

# CULTURED

YOUNG ARTISTS 2022 ART

## For Anthony Cudahy, Color Is a Character

With a new turn toward small-scale portraiture, the artist is letting his color palette speak volumes.



It may be surprising to realize that [Anthony Cudahy](#) is still a young artist. He has, after all, been showing his work for almost a decade—an accomplishment for anyone, but even more so for a painter whose work is part of the timeless, but not always current, figurative genre. Coming up in a New York drenched in theory and conceptualism, Cudahy, now 33, put his stock in color and the ways in which it can do more than represent. “I now understand color as a force or a personality,” he explains. “It’s sort of a character in the paintings and its function is narrative.”

A latent romanticism that whispered through the surfaces of [Cudahy’s early canvases](#) has risen to a crescendo in the past few years. In lockdown during the pandemic, the Brooklyn-based artist started making small-scale drawings, a departure from the larger works that made his name. The intimate portraits require a different sort of consideration and mark-making. “I sometimes have to layer six different colors to get the one I want,” he says of the labor-intensive process. The effort opened up new depths to his practice, and when he returned to his studio and canvases, he realized he had developed a new chromatic language. “The drawings changed the way I view color. The paintings got more complex and the color became a lot more relational in the sense that different chromas were more in dialogue with each other,” he says.

Cudahy is one of those artists for whom making is always relational. Painting, for him, is a simultaneous conversation with artists like Caspar David Friedrich and Giorgione, as well as peers like [Jenna Gribbon](#) and [Louis Fratino](#). Yet his interests are equally grounded in the relationships among people and friends—who often become his subjects.

Already represented by galleries Hales and Semiose, Cudahy joined the roster at Grimm earlier this year and has his first show at its Amsterdam site in November. The exhibition title, “A Pearl Caught Between My Teeth,” takes its name from the poem by his friend [Paul Legault](#), who is featured in the works. Next spring, Cudahy has his first solo museum presentation at the Museum of Fine Arts in Dole, France. For this one, he’s been mining the museum’s storage spaces, finding inspiration in the works that lack attributions, building narratives based on the language he speaks best: color.