

New York Exhibition

Alexandre Pépin

THE LOVER'S WALK

November 3 – December 17, 2022



Alexandre Pépin, *Sitting Together* (2022), oil and distemper on canvas, 72 x 60 in.

Arsenal Contemporary Art NY is delighted to present the first solo exhibition of Canadian painter Alexandre Pépin in New York. Titled *The Lover's Walk*, this exhibition is a delicate and sensitive investigation of solitude and longing at time of social distancing and political division. Taking an unspecified singular figure as the main protagonist for this suite of paintings, Pépin invites the viewer on nonlinear and theoretical journey across physical and psychological landscapes. Through a soothing palette of pastels and rich hues, the exhibition offers a simultaneous look inward and outward.

The artist has developed double practice that involves studio and plein air sessions. When working outdoors, Pépin exposes his body and psyche to the natural environment he chooses to depicts. In this way, these paintings become the result of a bodily encounter with nature. The Austin-based artist's technique also widely varies within this new body of work, using prevalent materials as oil and acrylic he combines with more ancient techniques such as distemper, whereby asserting the prosperous heritage of age-old painting materials. The resulted paintings are highly textured and made all the more intricate by the surfaces on which Pépin elects to paint – ranging from smooth wood panels to crude burlap.

Beyond the rich lineage of Pepin's materials, the artist also imbues his work with art historical references by including iconographic figures such as the angel, the fruit tree, the forest, the musician, etc. These allegorical tropes find themselves coexisting within this body of work with contemporary narratives as if time collapsed on itself to produce an atemporal fantasy.

As suggested by the title, the exhibition implies a romantic and wistful expedition. Walking functions in Pépin's work metaphorically as a signifier for reverie, but also for perseverance and resilience. There is also an implied recognition for the journey of the gallery-goer. Upon entering the room, the

visitors are inadvertently driven to emulate the lover's walk. As they move from one painting to the next, they decide on their itinerary across the room, letting themselves be guided by their own thoughts and emotions.

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