

Thew Smoak  
Silver Toast  
June 11-August 1  
@ Louis Reed

How does one avoid being jaded? I think making money hand over fist helps. But, by the time the Beatles made *Let it Be*, they had to go to the roof of Apple Records and pull a stunt to try and feel something (it failed). In art and life, thrills and cash will only take you so far.

*Silver Toast* chisels through art-world-weary eyes refreshing me. The movements in the show share notes with the past, but build upon them. Like Frank Ocean's *Blonde* building on *Revolver*.

Thew's flaneur paintings are so arresting, confident, and large that they belie the fact that the artist avoided Painting (oil on canvas) until two years ago. When I first saw them, their form and slightly metallic surface immediately brought to mind Umberto Boccioni's *Unique Forms of Continuity in Space*. But Smoak does not share the Italian futurist urge to accelerate. Au contraire, his subject and he seems to find space in the compressed world of painting; lingering, walking, staring. I can feel the freedom of Smoak's large light filled Connecticut studio in his work. Just as I feel the crush of the city through the windows behind me.

Smoak's seriousness about surface but joie de vivre lets him shed canvas for toast, and silver leaf for paint, when the moment suits him. In the titular work of the show, *Floppy Collage*, and the luster series he moves into abstraction, sexuality, and material fetish. These shifts herald an artist who is not just expanding his painting practice, but one who's time to strut, play, and have fun have yielded collage and sculpture worth their salt. I think of Bowie acting on screen. Thrilling.

-Lou