

NICELLE BEAUCHENE GALLERY

Alex Bradley Cohen

See / Think / Shape

August 3 - September 2, 2022

Opening reception Wednesday, August 3, 6-8 PM

Nicelle Beauchene Gallery is pleased to present *See / Think / Shape*, a solo exhibition with Chicago-based artist Alex Bradley Cohen. This is his third show with the gallery.

Cohen's style roots itself in a tradition of American vernacular painting alongside the likes of Faith Ringgold and Horace Pippin. His take on this folk-inflected history of representation, which reveres the everyday as subject and bounty, breaks away from the strictures of realism and leans into elements of play, imagination, and ultimately abstraction.

To this end, color is Cohen's primarily tool. Fields of bold, bright blues, reds, and purples wash the backgrounds in most of the paintings on view, out of which people, buildings, and objects sprout and commingle. In their everyday-ness, each painting relishes in a casual, matter of fact tone. His subjects sit and talk, or, if alone, sit and think. In some paintings, Cohen shifts his gaze to the city itself as a subject, looking to the built environment and public transportation as spaces for both close contact and for heightened interiority. Cohen's abstraction becomes a narrative device in the construction of space around his subjects, highlighting the interdependence of figures and what's around them.

Several paintings in the exhibition comprise the same essential structure—the artist's mother and father sitting inside around the kitchen table—yet diverge in composition and affect. Here, Cohen's emphasis on inflecting memory with imagination takes shape. Each approach to the same scene both reveals and obscures essential details, yet together they encompass the fullness and feeling of the moments Cohen seeks to paint.

Alex Bradley Cohen (b. 1989) lives and works in Chicago, IL. Recent group exhibitions include in *In Relation to Power: Politically Engaged Works from the Collection*, Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University, Durham, NC; *State of the Art 2020*, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, AK; and *Triple: Alex Bradley Cohen, Louis Fratino, and Tschabalala Self*, University Art Museum at the University of Albany, NY. Other exhibitions include The Luggage Store, San Francisco, CA; Mana Contemporary, Chicago, IL; Carrie Secrist Gallery, Chicago, IL, The Studio Museum of Harlem, New York, NY; The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL; Elmhurst Art Museum, Elmhurst, IL; Socrates Sculpture Park, Long Island City, NY; and The Craft and Folk Art Museum, Los Angeles, CA, among others. He is an alumnus of the Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture and was an artist-in-residence at the Ox-Bow School of Art.

Cohen's work can be found in the public collections of the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art and the Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University.