

Wallpaper*

The mundane meets the sacred in Anthony Cudahy's richly drawn figures



Left, Anthony Cudahy, *Lily waiting*, 2023, and right, Anthony Cudahy, *Annunciation scene (with Billy Sullivan photograph)*, 2023. Courtesy of the Artist and GRIMM, Amsterdam | London | New York Photo: JSP Art Photography

Cudahy's research informs his aesthetic: 'Research and collecting images, parsing them, reorienting them is a huge part of making paintings for me,' he notes. 'My images almost always begin in other images, in response or dialogue with them. This can find its source all over the place. In this exhibition there are paintings that quote Titian, but also contemporary painters like EJ Hauser. There are family images alongside unknown (to me) figures from archival footage, like hauntings or after images.'

He weaves a personal narrative throughout, in tender scenes and in a celebration of the intimacy only present in the small moments. 'It's a balancing act,' adds Cudahy on marrying the personal with the contextual in his work, 'But I'm trying to attune to a wavelength or feeling, for a lack of a better word. Usually, I know a painting is working if it's both very specific to me and open enough to be generative for others. Paintings that change the context of previous images and are flexible enough to have their contexts changed as well.'

by Hannah Silver
October 18, 2023

Contemporary references are imbued with a rich historicity in the works of Anthony Cudahy, who draws from figurative techniques in his first UK solo exhibition, *Double Spar*, held simultaneously at London's Grimm Gallery and Hales Gallery.

In his paintings, the quotidian becomes wreathed in romantic references; figures, caught in moments of rest or contemplation, are richly drawn, their forms interlinked with motifs from art history in a blurring of the mundane and the sacred.

'In general, I'm interested in toeing the line between imposed categories that are more nuanced than they are binary,' Cudahy says. 'That can look like elevating small moments. Painting or image making can be a sort of record of sensations and experiences, and the act of painting is a very present, minor activity. A lot of significant experience happens in quiet moments. There are entire worlds in subtle saturation or value shifts. Other binaries I feel are blurred are this false dichotomy of humans over here and nature over there, of interior and exterior, and life and death (often represented in my paintings as more of an ouroboros).'