ALMINE RECH

Jameson Green
"Look back, and smile on perils past"

Nov 23 — Dec 21, 2024 | Paris

Almine Rech Paris is pleased to present "*Look back, and smile on perils past*", Jameson Green's second solo exhibition with the gallery, on view from November 23 to December 21, 2024.

To Jameson Green, all the world's a stage.

Hailing from New York, where he received his MFA from Hunter College, Green has long been fascinated with the relationship between the private self and the self forged through clashes with the body, the community, and the images that reflect these structures back to us. In his solo exhibition at Almine Rech Paris, "*Look back, and smile on perils past*", the personal comes into often violent confrontation with the social and the historical, played out by the enigmatic characters on the face of the canvas.

Green's approach to painting is deeply rooted in the art historical. As he begins his compositions, he draws inspiration from the works of his favorite artists through time. One may find stylistic and compositional parallels in the works of Picasso, Goya, Dana Schutz, Georg Baselitz — his inspirations are too numerous to count. Similar to the practice of sampling in hip-hop, Green repurposes these icons from art history, transforming them by placing them in a new context. The canon echoes throughout his practice, as if to say that his own work is only possible through interactions with the past, re-mixed for the conditions of the present.

Take, for instance, the painting *Moral Currency*. The massive composition shares many similarities with the infamous *Guernica* by Picasso: the scale of the canvas, the interactions between man and animal, the jarring fusion of domestic interiors and the chaos ensuing just outside. Also similar to Picasso's painting, the characters in the scene face outwards, as if they are actors presenting themselves to an audience. The disjunct relationship between figure and ground furthers this feeling of turmoil and confusion, making it unclear exactly where bodies, and the interactions between them, begin and end.

The cartoonish faces of the characters in *Moral Currency* are rendered in varying styles, as if each is an actor wearing a mask. The exact time and place of these characters cannot be located – history is collapsed in on itself, as the contemporary viewer is forced to reckon with 'perils past.' The emphasis is both on these characters as individual players, and the scenes taking place between them. They are defined on their own terms but are also inextricably tied to the composition that they share, transformed by the larger scene taking place.

The collapse of the individual and the social, the personal and the political, is taken even further in Green's paintings of individuals. Though these characters are solo in the composition, the clash between personal and political is rendered by Green's symbolic language. For instance, in *The Unconquerable Soul*, the enigmatic man pictured is a representation of Green's father. This portrait does not show the intimate details of his father's face - instead, it is a rendering of a history of illness, his unzipped jacket revealing IV bags that have replaced his lungs. Despite the intervention of illness (and its pharmaceutical counterpart) on this man's body, he marches on, unwilling to let the clash of illness and the body determine his course of action.

Not all of Green's characters are so personal; in fact, the majority of his figures are composites, representing types rather than specific individuals. However, like the portrait of the artist's father, all of these characters are caught between the personal, and the interventions of the social and political. Their exaggerated, mask-like faces alienate them from the literal, while simultaneously drawing the viewer in to solve the puzzle that they present.

Despite the enigmas in these paintings, Green's masked players offer an opportunity for connection. By delving into the world of each painting, and by working to decode the language held within these worlds, the artist tasks us with considering our condition through that of other people, other histories, other eras. In an increasingly divided society, the practice of investing our own perspectives in each painting, in order to see what may otherwise be unknown to us, provides a rare avenue for better understanding. "*Look back, and smile on perils past*" poses a challenge – a challenge to face our own histories, our own biases, and to smile, knowing that we march onward.

— Audrey Gee