



Hamptons Exhibition Foreshadows MOCA Show of Contemporary Realism Painters

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by Pat Rogers

JACKSONVILLE, FL & SAG HARBOR, NY—Curiosity about the state of American realism painting has taken hold and will manifest this fall in an ambitious exhibition in Florida designed to present a snapshot of a new generation of painters. Right now, four of these artists are exhibiting in a group show at RJD Gallery in Sag Harbor, NY.

Presenting a focused preview was a natural for the gallery as four of the artists in the show at [MOCA Jacksonville](#) are part of the gallery's regular staple of artists. On view are select paintings by Kevin Munte, Frank Oriti and Haley Hasler with a single print by Andrea Kowch. All of Kowch's paintings have sold, leaving the gallery bereft of even a single painting to include.

The exhibition in Florida will present paintings by eight artists from across the country who are working in various forms of realism, including magic realism. "Get Real: New American Paintings" will be on view at MOCA (Museum of Contemporary Art) in Jacksonville, FL from Sept. 13, 2014 to Jan. 4, 2015. Exhibiting artists will include [Haley Hasler](#), [Jason John](#), [Andrea Kowch](#), [Bryan LeBoeuf](#), [Jenny Morgan](#), [Kevin Munte](#), [Frank Oriti](#), and [Kevin Peterson](#).

Taken together, these young painters provide a snapshot of what's happening with contemporary realist painting in the United States, according to the museum.

"“Get Real”'s heavily figurative focus explores themes that have persisted throughout the recent history of American realist painting such as narrative portraiture and social, psychological, and magical realism," according to MOCA. "The works in this exhibition trace an aesthetic lineage from Thomas Eakins and Andrew Wyeth through artists such as Philip Pearlstein, Gregory Gillespie, and Sidney Goodman, past well-known and successful contemporary painters such as Bo Bartlett and Vincent Desiderio to this new generation of young painters."

Meanwhile, a mini preview of some of the works by the magic realism painters is on view through April 20 at RJD Gallery. Find the show in the upstairs gallery only. Continue scrolling to see paintings by Andrea Kowch, Kevin Munte, Frank Oriti and Haley Hasler.

Andrea Kowch's paintings sprung from empty landscapes found in rural Middle America. Desolate and foreboding, they allow spaces for people gather for unknown reasons, engaged in activities that may or may not be part of a dream, and may be driven by an unpredicted upheaval of the natural world. Don't be surprised to find crows in unexpected places.



"Light Keepers" by Andrea Kowch. Acrylic on canvas, 60 x 72 inches.



"Queen's Court" by Andrea Kowch. Acrylic on canvas.

Frank Oriti paints portraits of blue-color residents from his Middle America hometown. Often displaced from their original life plan by choice or circumstance, each portrait channels a story where self-examination has a role to play. Evocative and personal, each portrait seems to command attention. Through the silent dialogue, the bond between strangers forged by considering what it means to be human elevates both portrait subject and viewer.



"I'd rather sink..." by Frank Oriti. Oil and acrylic on panel, 48 x 36 inches.



"The Other side" by Frank Oriti. Oil and acrylic on canvas, 48 x 60 inches.

Haley Hasler may take a page from Cindy Sherman's book. Hasler's paintings feature the artist as star in a variety of costuming in domestic-tinged settings with some serious surrealistic rearranging designed to conjure the intersection of reality and fictitious imaginings. Most times, it's her unflinching, direct and unchanging gaze that is the touchstone among the chaos that surrounds her from painting to painting.



"Portrait as a Sunday Brunch" by Haley Hasler. Oil on linen, 56 x 46 inches.



"Portrait as a Tooth Fairy" by Haley Hasler. Oil on linen, 56 x 38 inches.

Kevin Munte's paintings can conjure the same sensation as watching a scene from a psychological thriller, just before the full impact of true horror sinks in. His pensive landscapes contribute to the drama as much as the hero or villain in mid-motion that they are twinned with.



"Potential of Loss" by Kevin Munte. Oil on canvas, 36 x 48 inches.



"Smoke Signals" by Kevin Munte. Oil on canvas, 48 x 60 inches.



"The Raft: After the Fall" by Kevin Munte. Oil on canvas, 48 x 36 inches.

BASIC FACTS: A Group Show featuring Andrea Kowch, Kevin Munte, Frank Oriti and Haley Hasler plus Anne-Marie Kornachuk is currently on view through April 20 at RJD Gallery, 90 Main Street, Sag Harbor, NY 11963. www.rjdgallery.com.

"Get Real: New American Paintings" will be on view at MOCA (Museum of Contemporary Art) in Jacksonville, FL from Sept. 13, 2014 to Jan. 4, 2015. A preview will be held on Sept. 12 for patrons and museum members. www.mocajacksonville.org.

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