



Wanderer
Oil on canvas
65 x 83 in, 2022



Three Witches

Oil on canvas
8 x 10 in, 2022

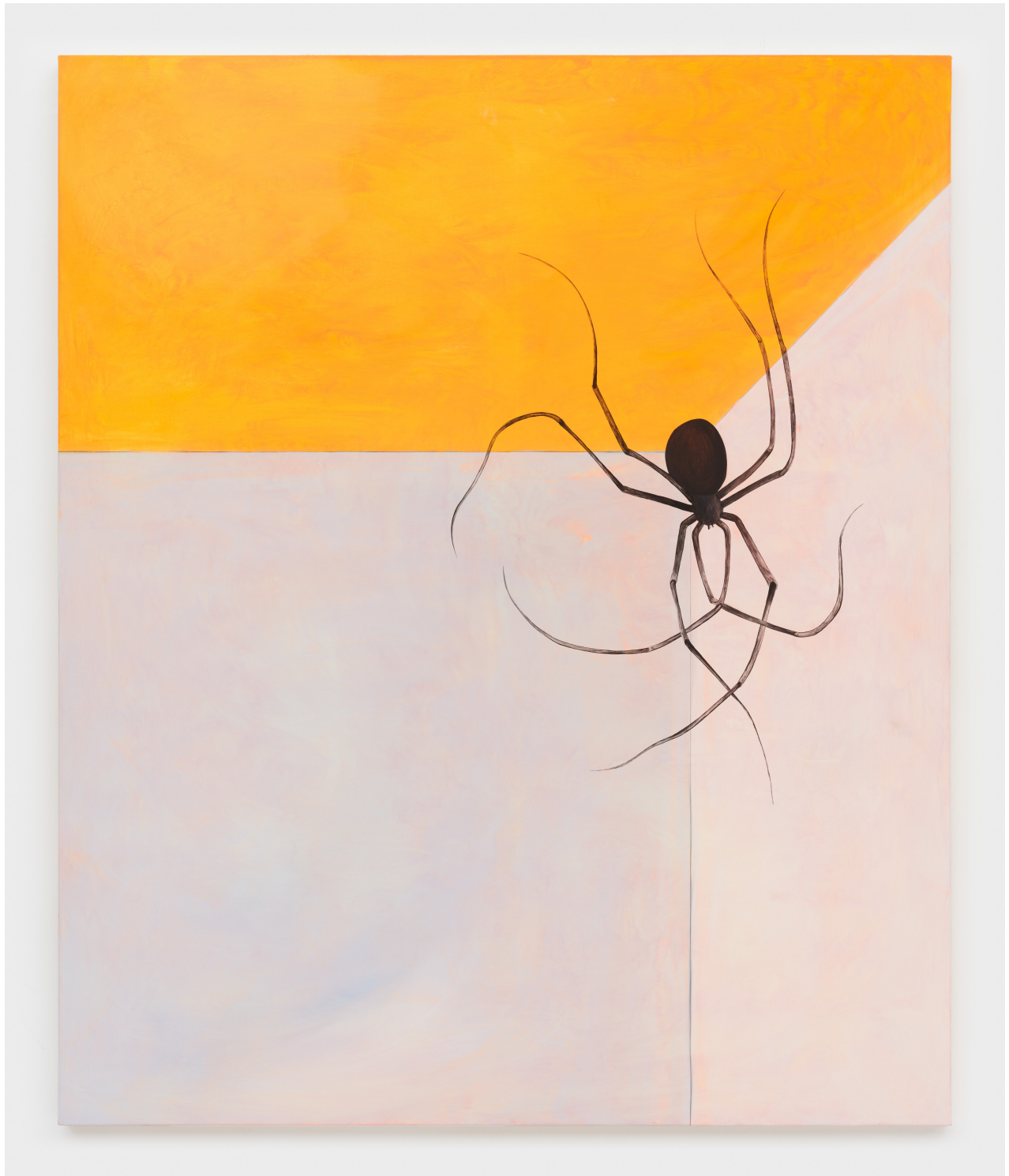


Ghost in the Hallway

Oil on canvas
69 x 45 in, 2022



Daydreamer
Oil on canvas
48 x 60 in, 2022



Spider #1
Oil on canvas
60 x 72 in, 2022



Cool Guy
Oil on canvas
60 x 72 in, 2022



Spider #2
Oil on canvas
60 x 72 in, 2022



Scarecrow

Oil on canvas

65 x 83 in, 2022



Peekaboo
Oil on canvas
36 x 48 in, 2022



Funny Friend
Oil on canvas
36 x 48 in, 2022



Trident
Oil on canvas
12 x 24 in, 2022



Sun Screen
Oil on canvas
41 x 69 in, 2022



Gill
Oil on canvas
8 x 10 in, 2022



Gazer

Oil on canvas
35 x 69 in, 2022

Facing a wall, closing one's eyes, we count down, picturing in our heads where everyone might hide. Arrive to zero, turn around, start the hunt: searching the house, the seeker's fooled into the inevitable doom.

SMART OBJECTS is pleased to present *Near Dark*, an exhibition of new paintings by Adam Alessi. For his second solo presentation with the gallery, Alessi extends an invitation to participate in his own game of hide-and-seek where, caught in the thick of it all, dream states and hallucinations call with thirst for care. Here, we see the artist become the portal to materialize visions into painting. The characters in *Near Dark* penetrate the gallery's disorienting space as fragrances that enliven entire rooms, like an intoxicating touch of a stranger's soft garment — an unpredicted act of soft violence. Once the figures have crossed the thresholds of our minds we find ourselves faced in contact with a memento mori; in order to bring us into a greater harmony with the nature of reality, we are also reminded of the fragility of life—the transitory nature of things.

Tipping towards a familiar nostalgia and kind of history, outwardly, the situations around us are tricky to place. Reading like aliens in non-places, oddly familiar outsiders in their very essence, we've felt these subjects before, not through lived experiences, but through film. Through Alessi's work we're simultaneously exposed to the homely and the unknown, faced with alienation not only as a feeling, but a state of mind. There is a force emerging in every painting: a reaching towards the nonexistent, which, ultimately, is what nostalgia underscores in its persistent oversaturation.

In search of adventure, the itinerant image is squeezed, stretched, strained and smushed. Mechanisms of montage become Alessi's brilliant device for destabilizing viewers' perspectives and breaking down any semblance of linear narrative, producing a barrage of intensified sensations. He achieves a formula that offers degrees of reassurance and panic in turn, another kind of fiction. As we participate in each scene's desires and forces, the characters' gaze becomes the vanishing point. We're bearing witness to an event that's beyond comprehension; observing a body gazing back, leaving us with the detritus of an event, the aftermath. Each painting records a kind of eventless event, a continuous state of being and becoming, indexing a portal into a wasteland of sorts. Through this material manifestation, we are warned that the eyes are the closest external organ to the brain, hence they are not only a window to the soul, but a doorway. In the end, when playing hide-and-seek, the one who searches usually loses.

– Mercedes Gómez & Julia Thompson

Adam Alessi (b. 1994) is a self-taught artist currently living and working in Los Angeles, California. Solo and group exhibitions of his work have been held at CLEARING, New York; SMART OBJECTS, Los Angeles; Public Gallery, London; NADA House with Zoe Fisher Projects, New York; Felix Art Fair with M+B, Los Angeles; Nino Mier, Los Angeles. He co-ran INSECT Gallery from 2019 to 2020. This year he will have a solo exhibition at CLEARING, Los Angeles.

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