

The approach

Anthony Iacono *Night Bonding*

22 February – 24 March 2019

Opening preview: Thursday 21 February, 6-9pm

Details were important. My shoes didn't match my belt so I spray painted them black. They were extra glossy and reflected the red from traffic lights as I walked to the apartment. I felt a pinch under my shirt. The toothpicks from cocktail hour I had put in my shirt pocket pierced through my button down and pressed the skin on my chest. He buzzed me up. As I walked up to the 4th floor I noticed my shoes were flocked in city debris. They were still wet from the spraying. He opened the door and asked me to leave the shoes on. They were still off gassing the enamel and probably lead fumes from the spray paint in his tiny studio apartment. It was too much for him and he asked me to leave.

Anthony Iacono builds his distinctive collages by meticulously assembling hand-painted and cut fragments of paper. Seemingly masquerading as paintings due to their bold palette and slick, flattened surface, these collages merge the figurative with still-life to evoke strange night-time scenes. Bodies appear alongside quotidian objects such as fruit, plants, curtains, hangers, and shrimp cocktails. Iacono reconfigures the raison d'être of these banal and everyday items, replacing their original functions with physical pleasure and perversion.

Iacono's vignettes are influenced by voyeuristic '80s erotic thrillers and Queer horror films. He provides a window for the viewer to look through, just long enough to evoke a narrative. The very act of collage itself mirrors the discontinuous narrative the audience is invited to piece together from the clues left behind by the artist, like some kind of lascivious detective story.

There is a paradox between the mundane and the highly erotic in these collages. Iacono has perfected the opposing forces of titillation and boredom that might occur in one's thought processes at the prospect of a sexual encounter. Comprising a few ostensibly unremarkable props alongside a figure, at first glance the viewer may not notice anything out of the ordinary in his mise-en-scènes. But look again; ambiguity and lust lurk between the lines. Shoes, jeans, button-down shirts, belts and rope – the remnants from the act of disrobing and some light BDSM play – come into view. Outlines and shadows of faceless, nameless, anonymous figures emerge, almost always in a standing position in the midst of some quietly perverse act. Never a participant, but always watching from a distance as a witness to some sort of sexual activity, Iacono makes the audience complicit in his scopophilic surveillance of encounters between queer bodies.

Anthony Iacono was born in 1987 in Nyack, New York. He received his BFA from the School of Visual Arts in New York and received his MFA from Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Virginia. He attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in 2013 and was a resident artist at LMCC Workspace in 2018. He has had solo exhibitions at P.P.O.W. Gallery in 2015 and 2018, and Marinaro Gallery in 2018. His work has been included in group shows at Jack Hanley Gallery, 106 Green, and Rockaway Topless and he's been featured in Artforum, New York Magazine, The Village Voice, and New American Paintings. In 2017 he was a recipient of the Toby Devan Lewis Fellowship Award. Iacono is currently an artist in residence at the Museum of Art and Design in New York, NY. This is Iacono's first solo exhibition in Europe.

Coinciding with Anthony Iacono: *Night Bonding*, The Approach will also be presenting Philip Allen: *Deepdrippings* in the main gallery.

For further information or images please contact Jędrzej Nyka at jedrzej@theapproach.co.uk