

Bradley Ertaskiran

Surrender

Preston Pavlis

November 9 to December 22, 2023

Bradley Ertaskiran is pleased to present *Surrender*, a solo exhibition by Preston Pavlis featuring a monumental presentation of two-sided artworks comprised of tender figurative oil paintings on one side and intricate hand-crafted quilts on the other.

Pavlis conveys his painted subjects through complex gazes rendered in loose, expressive brushstrokes and vibrant backdrops. One imposing figure set against a luminous turquoise background clenches in pain or exaltation, his body turned away from us. In another, a young girl dressed in a lavish purple dress offers a defiant, piercing stare. One painting shows a reclining couple relishing in the serene presence of each other's company, their shoulders turned inwards as if our presence would interrupt the sweet moment. Pavlis' array of figures, in their varying contemplative states, look outwards and inwards, all beyond our eyeline, as though their attention were turned towards another painting. Among the suspended tableaux, some figures acknowledge the viewer, while others need not return our gaze; they have each other.

Pavlis' gestural style carries onto the raw embroidered quilt supporting each artwork. Fringed, hand-sewn stitches poke through the painting's surface, offering an illustrative and collaged quality to the scenes. On the rear, patches of manipulated fabrics—imprinted floral motifs on crushed velvet, for example—replicate the paintings' characteristic blotted brushstrokes. Pavlis' painting-textile hybrids are guided by intuition; the colours and textures of the fabric inspire the making of one side, while poetic instinct guides the other. Both sides can be seen at once, fabric and paint spilling over from one scene to the next.

Contemporary artists have long revitalized traditional craft practices and Pavlis draws on a legacy of quilting — rooted in making and bonding, in skin-to-skin contact. Pieces of found leather, velvet, denim, and quotidian fabrics are laboriously taken apart, transformed, and then pieced back together into something new. Pavlis' choice of materials is purposeful and poignant; these clothes were once used and worn, a part of someone's daily life, maybe loved but then discarded, swathing one body and now remade by another. This care is a testament to the artist's ongoing commitment to translating human connection—desire, beauty, sorrow, longing—into moving, tangible means.

Preston Pavlis (b. 1999, Loma Linda, California) currently lives in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Pavlis holds a BFA from the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design. He has presented his work in solo and group exhibitions at MOCA (Toronto), the Robert McLaughlin Gallery (Oshawa), Stridge Gallery (Calgary), Bradley Ertaskiran (Montreal), Half Gallery (New York), Guts Gallery (London), the Winnipeg Art Gallery (Winnipeg), and Spurs Gallery (Beijing), among others. His work is part of the permanent collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario (Toronto), the X Museum (Beijing), and is held in private collections throughout North America, Europe, and Asia.

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