

John McAllister

serene raving radiant

November 13 - December 20, 2015

Opening reception: Friday, November 13, 6-8pm

James Fuentes is pleased to announce John McAllister's exhibition *serene raving radiant*. His sixth solo show at the gallery, the artist displays three panoramic paintings and a byobu (a Japanese folding screen) that stretches across the gallery. His palette dominated by tones of rose, peach and deep violet, McAllister's compositions detail phosphorescent landscapes and luminous interiors. Framed within rigged patterns and diagonals, he dispersedly stamps each work with miniature postcards rendered on the paintings' surface. Just like McAllister's canvases, the postcards float as memorandums of nostalgia, indulgence and decorativeness. Again McAllister folds the history of painting on itself by rediscovering its notions of beauty and atemporality.

McAllister has frequently found inspiration within the works of 19th century French painters of *Les Nabis* such as Pierre Bonnard, Maurice Denis and Paul Sérusier. Closely following their aim to free form and color from long-established, illustrative functions, McAllister's palette has become increasingly more vibrant and electric. Dissecting his precedents' use of unmediated colors and heavy outlines coalesced with bold patterns, during a recent trip to Tokyo the artist investigated further into how much *Les Nabis* appropriated these aesthetics from Japanese prints. Within his most recent paintings, McAllister traces this narrative of beauty back to the exemplar that inspired these French artists. Inside these paintings, the artist immerses the link between the two; showcasing how beauty, in the words of the late author Yukio Mishima, "is a perfect abstraction and creation of life itself".

Lately the artist has been thinking about the subtle force of "decorative-ness" and what it means to be inspired. If one looks at the latin roots for the word inspiration, they get to *spirare*, or to breathe in. Decoration is to the viewer what landscape is to the hiker: it's something to breathe in, to be immersed in and take in through the senses. This eventually gets breathed back out. Therefore combining both together there is this double assault of what is overtly decorative and a kind of landscape that is in collusion with it and wanders in and out of a "window", sometimes landing on the surface, sometimes becoming an immersive field. Often decoration gets maligned as being "merely" decorative. Whereas within McAllister's painting it's something much more powerful and meaningful. Something that is always around us, breathed in by our eyes and senses the way the ocean and the sea air would be taken in by a person laying about and strolling on a beach.

John McAllister (b. 1973, Louisiana, USA) studied at Art Center Collage of Design, LA (2007) and University of Texas, Austin (1999). He lives and works in Florence, Massachusetts. Recent and forthcoming solo shows include Hagiwara Projects, Japan (2015), Carl Freedman, London (2014), Richard Telles (2015), and Almine Rech (2016). Group exhibitions include L'ALMANACH 14 at Le Consortium, Dijon, France (2014) and American Exuberance at The Rubell Family Collection, Miami, Florida (2011). McAllister's work is included in the collections of the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles and The Rubell Family Collection, Miami.

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