

Diary of Open Secrets

József Csató

January 9 - February 13, 2021

Galleri Urbane is proud to host a solo exhibition featuring József Csató, the Budapest artist's first physical solo exhibition in the United States. Following an online show in the spring of 2020, Csató's much-anticipated *Diary of Open Secrets* arrives after nearly a year of exhibiting with the gallery and an exceptional reception from American audiences. The exhibition features all new work created in recent months and highlights a range of whimsical scenes completed in Csató's distinct style that fuses multiple genres from the canon of painting.

Csató garners inspiration for his work from the long history of painting and many of its traditional classifications: still life, landscape, portrait, narrative, abstraction. His canvases approach these categories from a fresh perspective, combining them to create unique hybrids. Assimilating these art historical references with the visual language of contemporary life, from fairy tales to pop cultural iconography, Csató constructs surrealist scenes that spark intrigue. Loosely biomorphic figures meld into botanical forms, droplets, tiles and other geometric shapes. Each composition's stylized objects are stacked to create a playful hierarchy and a curious depiction of space. With titles that offer only slight insight, the artist's fictional world is left open to imaginative interpretation.

A linear installation of 5 paintings, Csató's *Open Diary* series, forms the centerpiece of the exhibition. Csató writes that these paintings are a reflection of "the ups and downs of the current situation, the emotional rollercoasters of everyday life." Each painting captures a range of tableaux, from ones that appear to suggest domestic life to another that notably portrays a headphone-wearing figure peering through binoculars, perhaps gazing into the longed-for future as suggested by the painted text reading "Nostradam." In a medium on view at the gallery for the first time, carved plaster reliefs transform Csató's two-dimensional depictions into tangible objects. His vision also seeps into the gallery setting with the addition of site-specific installation elements including painted walls embellished with raw canvas shapes. In conversation with the artworks, these components serve as portals through which viewers might imagine themselves within the artist's universe.

At a moment in history when everyone's worlds have become strangely foreign, *Diary of Open Secrets* invites viewers into one that Csató has created through painting. Playful in form, texture, and color, the exhibition offers an alluring opportunity for one to voluntarily escape.

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József Csató lives and works in Budapest, Hungary. He completed his studies in the painting department of the Hungarian University of Fine Arts (MKE) in 2006, under the instruction of Dóra Maurer. He was a three-time recipient of the esteemed Gyula Derkovits Scholarship from 2013 to 2015 and received the prominent Esterhazy Prize in 2013. He was an artist-in-residence at the Krinzinger Gallery (A) - AIR program in 2017. Csató's work has been exhibited in numerous group and solo exhibitions across Europe including Budapest, Vienna, Berlin, Stuttgart, Düsseldorf, Nürnberg and Copenhagen. His works can be found in Hungarian and International private and institutional collections such as the Contemporary Collection of the National Bank of Hungary and the Collection of the Ludwig Museum, Budapest. Galleri Urbane has represented Csató's work in the US since 2020.