



GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

ART

Alex Bradley Cohen

Conversation, often held over coffee, is a favorite subject of this Chicago painter, whose small canvases—quiet but for their blaring color—are windows onto private moments shared in public spaces. Cohen’s everyday scenes assume an eventful, even mythic quality thanks to his simplified forms, keyed-up palette, and indifference to the rules of vanishing-point perspective. The friends depicted in “Tim and Scott in Diner” and “Lucero and Aguilar (sitcom lifestyle)” are divided by tables rendered as sunny planes, and by their roles as either talkers or rapt listeners. (The first duo, their intent profiles seen against contrasting blue and green walls, may be on opposite sides of an argument.) Cohen also paints solitary figures, including a daydreaming self-portrait in which the artist’s forehead contains a blue lake, and the seated man in “Bittersweet Pete,” who clutches a takeout cup with both hands and looks ready for a tête-à-tête.

—*Johanna Fateman*

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