ALMINE RECH

Chloe Wise
Myth Information

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The human eye can detect approximately 0.0035% of the electromagnetic spectrum. The human ear can hear roughly 0.00001% of the sound frequency spectrum. These statistics were pulled directly, without fact checking, from an AI trained on just 0.05% of the indexed internet. As the AI summarized with unprompted poetic flair: “We are essentially looking at reality through a very narrow keyhole.”

Chloe Wise’s paintings are vignettes in a keyhole. Sometimes her bon vivants appear ignorant to what lurks outside—outside their frames, that is—and the burden of their naiveté falls on the viewer, much like it does when we watch characters in a horror movie plan a fun adventure in the woods. But in Wise’s newest body of work, *Myth Information*, it appears her subjects have entered Act Two, beginning to sense the narrowness of their realities, or rather, the proximity to a vast void that narrowness implies.

What lurks beyond the horizon of perception? Beyond the tight confines of language, image, time, and space that hold all that is known and knowable? Maybe UFOs—one of Wise’s long-held fascinations. Maybe monsters, ghosts, spirits, gods, angels, demons, death, sex—little deaths—or, most frightening of all, nothing. Like a good horror movie again, Wise doesn’t depict what her subjects see. Instead, she plays with trope and genre, beauty and brushstroke, bringing a retropop grammar to the divine and sublime—hobbyhorse themes of the Renaissance, the Baroque, and, really, art since the caves. It's Spielberg attempting Caravaggio in the Scooby Doo cinematic universe.

Fitting that Wise’s subjects are now, in this historical moment of collapse and crisis, glancing upward. When the contents of our frameworks begin to fail, ancient reflexes fire, pushing our gaze past its edges, to gods in the sky, logic in the stars, omniscient intelligences residing in that vague and general direction. Looking at Wise’s paintings with this in mind, an alternative to the mystery arises: Maybe what her subjects are beginning to sense is us. Maybe, having already broken the fourth wall, they’re breaking the fifth, only to catch strange, incomprehensible glimpses of a species desperate to break its own.

— Gideon Jacobs, writer