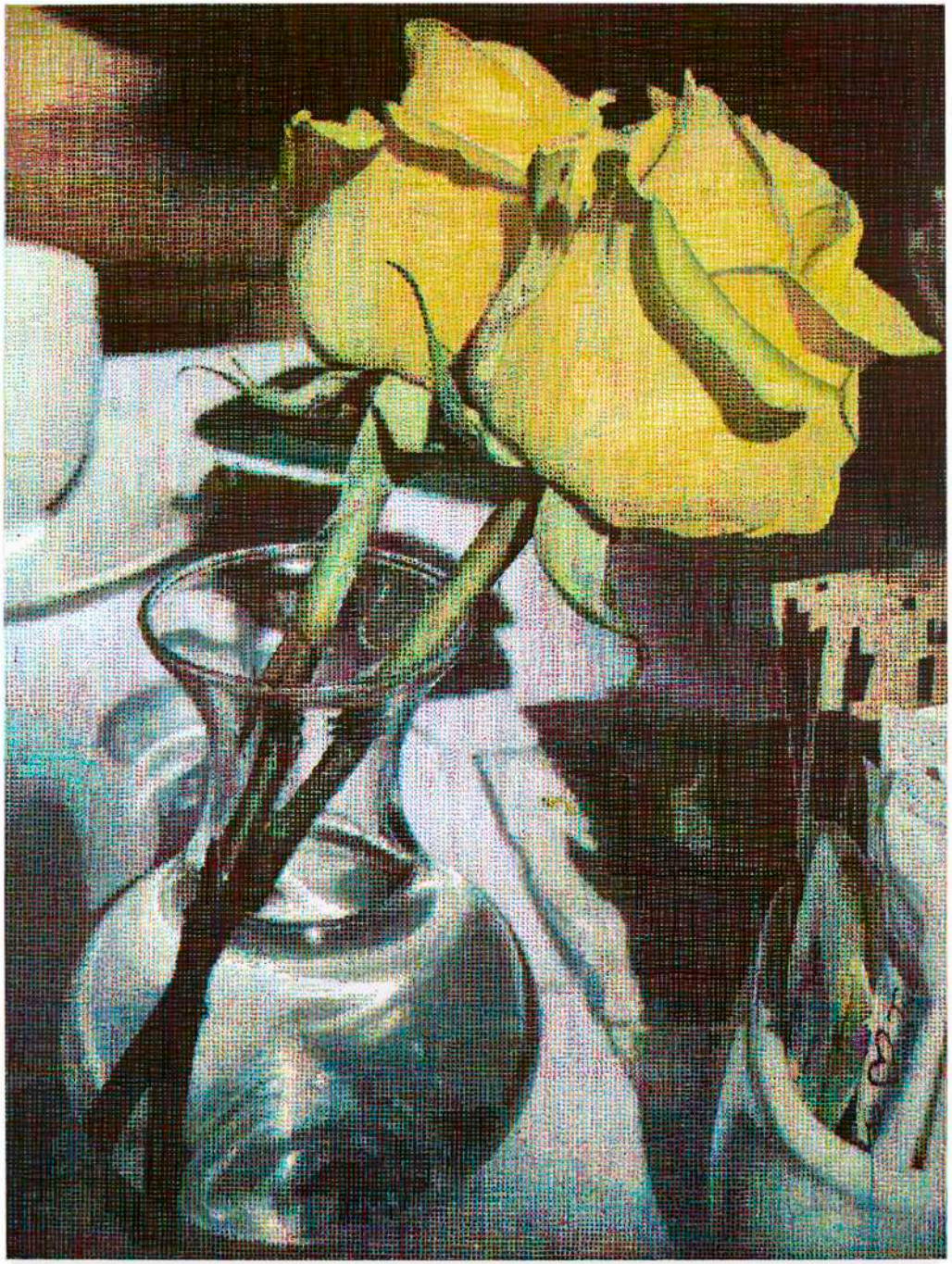


The Devouring of Ziggy Stardust, 2023. Acrylic ink and acrylic paint on linen. 3 panels, each 78 3/4 x 59 in, 200 x 150 cm (ALI23.027)





Fluorescent Mist, 2023
Acrylic ink on linen
70 7/8 x 55 1/8 in
180 x 140 cm
(ALI23.001)

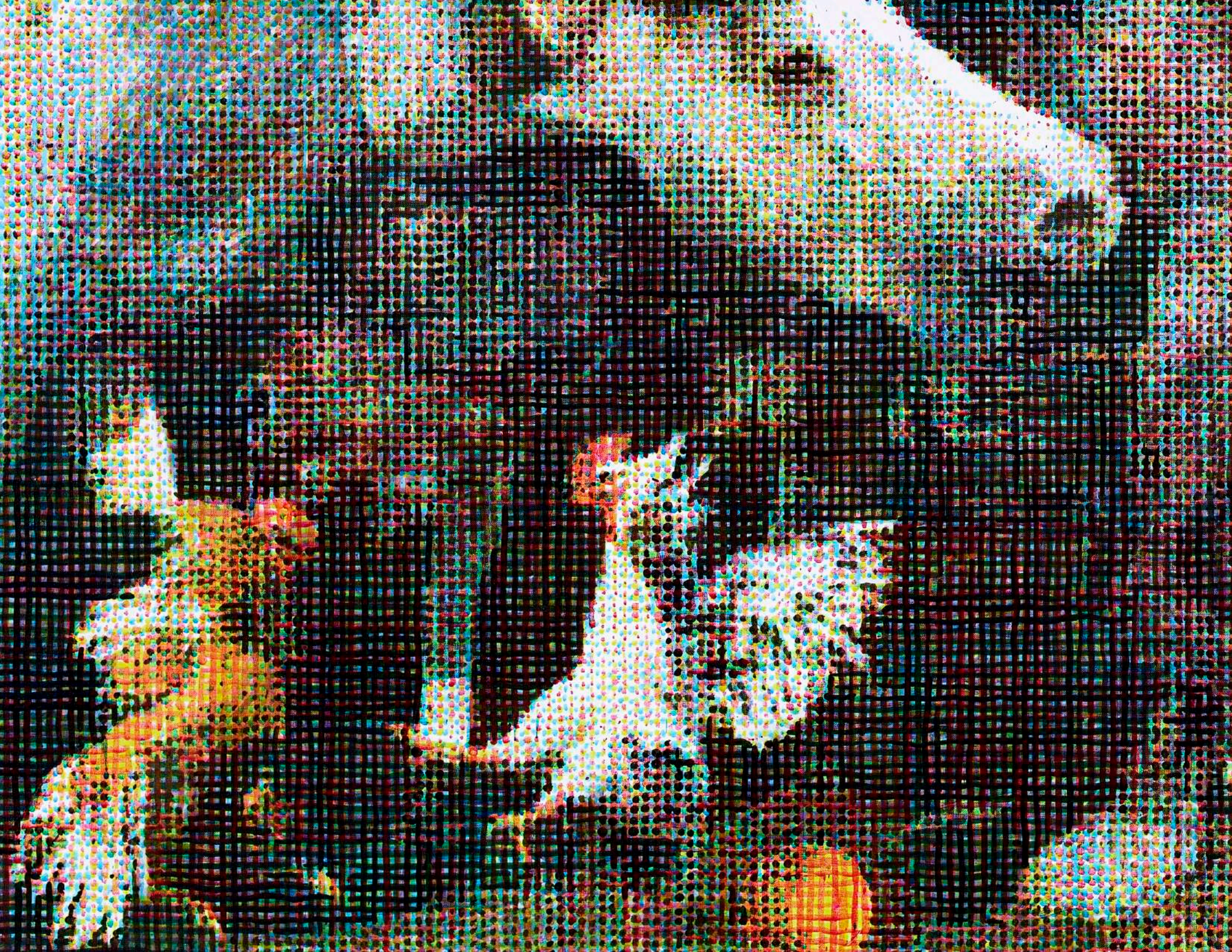


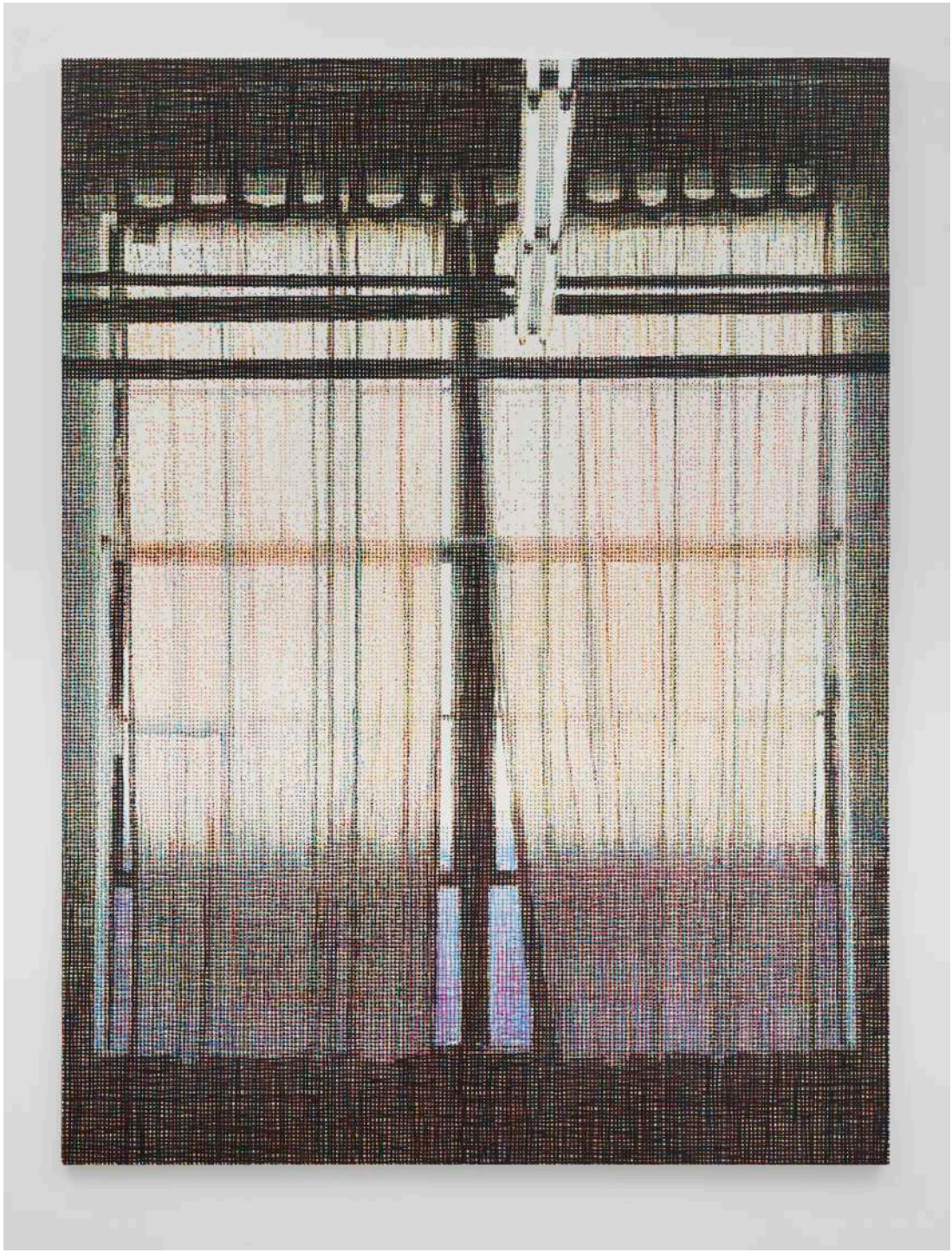
Yellow Roses, 2023
Acrylic ink and acrylic paint on canvas
78 3/4 x 59 in
200 x 150 cm
(ALI23.002)





At Grass, 2023, acrylic ink and acrylic paint on linen, 72 x 96 in, 182.9 x 243.8 cm, (ALI23.003)





Window in the Studio, 2023
Acrylic ink on canvas
78 3/4 x 59 in
200 x 150 cm
(ALI23.005)



SELECTED EXHIBITONS AND PROJECTS

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS AND PROJECTS

CAT'S CRADDLE
2026
NINO MIER GALLERY
NEW YORK, NY

KNIGHT'S MOVE
2024
NINO MIER GALLERY
BRUSSELS, BE

ERROR SIGNALS
2023
NINO MIER GALLERY
NEW YORK, NY, US

BEACH
2023
NINO MIER GALLERY
NEW YORK, NY, US

OF THE SURFACE OF THINGS
2022-2023
GALLERIA ALESSANDRO ALBANESE
MATERA, IT

SPRING 2021 UNDERGRADUATE THESIS EXHIBITION
2021
YALE UNIVERSITY
NEW HAVEN, CT, US

CAT'S CRADDLE

2026
NINO MIER GALLERY,
NEW YORK, NY, US

Nino Mier Gallery is pleased to present Cat's Cradle, Asher Liftin's third solo exhibition with the gallery, opening January 9th at our Tribeca location. Cat's Cradle showcases twenty new works, each presented as a suite of twenty framed works on paper. Every suite contains one original drawing accompanied by nineteen replica prints of the remaining drawings in the series.

Poet and art critic Barry Schwabsky wrote the following on occasion of the exhibition.

When Asher Liftin first sent me some jpegs from his Cat's Cradle project, my response was that I couldn't understand what I was looking at. I needed to see these things in person.

Little did I realize that I wasn't just articulating a common problem, one that's existed at least since the rise of color photography but which became really pervasive with the advent of the internet, email, and social media: Images of artworks give us information about them but not the experience of them that would allow for a proper understanding of that information. I was also unwittingly pinpointing the philosophical crux of Cat's Cradle, which is that an artwork may convey an image, but is not in itself only an image: On the one hand, it is also a thing, and on the other, it is a node in a system of meaning. Art is both more material and less material than an image. But images of the work tend to produce the illusion that the work is an image above all.

This is a new, art-specific variant of an ancient conundrum: the incongruence between appearance and reality. In art, this conundrum has often manifested itself through trompe l'œil, that is, the creation of an illusion of three-dimensionality. This is distinct from ordinary representation, which is never intended to create the possibility of a misrecognition: When I see a picture of, say, a lemon in a dish, I never mistake it for a real lemon in a real dish. By contrast, a successful trompe l'œil is one in which I really might imagine, at least momentarily, that the painted thing is a real one. The painted image of a crumpled piece of cloth might well be taken for the thing it depicts. It is an at least temporarily effective deception. Trompe l'œil painting is often dismissed as superficial trickery—closer to a sleight of hand than to the play of mind. But Yves Bonnefoy's great book Rome, 1630, convinced me that, at least in the Baroque era, trompe l'œil had theological import, impinging on weighty issues of faith and doubt.

Cat's Cradle is not exactly a work of trompe l'œil. Rather, it's a work that turns trompe l'œil inside out by making the artwork itself the occasion of deception and doubt and not just its instrument. Here I should briefly set out the work's unusual terms. Cat's Cradle has two guises. In its first phase, as it is exhibited in the gallery, it consists of a grid of twenty drawings each incorporating photographic imagery:



Drawn with colored pencils are deliberately commonplace-looking still lifes, lemons being the most frequent element. In their very simplicity, the still lifes evoke the longue durée of Western art, let's say from Pompei to Cézanne, but also the generic quality of student exercises. These still lifes have been semi-decomposed into grids of lines, of chromatic threads, as if transformed into a loosely woven piece of fabric; think of the pointillist dissolution of the painted image into a field of dots, but substitute vertical and horizontal lines for the dots. And just as textile swatches might be, these swatches of pictorial fabric are shown as manipulable and destructible: The artist shows them as variously pulled, folded, torn, crumpled, and unwoven. In other words, the flat plane of the still life image becomes a three-dimensional object depicted in an ulterior pictorial dimension. The photographic element in this depiction—a second angle on reality—consists of the hands that are shown manipulating these sheets of pictorial fabric.

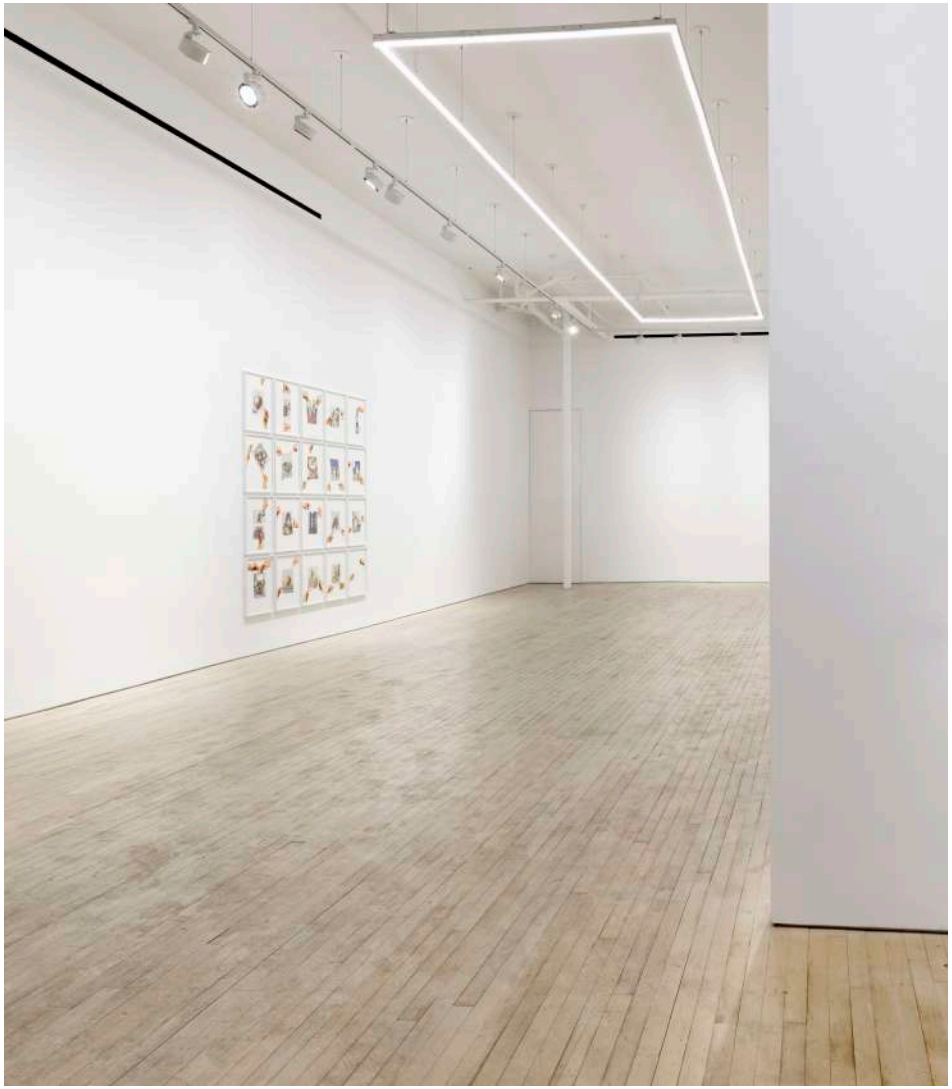
These twenty drawings are displayed facing a seemingly identical grid of twenty prints of the same drawings. That's in the project's first phase. In its second phase, the work consists of an edition of twenty sets of twenty sheets, each set containing just one of the original drawings and nineteen reproductions of its companions. Thus, the twenty editioned copies will appear identical, but each will have a different handmade image among its printed brethren.

Is it live, or is it Memorex? Can the unaided eye distinguish between the drawn and the printed? Today, the possibility of a fiction becoming an illusion presents not so much a theological issue, as it was in the Baroque era, as a psychological and sometimes political one. It's no longer about a faith that one might have or lack, but about the necessary skepticism that can overwhelm one's relation to reality—that can undermine one's connection to things as they are as much as it can provide a defense against reliance on things that are not. In this way, Cat's Cradle is an allegory of art in its relation to our everyday existence. On the one hand a very limited problem has been set: Liftin is playing with our inability to distinguish between a handmade drawing—and of course the hand is a key component in this work's imagery—and its technologically immaculate simulacrum. But this is only a local instance of a problem that in our culture is becoming more general, and has been doing so gradually for a long time. It was in 2016 that the Oxford Dictionaries named "post-truth" as the word of the year, but, paradoxical as it may seem, the idea of post-truth is only the obverse of the tagline of the 1990s TV series The X-Files: "The truth is out there." The truth is not abolished; it is simply unreachable, and in its absence, paranoia may seem to be the best policy.

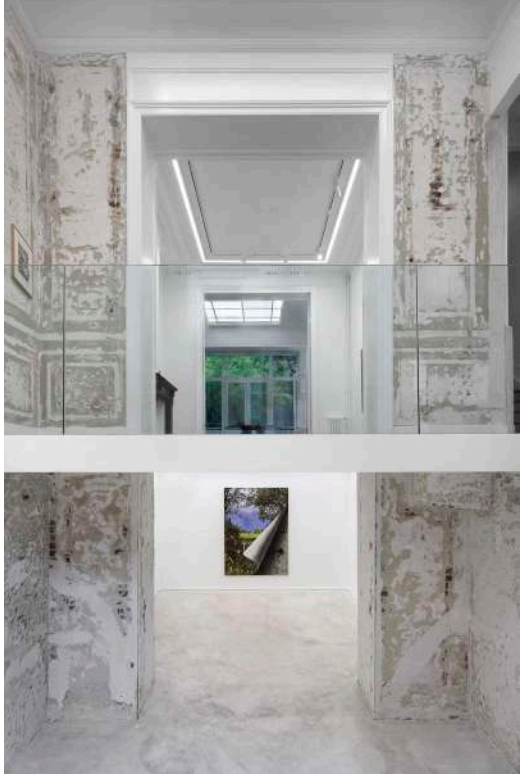
But I don't think extreme incredulity is what Liftin is proposing. Yes, he's presenting the viewer with an intellectual and perceptual puzzle that in practice will be difficult to work out. But the pleasure comes, I think, not from solving the puzzle (and then checking the answer to confirm it) but from thinking through and following along with the structure of the puzzle's making.

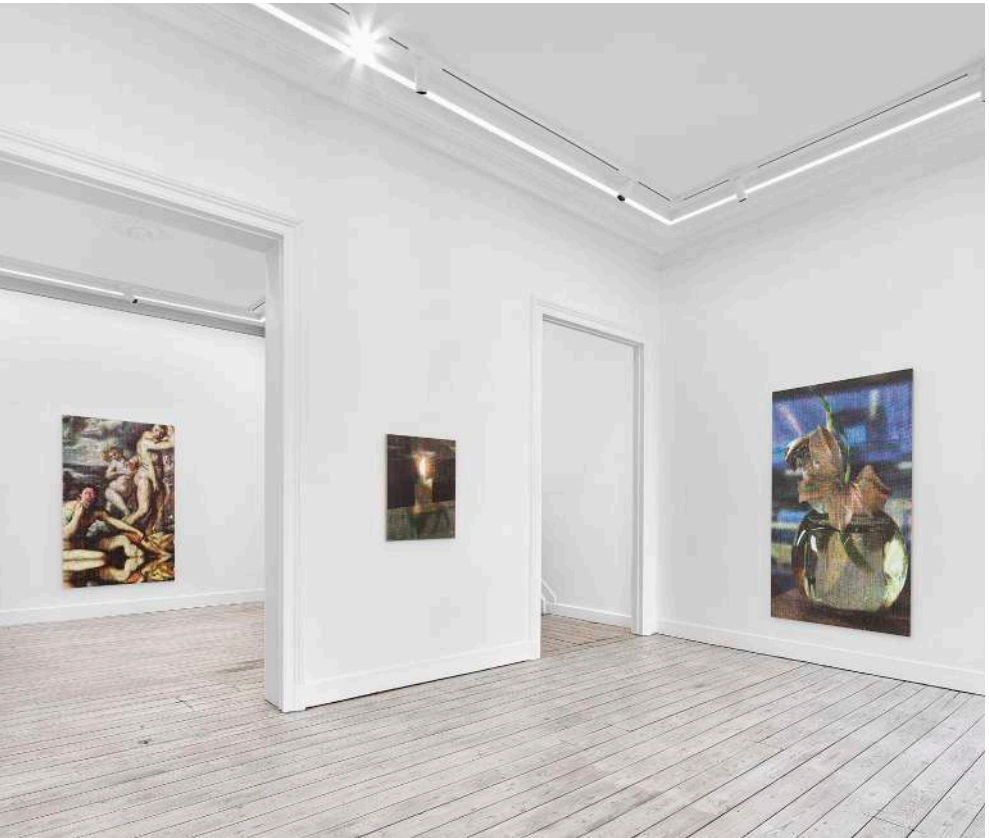
And besides, the point is this: There's a puzzle behind the puzzle, and that one has no solution. The artist is not there to outsmart you. The pleasures of art admit of no correct answers. As for me, unlike the moment when I got Liftin's email, I now think I understand what I'm looking at. But do I really? In truth, I think of Liftin as a sort of pictorial magician, reminding me that the hand is quicker than the eye and then, with a wink, adding as if as an afterthought — though it's not—that the eye is also quicker than the hand. The artist carefully unmeshes the warp and the weft of the image, but this undoing makes possible a different, more complicated and more strenuously engaging kind of image, strangely delicate and combining the cryptic with the self-evident, the idiosyncratic with the anonymous, the visible and the imperceptible.

Barry Schwabsky
New York, 2025









KNIGHT'S MOVE

2024
NINO MIER GALLERY
BRUSSELS, BE

Nino Mier Gallery is delighted to present Knight's Move, Asher Liftin's second exhibition with Nino Mier Gallery, and his first presentation in Brussels. In this new body of work, comprised of paintings and works on paper, Liftin continues to explore ideas of perception, the constructed image and abstracted realism, frequently adopting the still life to represent the act of seeing. The exhibition will be on view at the gallery's Allard 25 location in Brussels, from November 8th – December 21st, 2024.

On occasion of this exhibition, art historian Carol Armstrong wrote the following essay after visiting Liftin's studio in Brooklyn:

He begins a painting with a canvas prepared with a medium-grey ground: neither the dark ground of old-style chiaroscural painting, nor the light ground of Impressionist "peinture claire," but something in-between. He proceeds by projecting a digital photograph onto that prepared surface, blocking out its main forms and, crucially, the highlights on those forms, in white acrylic, before adding in dark tones that—together with the white pigment and grey ground—give the under-painting the look of a black-and-white photograph translated into paint. And then he layers over that foundation a painterly kind of rasterized dot-matrix, in successive strata of colored, water-based inks, carefully prepared on his palette to follow the CMYK (Cyan/Magenta/Yellow/Key) subtractive system of color-mixing. Together those pixelated strata construct the image—a still life, say, of a single flower in a simple glass vase—in much the same way that our eyes, in concert with our brains, construct a recognizable image, from the ground-up, out of bits of raw perceptual data: something that is going on all the time without our being in the least aware of it. Simultaneously, the highlights that undergird that colored dot-matrix—instead of sitting on top as they generally do in the history of illusionist painting—filter and flicker through to give the image, the flower in the glass vase, its optical sparkle, mimicking the additive RGB (Red/Green/Blue) system of the light spectrum, as received by the three types of light-receptor cones in the human eye, before being processed in and through the somatic activity of the brain.

As the painting's viewers, in turn, we see that flower in the glass vase as if through a screen: a window screen, a computer screen, a silkscreen or a half-tone screen—really, any or all of these screens are pertinent here. And we start by taking that screened image in from a distance that allows us to see, recognize and understand it as a whole gestalt, processing it from the top down, before moving up close to encounter the rainbow networks of colored and sometimes gridded dots of which its surface is composed, at which point the gestalt of the flower in the vase partially unravels and undoes itself, to become an exercise in pointillist abstraction. That raveling and unraveling are complementary and continuous in the dance between painter and viewer that each of Asher Liftin's paintings proposes.

From a distance, as if seen through a screen, the canna lily in its squat, round glass vase is a cool painting, as are all of this young artist's paintings, when seen at a glance or in photographic reproduction. But as we move progressively closer in to its surface, it gathers warmth, not only from the coloristic pleasures of its overlapping cyans and magentas and yellows—which combine to produce greens and pinks, oranges and purples, interlaced with blacks—but also from the ever-more evident facture of the painting, in particular the drips that stream down from some of its details. Those drips, together with the woven, textile-like look of the ink-painted surface, help sustain the unraveling effect that marks these paintings as well: one small colored-pencil drawing of a lit candle metaphorizes that effect quite directly, with a bottom edge that appears to fray, as if each colored line that makes up the mesh of the image were a separate colored thread, coming apart from the lattice-work warp and weft of its weave. It is at this level that the paintings, too, confront their intermedial constructedness: their fundamental movement between the image-systems of painting, digital photography, printing, drawing—all of which are practiced by Liftin—as they are tapestried together like a loomed piece of Jacquard fabric, yielded from a proto-computer code. (The textilic basis of painting-on-canvas surfaces everywhere, across media, in this body of work.)

The subjects that Liftin chooses to paint, print and draw, along with the manner in which they are rendered, are mediated—screened, we might say—through an array of art-historical reference. First, still life—flower painting, in particular—reminiscent, for me at least, of Edouard Manet's poignantly simple "last flowers." (There is also a lovely little drawing of lemons that reminds me irresistibly of Manet's own late lemon and other single and double pieces of fruit.) Studio and gallery windows, printed and painted, larger and smaller, which call to mind both the modernist grid and the Italian Renaissance model of the picture-as-window, an opening onto the world on the other side of its notionally transparent surface. Small colored-pencil drawings of a female intimate, at once clearly posed and snapshot-like: these portraits evoke the photo-filtered paintings of Gerhard Richter, as does the topic of the lit candle found in certain drawings and paintings, such as the one mentioned above. Mannerist bathers, culled randomly, by means of a self-censoring prompt given to an AI program, from 17th-century Italian sources such as the work of the so-called "Il Passignano." Collaged and swirled paintings that vaguely recall Picasso and Van Gogh. The illusionist gambits of 2oth-century Photorealism and of earlier camera obscura painters such as Johannes Vermeer. And through it all, of course, runs the Neo-Impressionist mark of Georges Seurat, and the divisionist color theory that goes with it. Though it is possible to see Liftin's paintings as connecting the dots between Vermeer and Richter, however, this screening through the sieve of art history does not really yield any secure time-line; quite the contrary. But it does knit together the threads of a mediated vision, in which the image bank of painting and its sister media is imbricated with cognitive process. Asher Liftin is not a neuroscientist, and this is not "neuro-art-history," but his is a practice that everywhere invokes the intersection between art and cognition.

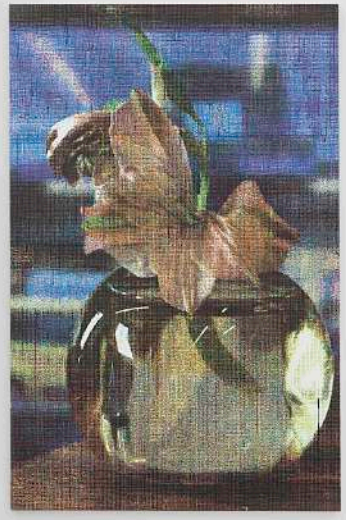
I have always had a special taste for still-life painting, so I am drawn to those works in particular. One little doubled painting of flowers in a vase—on the left side a Photorealist oil version of it, and abutting it on the right side a flipped version of the same image, rendered in an enlarged raster of inked dots—opens onto broader questions of mirroring and cognitive mediation, scaling and iteration. And so, though it is not in the present exhibition, I shall conclude by zeroing in on a slightly earlier pair of paintings that resides in Liftin's studio, for that pair quite literally doubles down on the same operation of doubling in order to confront those questions with magisterial, even preternatural confidence. Much larger in scale, this pair of paintings of tulips in a vase set against a view out a window, each reflected upside-down in the surface of a glass coffee table with books on it, flips the left-right orientation of the smaller still-life pair, so that now the rasterized, inked canvas sits on the left, hinged to the reversed, Photorealist oil version of itself on the right. This time the rasterized half on the left is composed of a tighter fabric of much smaller pixelation, so that the importance of scale and resolution become pronounced, especially relative to the smaller, more recent pair of flower paintings just mentioned: the smaller the painting the larger and more noticeable the raster, and the closer one is invited to get to the image's surface and its mediation by and through its weave of dots, while the larger the painting and the smaller the raster, the more one is inclined to back up and see it as a resolved image. And vice versa on both counts.

But in the case of the larger pair of paintings that scalar dimension, along with the doubling and reversal of the image, the undermining of its own transparency, its translation of digital photograph into paint, and its pairing of printerly ink and painterly oil, is tied to a more complex meditation on mirroring. The still life's setting against the backdrop of a window is pertinent here, as is the pile of books (with at least one semi-readable title on its spine); the mirror-image of the artist with camera reproduced twice on the convex side of the vase and twice reflected upside-down on the glass table (mimicking a device found in 17th-century Dutch still-life painting); the broad areas of white paint on that table in the right-side version; the blurry white "circles of confusion" on the cushions in the right-side background (subtly reminiscent of Vermeer's work); and the little square painting-within-a-doubled-painting that is purposefully propped against the couch and the window in the back.

Together these add up to a kind of self-reflexive summa of Asher Liftin's iterative experimentation with the relay between painting and cognition: suggesting not only the intersection between bottom-up and top-down mental processing, but also the doubling of stereoscopic vision, the upside-downness of the retinal image before it is righted by the brain, not to mention the necessity of repetition in the process of learning to see. And through it all runs the history of Western picturing, screened through the colored materiality of painterly and printerly pigment. Back up from the surface, and ta-da!, it comes into focus. Move in close, and it comes undone. Move away once more and it all comes back together. But move from side to side in front of this joined pair of paintings, and you see it do both, in concert and in oscillating alternation, over and over again.














ERROR SIGNALS

2023
NINO MIER GALLERY,
NEW YORK, NY, US

Nino Mier Gallery is thrilled to present *Error Signals*, Asher Liftin's debut exhibition with Nino Mier Gallery as well as his first solo exhibition in New York. Liftin's background in cognitive science informs this new series of pointillist paintings rendered in transparent inks. The paintings and accompanying drawings explore the constructed nature of images perceptually, digitally, and art historically. The exhibition will be on view at the gallery's Soho location from November 2nd – December 16th.

It is a privilege to watch someone find themselves in something they love doing – that you also happen to love doing. The process of becoming oneself as an artist is generally slow and fitful but when the pieces finally fall into place it is thrilling. In this case, the pieces haven't exactly fallen into place so much as come together in teasing disjunction.

The artist in question, Asher Liftin, is in his mid-twenties and I have known him since his late teens. He was precociously gifted from the get-go as well as precociously determined to make his mark in the "art world," having started out with graffiti and graduated from that to oil painting while a student in high school where his exigent teacher Katya Arnold was the wife of the Russian émigré artist Alexander Melamid. So in a way, his ultimate decision to launch himself into the world as a painter – one among tens of thousands who attend art schools and colleges, and then brave the daunting odds against them – came as no surprise. Indeed, it seemed inevitable and right. The paintings themselves are a surprise inasmuch as they melded exceptional manual dexterity and a keen eye for the subtlest nuances of tone and color with a reservoir of imagery as broad as can be known – which is short for as all-encompassing as the Internet – and in formats both stable and traditional – primarily portraits and still lives. Some of the former are remarkably classical in appearance; for example a haunting, not to say haunted three quarters likeness of a young woman in a green sweater looking back over her shoulder at the artist. Among the latter are flower studies that have a vaguely Vermeer- like formality. However, still, other images spill over into the realm of hallucination. They include heroic scale yet perversely anti-heroic works seemingly inspired by Renaissance tableaux and tapestries that are woven from thousands of discrete marks which coalesce into complex shape-shifting/space-distorting compositions. When I say "perversely" the term of art might better be "grotesquely" given the lurking hybrid protagonists – crazed men and horses out of Ovid's Metamorphoses as reimagined by an entirely au courant American of the 21st century, or beasts from an updated version of H.G. Welles' The Island of Doctor Moreau backdated to the 17th century. Meanwhile, overall think of a cool-headed 17th century Chuck Close in his youth transcribing his fever dreams or pipe dreams by doing manually what it would take



a machine a fraction of the time to finish. But, then, the result wouldn't hold the same fascination for the viewer who is fixated not so much on virtuoso craft as by Olympic feats of sustained concentration that such an enterprise necessarily entails.

Taking all these precedents into account, we are not talking about a Neo-Appropriationist trying to redo what artists of the 1980s such as Sigmar Polke or David Salle did, but rather an artist of the new A.I. Millennium with a penchant for Mannerist inventions that whiplashes the viewer from the remote past of elegant post- Renaissance European painterly painting – albeit by other means, since rather than oil pigments the artist has employed layered ink glazes of various densities – to contemporary prestidigitation, patiently and by that token paradoxically executed by the machine assisted human hand. Thus the visual anomalies that disorient the mind are rendered with a sureness of touch that convinces one that the result could have come out no other way. The mismatching of iconographic and spatial codes involves the most painstakingly refined brushwork, and frequently veers off toward what amounts to a kitchen blender or clothes dryer effect, inasmuch as the vortices found in several of these paintings create a powerful visual tornado and undertow that swirls the motif in on itself till its contours are all but lost. In the past, such torsion generated forms were a feature of anamorphic transcription whereby the artist faithfully rendered what s/he saw in a highly polished ring that picked up and skewed the reflections of a flat image as in Parmigianino's Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror (1524) but taken many steps further with advanced computer technology.



That those results alternate between coy incongruities nested in solid, ostensibly plausible compositions – a woman's arm extending from what appears to be her dislocated shoulder that is in turn clutched by the man she is embracing whose Thalidomide hand kneads that shoulder like putty – and overt monstrosities. In the latter category, is the piece de resistance of Liftin's startlingly sophisticated debut New York show. It is a triptych that might be seen as equivalent to a Roger Corman horror film experienced on acid. The myths it evokes are too numerous to be named which is in keeping with A.I.'s shake-and-bake way of amalgamating myriad disparate sources. But as with John Cage's use of the I Ching, the choice of which recombinant elements to commit to canvas is wholly that of the painter and therein resides his artistry. The most extreme triptych, featuring a loathsomely fleshy man-thing whose gaping, drooling maw appears ready to devour anything and everything within its range, like Goya's rampaging Colossus (circa 1808) who doubtless provided some of his digital DNA while leaving out the Spanish master's lugubrious atmosphere, must be paired with another that has the poise and naturalism of 18th century Danish genre painting, most notably three views of a curtained window whose component webs of descriptive tracery shimmer like layered and tinted tulle. Meanwhile, several mid-sized still lives follow the example of this latter triptych but with extra twists and turns while other larger format panels go further toward the stock in trade of Baroque and Romantic supernatural scenarios.

All in all Liftin is a talent to watch. Take it from me, I've had my eye on him for five years and during the whole of that period his unpredictability and ingenuity have been unflaggingly amazing.

Robert Storr
Brooklyn 2023

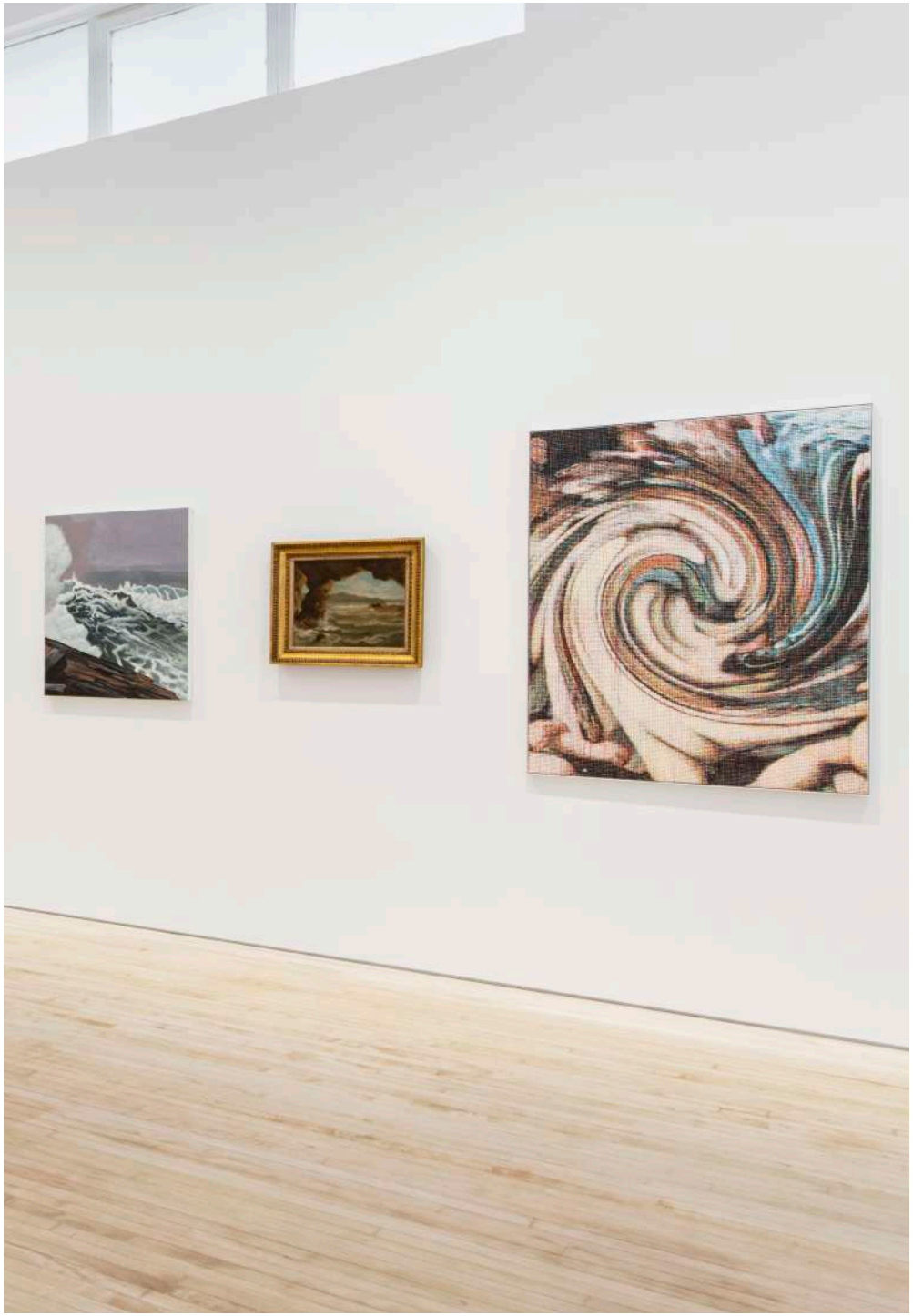












BEACH

2023
NINO MIER GALLERY
NEW YORK, NY, US

The beach is a natural boundary. On one side is what we know, terra firma; but on the other is the deep unknown, a place of beauty but also of danger, hostile not just as a volatile expanse but also as what that expanse might contain.

Throughout history, humans have treated the shoreline with awe and humility. It was, after all, the place of shipwrecks and invasion, of pirates, tsunamis and squalling storms. In the ancient world, it was the residing home of, amongst many others, the terrifying mythological figures of Poseidon, Triton, Scylla and Charybdis, to name but a few.

It was not until the late 18th century and the Age of Enlightenment that the idea of landscape in general began to change. Casper David Friedrich and J. M. W. Turner made paintings of the sea with an intensity that was almost religious, the wrath of the sea and its huge expanse a thing of wonder imbued with spiritual awe.

As the notion of landscape changed in art and literature so did the science. It was thought the sea air and the bracing seaside walks were a good constitutional, so in the mid-19th century in the small seaside town of Scarborough in Northern England a resort was made for just this kind of activity. It was quickly followed by many others not only in the United Kingdom but all across Europe. This dramatic change was reflected in painting by most Impressionists and Post-Impressionist for the rest of the 19th century.

In the early twentieth century F. Scott Fitzgerald and the Murphys inadvertently made popular the idea of sitting by the beach on the Côte d'Azur in semi-undress in the heat of the sun. Henceforth, the umbrella was cast away for the parasol, under which people lay in states of undress, thus casting away the old notions of 19th century propriety. Matisse and Picasso quickly took up themes of the bathers by the seaside (famously, with Picasso, in the Baigneuse series). One could say that from that point on, the seaside became glamourous and exotic. As a result, the beach has now transformed from being an undesired wilderness into a highly prized destination where people not just holiday but go to live and work. This obviously has had a transformative effect on the landscape and the fragile eco system that made it so attractive in the first place.

This large group exhibition explores all aspects of the shoreline—and in so doing will tell the vital story of humanity's ever-changing relationship to this delicate piece of the natural world.



OF THE SURFACE OF THINGS

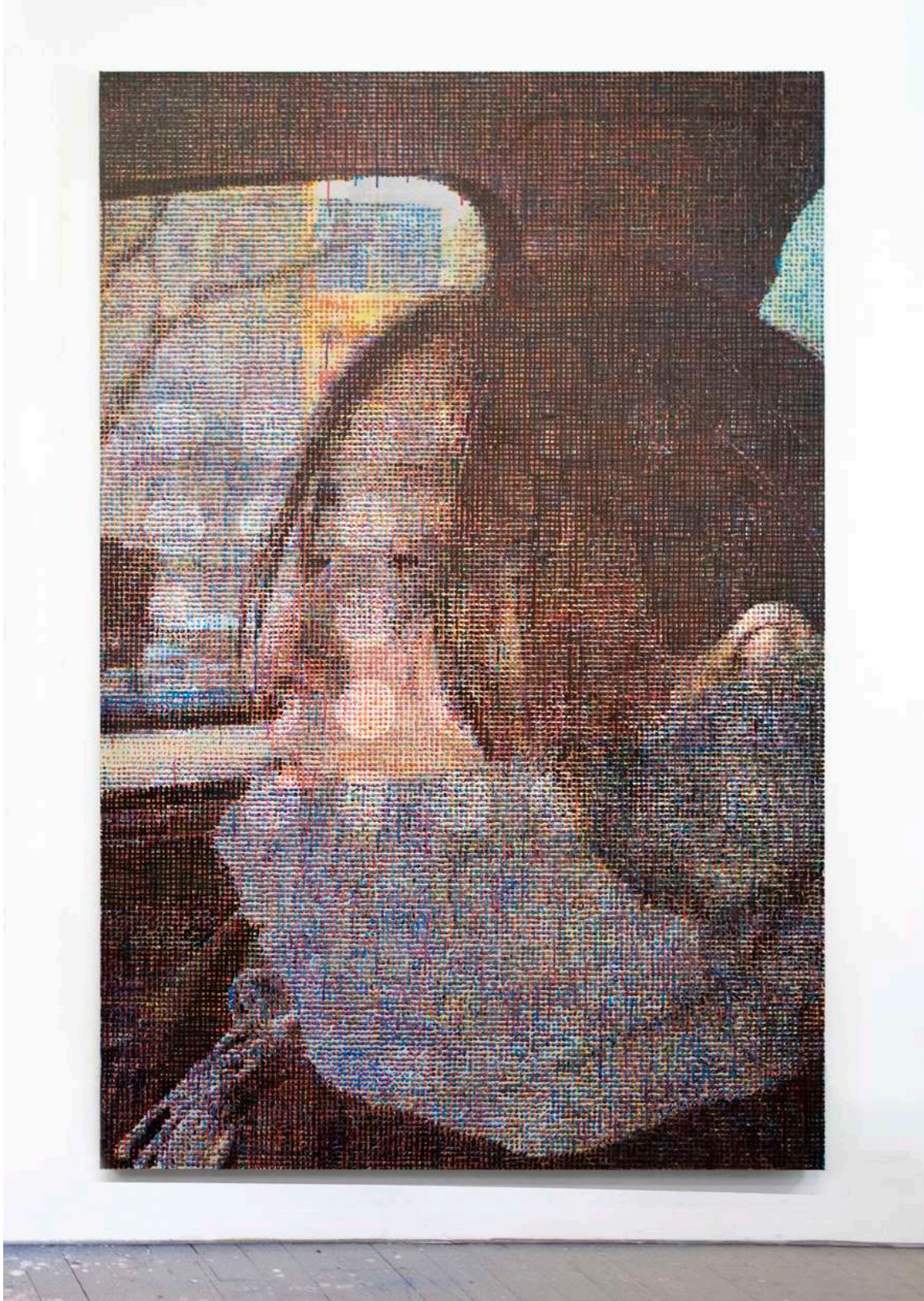
2022 - 2023
GALLERIA ALESSANDRO ALBANESE
MATERA, IT

The title of the exhibition *Of the Surface of Things* comes from the poem of the same name by Wallace Stevens in which the poet reflects on the ways of observing the world, “of the surface of things”, between reality and imagination, a dualism at the center of Liftin’s research. The poet dresses himself in the cloak of imagination and obscures the real world, which is why the elements of nature appear in different and new colors. From this awareness of renewed representation, Liftin’s figures emerge, with a visual search with a broad index: as photographs found or taken personally by the artist and from media icons, such as television or film. The works in the exhibition emphasize their provenance by repurposing the textures of digital photography in painting, similar to pixels, or bright film filters.

Subjects that are often simple and familiar are digitally reworked, stripping them of their iconographic references, to propose them anew in painting. As in the work Torso in Torque, in which a late nude by Picabia is reprised, or, again, still lives as in Still Life of Fruit and Pistachios, in which the subject is a photograph of the artist, and the complimentary work Flower in Turcato, in which the still life is circumscribed within a gestural trace on the canvas. Gesture returns as the protagonist in the diptych The Conformist, in which the image from Bertolucci’s film is overlaid with a grid, imitating a drawing found on a package delivered to the artist, perhaps by the letter carrier, to erase his address. Asher Litin focuses on the synthesis of these visual stimuli as carriers of information and concepts.

Of the Surface of Things creates a forest of heterogeneous signs in constant tension between imagination and reality, in which the relationship between image, sign, and gesture of the artist are lenses of the world. In this sense, imagination becomes the tool of knowledge and art the space of questioning our reality.

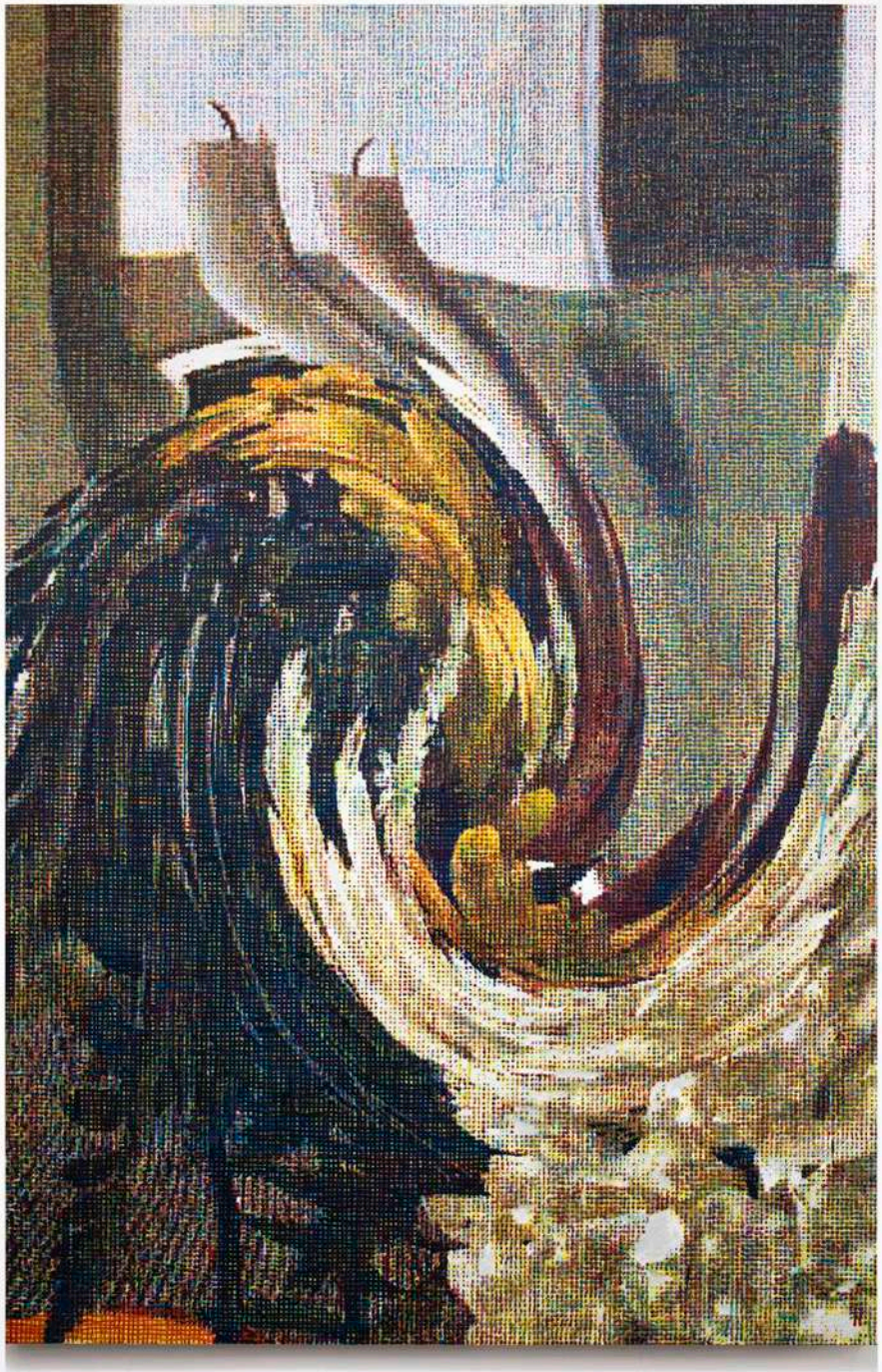
Images courtesy of Galleria Alessandro Albanese











SPRING 2021 UNDERGRADUATE THESIS EXHIBITION

2021
YALE UNIVERSITY
NEW HAVEN, CT, US

Installation view of Asher Liftin's *Reconstructed Image*, 2021. Photo courtesy of the artist.






PRESS

PRESS

CULTURED MAGAZINE
DECEMBER 2025
BY CULTURED MAGAZINE

AIR MAIL
NOVEMBER 2023
BY CLARA MOLOT

ARTMUSE
AUGUST 2021
BY SAMANTHA KOHL

FORBES
OCTOBER 2020
BY DAN Q. DAO

CULTURED

DECEMBER 2025

The Art World Doesn't Really Have Child Stars–Except for Asher Liftin

The artist had his first pinch-me moment at 12, when he was selected to create an original artworks for a Wes Anderson film. 15 years and two degrees later, Liftin's exquisitely rendered pointilist works have the art world's attention.

By Cultured Magazine



Photography by Dylan Siegel.

AGE: 27
BASED IN: New York

Asher Liftin got his big break at the tender age of 12, when he was chosen from a towering pile of submissions to create original artwork for Wes Anderson's Moonrise Kingdom. Two college degrees in cognitive science and visual art later, he creates trompe l'oeil compositions that look as if they are tapestries but are in fact finely rendered, pointillist compositions inspired by art-historical still lifes and history paintings.

Describe your work in three words.

Constructing a picture.

Tell us about a teacher who changed the way you think about art.

When I was 12 years old I met an older artist named Christian Aldunate, who was teaching students how to use spray paint to write graffiti on large paper sheets on the street in Brooklyn. He brought me along with him to openings of other graffiti artists. It was a community where art wasn't hoarded but dispersed. In graffiti, a word becomes an abstraction that solves the problem of subject matter. The creative problems lie in form and color. I use images today in a similar way: starting with an image, decoupling it from its meaning or associations, and finding ways to translate it into a painting.

Imagine someone gives you $150,000 to make anything you want—no strings. What are you making?

A book that is all 25,669 photos I've taken that are currently in my references folder on my iPhone.

What's an artwork you didn't make, but wish you had?

Paul Sietsema's enamel phone paintings. He covers the actual phone and surface in a monochrome enamel paint, photographs it, and then repaints the painting with the same enamel paint. The final painting is an optically seductive collapse of subject and object.

What's an underrated studio tool you can't live without?

Muji pens.

What art-world trend would you like to see die out?

Art-world trends.

Is there a studio rule you live by?

I won't eat too much when working out an idea. Ernest Hemingway wrote in A Moveable Feast that he could see paintings much more strongly on an empty stomach, and this helped him understand Cézanne's landscapes. That always stuck with me. I thought it made sense that if your body is hungry, your mind would be more open.

AIR MAIL

NOVEMBER 2023

Asher Liftin

The 24-year-old art-world darling, whose fans include David Geffen, stages his first solo show in New York CIty

By Clara Molot



"I'm totally giving myself carpel tunnel."

WhatsApp co-founder Jan Koum, Splunk C.E.O. Gary Steele, and Jack Shear, Ellsworth Kelly's widower, all mingled on November 2 at Nino Mier Gallery, in SoHo, for "Error Signals," Asher Liftin's first solo show in New York. It sold out before it opened. With the show, the art world's newest talent is no longer a secret kept by the big-name collectors who have purchased his work, including David Geffen.

At just 24, Liftin also has work on view with paintings by established artists—from Dana Schutz and George Condo to Kara Walker—in a group exhibition at Venus Over Manhattan, in NoHo. "Retinal Hysteria," up through January 13, was organized by Robert Storr, the former dean of the Yale University School of Art and Liftin's freshman year professor.

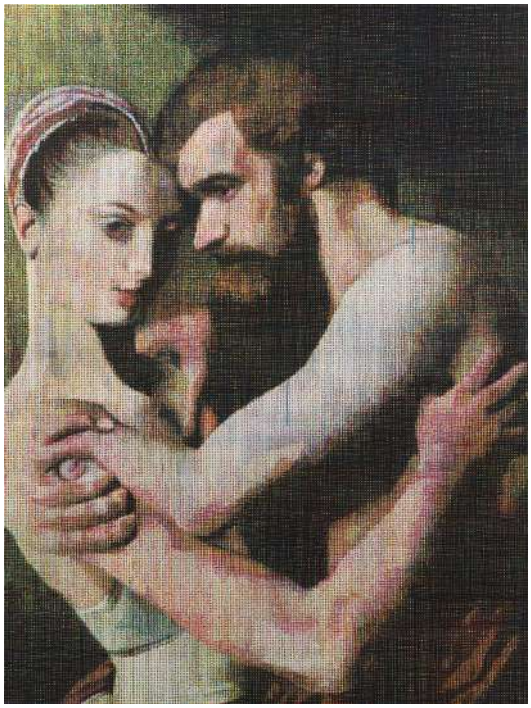
Liftin graduated from Yale in 2021 with a double major in art and cognitive science. He's Nino Mier's youngest artist, and his work, large-scale paintings depicting classical themes—a Vermeer-like still life, a Mannerist-inspired triptych—are freshly modern.



The Devouring of Ziggy Stardust (2023), on view at Nino Mier.

"I didn't want to make an oil painting of technology," Liftin tells me. "I'm not interested in the irony which comes with using an art language to describe a technological language." Instead, he created something entirely new to answer the question "How do you represent technology outside of a computer?"

First, Liftin uses iPhone photos, movie stills, and A.I.-generated images to make digital compositions. He works as a printer would, reconstructing RGB bits (the colors we see when we look at a screen) into CMYK bits, the color module that a printer uses to translate an online image into something physical, to create his images. He layers one grid of dots on top of the next. "I'm totally giving myself carpel tunnel," he says, laughing. One of his larger paintings is made of 400,000 dots.



Ballerina and Wrestler (2023).

Liftin, the son of an architect and an English teacher, grew up in Tribeca and spent weekends going to galleries and museums. He became interested in drawing in fourth grade, when he started spending lunch breaks in the art room of his Brooklyn prep school, Saint Ann's School. A discerning teacher took note of Liftin's talent. The teacher happened to be friends with someone working on Wes Anderson's then upcoming film, Moonrise Kingdom, who was looking for a young artist to make paintings for the movie.

"I had no idea who Wes Anderson was," Liftin says, "but I went home and did three watercolors." He got the job.

At 12 years old, he met a graffiti artist on the street who "started bringing me to art openings," Liftin says. "I would bring my sketchbook and show people what I was doing." He also began selling hand-painted shoes on Facebook. By the end of high school, he'd landed an internship at R13 Denim, during which he drew on blazers and white denim jeans. Wiz Khalifa wore the pants onstage during his 2017 Coachella performance. "There is a photo of him backstage, shirtless, smoking a joint in a pair of my jeans," Liftin proudly tells me.



Asher Liftin's drawing in Wes Anderson's *Moonrise Kingdom*.

When he got to Yale, Liftin wasn't so sure what he was going to do with his life. "I didn't want to be an artist, but I was looking for something that felt like I could use my creative drive." Even though he took art classes throughout college, Liftin didn't think he could support himself as a painter.

Then, during the pandemic, Liftin stayed in New Haven and turned his grimy college house, where he lived with five friends, into a studio and began painting every day. He started to apply the rules he was using for his cognitive-science thesis to his art. "Rigid structure is also highly creative," he says.



Liftin's hand-drawn jeans for R13 Denim.

"I started developing a sort of visual language that could encompass the discrepancy between the painting and the thing it represents," explains Liftin. "The digital space is exciting for me because it represents this new language system for constructing anything."

Paintings: © Asher Liften. Photos: © Joji Baratelli (Liftin); IMDB Pro/Moonrise Kingdom Gallery (Moonrise Kingdom); @instagram/asherliftin (jeans)

ART MUSE

AUGUST 2021

ARTMUSE NEXTGEN: AUGUST ARTIST RADAR

BY Samantha Kohl



Pictured: *Reconstructed Images*, 2021 (detail of the installation, above) | courtesy of the artist

The work of these artists is priced up to $15,000— perfect for the aspiring collector or a veteran looking to electrify an existing collection with fresh voices and exciting talent.

Featured Artist: Asher Liftin
Last spring, Asher Liftin graduated from Yale with degrees in both Visual Art and Cognitive Science. His amazing work pulls from both of this fields: Liftin brilliantly explores perception and the human mind as he meditates upon how human beings unconsciously piece together disjoint fragments, which then create a cohesive perception of the world.

The artist (and cognitive scientist) writes in his artist statement, “My interest lies in awareness of how one sees as much as what one sees, and how something thrills, frustrates, disturbs, and brings joy.” Thus, his amazing work often entails shifting the resolution of an familiar figure or even total environment resulting in work that is endlessly interesting and beautiful.

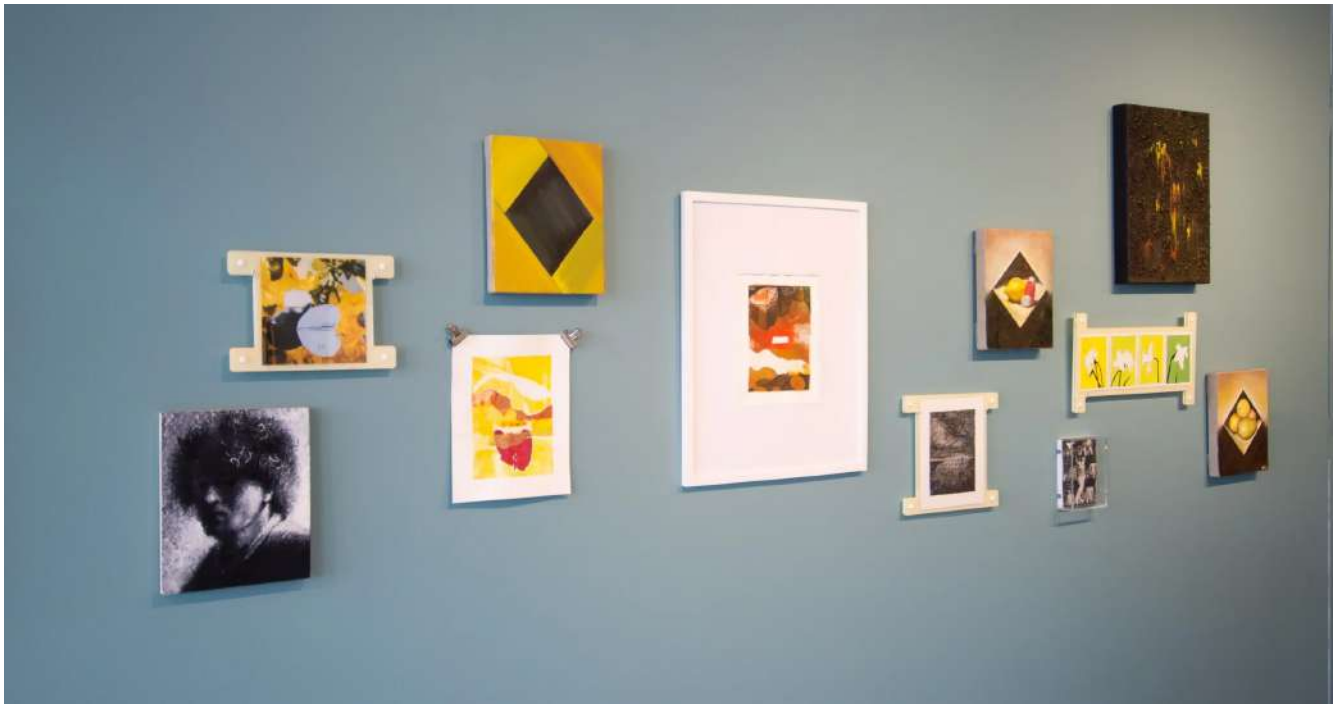
Liftin’s work is currently exhibited at the Yale undergraduate thesis show at MoCA Westport, curated by Max Teicher and Emily White of Gagosian, on display through August 21st.

Forbes

OCTOBER 2020

Palo Gallery's 'Memories Manifest' Showcases Rising Stars Of New York City's Art Scene

By Dan Q. Dao



Courtesy of Palo Gallery

As New York reopens slowly, and carefully, the city's museums and galleries have once again started welcoming loyal patrons—albeit with COVID-19 safety measures like timed ticketing, mandatory mask-wearing, and social distancing. In such unprecedented times of crisis, it's worth discussing how art can serve as both a refuge from and a reflection upon events and emotions past and present. This fluid idea of memory is a central motif in "Memories Manifest," the latest group exhibition by the experimental Palo Gallery.

"The exhibition is a rumination and exploration of memory through a series of small-scale works from seven different artists," explains founder-curator Paul Henkel. "Particularly in this time, memory is one of the few things we still have to remember the past pre-coronavirus and pre-election—or perhaps just taking us back to a sense of comfort. Yet, there are also works that don't glorify memory in a nostalgic way. Memory can be problematic as well."

Now in its final week at 347 Broome Street in Nolita, the show spotlights a more accessible and relaxed set of works from exciting art-world names like Dean Dempsey, Alexander James, Steve Nishimoto, Alaia de Santis, Asher Liftin, Rachel Wolf, and Monsieur Zohore. Each artist was invited to offer their own interpretation of memory: for example, Nishimoto examined the idea of windows as time portals through a series of dynamic oil-on-linen paintings, Wolf fused natural objects into hypnotic mobiles and soap sculptures, and Zohore sealed written personal memories of trauma and violence within mirrored plastic easter eggs sitting atop gilded legs—thereby denying the commodification of his suppression.

In conjunction with the showcase, Henkel sought out several outdoor-friendly programming initiatives, hosting a mini-cookout—complete with a portable BBQ truck—catered by now-shuttered Tribeca steakhouse Holy Ground. Other events include a weekend pop-up of Alimentari Flaneur, a produce market, and a forthcoming voter registration event donating proceeds to the campaign of City Council candidate and Black Lives Matter activist Chi Ossé.

Henkel says he works with a diverse mix of young and rising artists not only to sell their work, but also to bring together a community of likeminded creatives and patrons to participate in conversations around art. To that end, those who are interested in purchasing the works may also do so, although roughly half of the pieces on display have already been sold.

“We have artists who are internationally known, artists who are mid-career, and artists who are starting out—I want to introduce collectors and buyers to people my age, people who are experiencing racism or homophobia, or just the struggle of being young.” Henkel says, noting that the show is one of the most accessible Palo Gallery has done. “Our other shows have had canvases that go up into the six figures, but given the times, we want to engage as many people as possible to begin collecting and taking part in this part of our culture.”

CIRRICULUM VITAE

ASHER LIFTIN

b. 1998, New York City, NY, US
Lives and works in Brooklyn, NY, US

EDUCATION

2021 B.A. Visual Art & B.S. Cognitive Science, Yale University, New Haven, CT, US

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2026 *Cat's Cradle*, Nino Mier Gallery, New York, NY, US

2024 *Knight's* Move, Nino Mier Gallery, Brussels, BE

2023 *Error Signals*, Nino Mier Gallery, New York, NY, US

2022 *Of the Surface of Things*, Alessandro Albanese, Milan, IT
Blow Up, Alessandro Albanese, Milan, IT

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2025 *It Looks a Lot Less Bleak Through a Filter*, Chilli Art Projects, London, UK
A Forest, Hexton Gallery, Aspen, CO, US

2024 *ARTIFICE*, curated by Isabel Filer, Gabriela Goizueta, and Caroline Scarcliffe, Sitting Room Gallery, New York, NY, US
Haptic Encounters, Winter Street Gallery, Edgartown, MA, US
Arcus, Rachel Uffner Gallery, New York, New York, US
Whose Muse?, PALO Gallery, New York, NY, US

2023 *Retinal Hysteria*, curated by Robert Storr, Venus Over Manhattan, New York, NY, US
Beach, curated by Danny Moynihan, Nino Mier Gallery, New York, NY, US
On Genres, Winter Street Gallery, Edgartown MA, US
My Condolences, curated by Monsieur Zohore, M+B Gallery, Los Angeles, CA, US

2022 *Real Wild*, PALO Gallery, New York, NY, US

COLLECTIONS

The Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, CT, US
Thyssen-Bornemisza National Museum, Madrid, ES



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