

All Dressed Up And Nowhere To Go

Meghan Borah

May 22 - June 26, 2021

Public Opening Reception Saturday May 22, 5-8PM

Galleri Urbane is pleased to present Chicago artist Meghan Borah in her first solo show with the gallery. *All Dressed Up and Nowhere To Go* softly reflects on the past year's feelings of solitude and isolation. In her paintings on canvas and drawings on paper, Borah captures quiet, introspective moments through an all female-presenting cast of figures. Rendered with ambiguous expressions and a soft touch, the subjects confront the viewer in a manner that leaves each work open for interpretation.

Borah's imagined portraiture finds inspiration from a variety of sources, from fashion magazines to textiles and art history. Often utilizing thinned oil and distemper paints, she likens the surface of her canvases to that of a delicate tapestry. Colors seem to absorb into each canvas in the way textiles would absorb dye. When elements of nature are present, they are rendered with a sense of design that borrows more from art history than actual observed landscapes. Simplified and flattened, the settings become more like theatrical backdrops. Placed in front, female figures depicted alone or with additional companions gaze out to the viewer. Borah illustrates her figures' facial features with a light hand and utilizes minimal marks to capture a remarkably compelling expression. With deadpan faces and straightforward eyes Borah's figures can be read to be experiencing equal parts boredom and nostalgia.

This exhibition shares its title with a series of seven chalk drawings. The smallest of all the works on view, the works on paper remain just as impactful through their undeviated directness. Seven women are depicted donning a different colored long-sleeved gown and statement earrings, each set against a geometric backdrop. Coupled with each figure's cross-armed pose, their ambiguous expression could be interpreted as bold defiance or intimate vulnerability. Borah suggests they could be seen as "bored of the monotony of quarantine, nostalgic for a time when an outfit change caught eyes." In addition to their puzzling facial expressions, the circumstances the women find themselves in are never disclosed. In *Motherhood Part 3* (2021), the figures might be read as lovers before the title suggests the painting could be depicting a mother and daughter. In *Three Girls with Bull* (2021), three figures stand in a line with a hand draped over a yellow bull. Their eyes averted from the viewer and cast in different directions, one gets a sense that they are together yet alone. Borah offers no explanation but invites viewers to imagine the story behind each of the painted scenes like these.

At first glance, Borah's work may appear deceptively simple, but sustained observation reveals them to be replete with sophisticated elements. Delicate lines and rich color imbue a dream-like quality to each painting that resonates with the feelings experienced over the past year. Through works both large and intimate in scale, Borah encourages viewers to confront the theater of everyday life.

--

Meghan Borah (b. 1990, Evanston, IL) lives and works in Chicago, IL. Borah is represented by Galleri Urbane (Dallas) and Goldfinch Gallery (Chicago) Her work has been featured in Chicago Magazine, Time Out Chicago, New American Paintings and ArtSlant. Borah earned her MFA from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL, and was a resident at The Vermont Studio Center in October 2018.