

Exhibition Checklist

In office entryway:

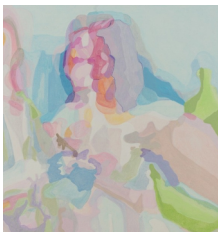
1



The Candidate, 2024
Acrylic on canvas
20 x 19 inches
50.8 x 48.3 cm

In Gallery II, clockwise L-R

2



Reconsolidation, 2024
Acrylic on canvas
23 x 22 inches
58.4 x 55.9 cm

3



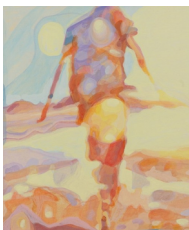
Grandma is Mountains, 2024
Acrylic on canvas
24 x 26 inches
61 x 66 cm

4



Runner, 2024
Acrylic on canvas
21 x 18 inches
53.3 x 45.7 cm

5



Doublet, 2024
Acrylic on canvas
18 x 15 inches
45.7 x 38.1 cm

6



Crash, 2024
Acrylic on canvas
30 x 34 inches
76.2 x 86.4 cm

7



Rest, 2024
Acrylic on canvas
23 x 26 inches
58.4 x 66 cm

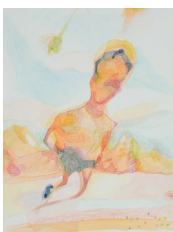
Untitled Studies, in portfolio in office:

8



Untitled study, 2024
Watercolor and colored pencil on paper
12 x 9 inches
30.5 x 22.9 cm

9



Untitled study, 2024
Watercolor and colored pencil on paper
12 x 9 inches
30.5 x 22.9 cm

10



Untitled study, 2024
Watercolor and colored pencil on paper
12 x 9 inches
30.5 x 22.9 cm

11



Untitled study, 2024
Watercolor and colored pencil on paper
9 x 12 inches
22.9 x 30.5 cm

12



Untitled study, 2024
Watercolor and colored pencil on paper
12 x 9 inches
30.5 x 22.9 cm

13



Untitled study, 2024
Watercolor and colored pencil on paper
12 x 9 inches
30.5 x 22.9 cm

14



Untitled study, 2024
Watercolor and colored pencil on paper
9 x 12 inches
22.9 x 30.5 cm

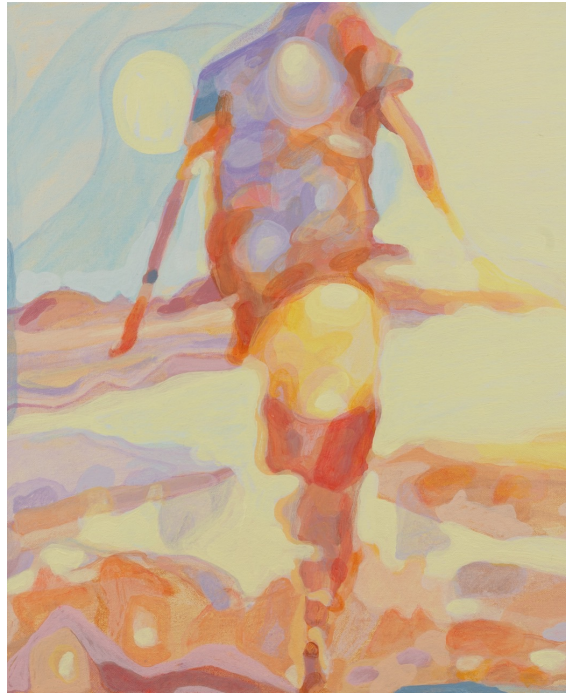
15



Untitled study, 2024
Watercolor and colored pencil on paper
9 x 12 inches
22.9 x 30.5 cm

Andreas Fischer: Sky Hole

March 9 – April 20, 2024



In Gallery II, Goldfinch is excited to announce *Sky Hole*, our second solo exhibition with Chicago-based painter Andreas Fischer. The opening reception will be held on Saturday, March 9th from 2-5pm. On Friday, April 12th, from 5-7pm, Goldfinch will host an evening “Meet and Greet” with exhibiting artists Andreas Fischer and Leslie Baum in conjunction with Expo Art Week’s “Art After Hours;” and on Saturday, April 13th at 2pm, Justin Witte, Cleve Carney Museum of Art at College of DuPage will moderate a conversation on painting with Andreas Fischer and Leslie Baum.

Sky Hole features new paintings that signal a shift in Andreas Fischer’s thinking about the nature of representation. In earlier bodies of work, including those in his 2021 solo show, *And apologies for bringing this up...*, Fischer focused on the potential of distortion to alter the descriptive character of representations. His new work is more invested in what can be felt through his paintings than in what can be read in them.

Fischer’s sense that a change in tactics was needed in his work has led him to use photography to engage subjects in ways he hadn’t explored before. Importantly, he does not deploy the camera in service of factual documentation but uses it as “a device for emptying...and opening possibilities.” He uses his watercolor studies as beginning steps in “re-assembling” images that spring from his photographs. The studies form the basis of Fischer’s paintings, which he sees as ways to further processes of reconstruction. These

generative steps have enabled the artist to discover new ways of building images that function differently from “descriptive representations.”

“I want the material facts of my paintings to be in tension with whatever representational characteristics there are. It is easy for description to take over in a drawing or painting—and I think that might tend to be true in life too. In my work, I want the material and imaginary to bounce back and forth so the experience is not a collection of mostly well-behaved marks that, no matter how ‘expressive,’ ultimately deliver clear content. Instead, I hope for a range of perceptual and psychological features that are different in kind and vibrate with each other. I like what that might suggest.”

As Fischer sees it, “vibrations” of this kind are capable of creating important connections that battles over representational content might not allow us to sense.

Artist’s Bio:

Andreas Fischer has a BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, an MFA in Studio Art and an MA in Art History from The University of Illinois at Chicago, and attended the Universität der Künste, Berlin. He has participated in solo and group exhibitions at Goldfinch, Chicago; Slow, Chicago; Boundary, Chicago; Andrew Rafacz Gallery, Chicago; Nathalie Karg Gallery, NYC; Untitled, Miami; Devening Projects, Chicago; Hudson Franklin Gallery, New York; Hungryman Gallery, San Francisco; The Hyde Park Art Center, Chicago; Important Projects, Oakland; Kavi Gupta Gallery, Chicago; Lamontagne Gallery, Boston; The Mattress Factory, Pittsburgh; The Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago and Regina Rex, Brooklyn.

A Conversation with Andreas Fischer, conducted by Elizabeth Lalley

EL: I wanted to start off by going back a little, if that's alright. In conjunction with your first exhibition at Goldfinch ("And apologies for bringing this up"), in 2021, you spoke with gallery owner/director Claudine Isé about ideas of—and problems with—representation and with the ways images create and (re)enforce structures of power. You spoke about your interest in distortion, as a way of pushing back at the idea that things are "supposed to be a certain way." The distortion in your paintings, too, seems to poke at and stretch images in ways that challenge how images are made and how they might function. Can you say a little about your thoughts about representation, and use of distortion?

AF: When I read TJ Clark's "The Painting of Modern Life," in graduate school, I was immediately attached to his claims that we structure society through representations, and that representations are battlefields. Those arguments seemed to explain my experiences growing up. I think I grew up with a strong sense that the goal was to battle to position representations in better and better ways, and for me distortion was attractive all along for its potential to help with all of the re-configuring that was necessary.

I think it was somehow apparent growing up that lots of the exciting people were distorting the kind of life that people who were maybe more self-interested were pushing toward. I think what is exciting about distortion relative to this kind of perception is that it is not a way of moving beyond a subject. It is an acknowledgement and preservation of a subject to some degree because the thing being distorted needs to be the starting point somehow. Once it is asserted though, it can be messed with in all sorts of ways. I think adjusting something has a kind of potential that pure dismissal often does not and it takes away the pressure to re-invent the wheel every time an issue pops up. The whole point of distortion is to somehow re-calibrate the original subject and there is an implication that the original form can be morphed into something that works better. So, I have long thought of distortion as a way of re-configuring a subject.

These were the terms of how I was thinking about the paintings I was making during that show. I liked the idea that painting could be a site where representations could be re-configured, and I was excited about the possibility that artists could help shape the world by offering reconfigurations of everyday images that might be building block for how we structure ourselves.

EL: In terms of distortion, your paintings have often depicted amorphous figures and forms (elongated heads, bodies stretched like balloons or clouds), existing in painted spaces that feel like a sort of limbo. Not really "here", but not "there" either...the setting dissolving or reassembling itself. This elastic imagery is taken even further in your new paintings in "Sky Hole." Representation has dissolved even further, and the imagery has been stretched often beyond immediate recognition. How has your interest in representational painting shifted with these new paintings? What were some of the moves

that developed for you, drawing this work away from the more concrete imagery of earlier paintings and nearer to this almost hypnotic, hallucinatory effect?

AF: I think the big shift has been a loss of faith in the way of understanding of representations I was just describing. After 2016, the political operation I imagined I was engaged in as an artist started to feel bankrupt. The fights over Covid vaccinations and the tactical possibilities those fights seem to have opened for the right have really pushed things over an edge. What kind of representation has science become? I know the whole ‘doubt science’ thing relative to the right and climate change has been around for a while, but we seem to be in the middle of an enormous perversion of that approach here. There does not seem to be much potential for stability in science anymore, and that kind of shift seems to be operating with all sorts of representations.

It is hard to believe in representations the same way. Representations that seemed to promise to eventually come around – that despite the battles, or because of them, to land in a good place, I think, are just proving to be too shifty. Fighting for their status seems too enabling, suddenly. Maybe battles over how representations should be read, what they “stand for” are missing the point. Maybe, stepping outside of battles over where the content of representations should take us would work better. Since “the truth” can’t convince anyone anymore, anyway, maybe we need to think about the energy that travels to and from representations instead.

So for me, this shift has not been a matter of degree, but a much more fundamental change. In the studio I think this has been playing out as an urge to empty representations of much of their descriptive information, which to me is totally different than simple distortion. After some amount of ‘emptying’ I have been trying replace what is gone by putting something different in its place. I love your use of “hallucinatory” and “hypnotic” because I think those kinds of experiences have much more promise these days than recognition and interpretation. I am into the idea that the energy we get from representations matters more than their content, so I want to paint toward that and learn more about it.

EL: Although it isn’t directly apparent in the work itself, your paintings are loosely engaging in a game of telephone, morphing and mutating away from their initial source imagery and materials, through various translations across media—ultimately worked through different iterations of the same painting within a single canvas. Through this degree of removal, context is destabilized and the language of the paintings operates almost like an echo or an extended sound wave. How do you think about the sources for this work, and, more specifically, about the way “source” has been decontextualized within the paintings themselves?

AF: The morphing and mutating you are mentioning comes from a chain of steps. Lately, I have been getting interested in photography as a starting point for how to interact with subject matter. Instead of using it to capture and document, though, I am interested in using it to empty some of the descriptive information. I have been going out

and shooting—sometimes shooting images from shows and movies at home, also—but I have been playing with the camera as a device for emptying some of what cameras have always been so good at capturing, and opening possibilities for something else. After I shoot the photos, I have been making studies on paper in color. Then, I have been making paintings. The paintings use only the drawings as source material. I see the drawing and painting steps as ways to re-build images. I want the rebuilt images to be more about energy and less about information. I would like them to be more felt and less read. Right now, I am tinkering around with different degrees of this or maybe a better way to put this is: the paintings are tinkering with me.

EL: While your paintings have often captured a sort of dreamlike quality, particularly in terms of the spaces within them—conjuring settings that feel impossible to pin down or locate, in an almost Lynchian way—the new paintings in this exhibition feel even more interior, like landscapes of the mind rather than external or material locales. What do the spaces in these paintings mean for you exactly? Where do they feel “located” to you?

AF: I like that you mention Lynch. I was mystified by him years ago and that was definitely because of the sensations his work creates. I appreciate the psychological characteristics in his work, but as means to get to a place of sensation—to connect intuitively, rather than as ways of saying something about our minds. I think the “impossible to pin down” settings you mention are symptomatic of this. So maybe a more direct answer is that I want the location of the work to be psychological and mental, but in a way that hopefully creates vibrations instead of delivering some kind of specific content. I hope the settings of each piece set up a function, rather than just delivering a visual context.

I hope another factor in all of this is the materiality of the work. This work is constructed mostly of translucent blobs that sit next to each other and on top of each other. I imagine them working together sometimes, talking disruptively next to each other sometimes or arguing with each other sometimes. In general, I want the material facts of my paintings to be in tension with whatever representational characteristics there are. It is easy for description to take over in a drawing or painting—and I think that might tend to be true in actual life too. In my work I want the material and imaginary to bounce back and forth so the experience is not collection of mostly well-behaved marks that, no matter how “expressive” ultimately deliver clear content. Instead, I hope for a range of perceptual and psychological features that are different in kind and vibrate with each other. I like what that might suggest.

EL: Related to this, you’ve used the word “vibe” to describe the way you think about these new paintings. Can you talk a little about that?

AF: I was trying to talk about all of these possibilities during a critique once and someone in the group just reduced it all to a question of whether the work “vibes.” It seemed like the person who did that was in the habit of evaluating almost everything in terms of whether it vibes or not. That is such a good way to start to talk about the energy between

things. I think saying that something vibes, is a way of acknowledging that it brings some kind of relationality alive between itself and viewers. I love that as a mode of engagement.

EL: Something that I've always loved about your work is the way that, while existing so often in these ambiguous states, open to interpretation and projection, I've never felt 'tricked' as a viewer, in the sense that there's something I'm missing or not piecing together. Of course, there will always be things I overlook, just as I might see something the person next to me might miss. The associations and combinations are many. In other words, the openness of the paintings feels earnest to me, rather than cryptic and aloof, or cagey. They have always been very "slow" paintings in this way, in the sense that you can't comprehend them quickly and piece together an "understanding" and then move on, which is what so much of our information/image-based world seems to encourage: quick consumption. I'm curious how this feels to you, as the painter. Can you talk a little about this ambiguity, this openness, and how it feels to enact these states of unfolding or opening, rather than resolution?

AF: Thank you for those comments. What you are describing is totally in line with what I want from the work.

The painter Merlin James once said that he prefers paintings to be like a house instead of a package. When a package is delivered, you open it and receive its contents. When you walk into a house you can move around, look at things on the walls, sit on furniture, etc. You can keep moving around in the space and have different experiences and different relationships to the space. You can go away and return. I love this model and have tried to make my work like the house for a long time. One nice thing about the house is, unlike the box where the whole point is to get things out of it, there is no implication that there are things to miss. I don't think we think about houses that way. Certain people might want to hang out in the basement on the couch watching TV and others might want to be in the kitchen cooking. And your relationship to it can change over time. We interface with it for the kinds of experiences that are important to us within what the structure provides. I like that a viewer might feel agency in this analogy. I do not want a viewer to feel like that are things they might miss, or that missing things might somehow shut the experience down. I want viewers to feel like they can participate.

EL: Following up on my previous question, you've described the work in this exhibition as existing on a "spectrum of legibility." Legible forms and imagery come in and out of focus in your paintings. I find myself locating a shape or a face or body that seems to solidify slightly, only to dissolve again when my eyes move to another area of the painting. There are moves you make, in paint, that subtly define or articulate the edges of a form (like the shape of hair, or a face in profile)...but never define them too acutely, to the point where the form is fully readable. There is always the potential that the legibility can be reset or erased, the more we look at the painting, or if we return to the painting after looking elsewhere.

AF: I like the way you are describing your experience very much.

I used to have a bathroom with hard wood floors and right outside of my shower was a shape made of woodgrains that would look like an old man on some days. (I started to think of that guy as very wise older person who was there for support, but that's another conversation.) The thing I liked about that collection of marks is that they were never clearly and permanently a person. The marks were just suggestive enough for the man to appear some days, but he was not an image that could not be unseen. He could easily go back to being a collection of scratchy wood grain marks again. Some days I could not even find him.

I like the continuousness of that kind of back and forth and what happens in relation to it over time – how, because of the way its facture is in tension with any legibility, it changes the terms of its relationships based on how much focus a person has on a given day, how distracted they might be, how late they are to work, etc. I suppose that there are varying degrees of legibility among the paintings, and that is probably just there because these paintings are the very beginning of all the stuff we are talking about. Maybe that will figure itself out – or find a way to stay important over time. What I want most, though, is a varied experience within individual paintings.

EL: I'm wondering if you could talk a little bit about how you make decisions about how much to define a form versus how oblique it remains? Because of the fact that you, as the painter, are continually confronted with the work and can recognize certain images or forms more directly, what do you do to continually refresh your eyes? How are these degrees of legibility important to you and how to you ensure that an "il-legibility" of the work is maintained for the viewer?

AF: That is a great question. I have been interested in that question for years. Some of my favorite painters are good at activating a flickering between material and suggestion. I have had the romantic idea that artists interested in this sort of question just develop an instinct for where to land and get their body to perform it in paint. I guess some people just have this ability, but right now I am excited about using the camera to do much of this work and to do lots of this almost by chance – whatever comes out, particularly in the early steps, just comes out. After that, the work becomes responsive. I think it is interesting to talk back to something.

I have been trying to set the camera up as a tool to mess up the kind of 'seeing' that we used to rely on it for. Once the camera begins the process, the image opens up and the range of ways to interact with it widen. Maybe my role in painting and drawing at this point is to compensate for what has been lost or jettisoned, but hopefully not in the pathetic or tragic way we often use to think about compensation – where compensation

never really fills the gap or replaces what is supposed to replace, and that becomes a defining tragic psychological characteristic. I have faith that painting can compensate in a way that can make the original better or stronger, maybe because this kind of compensation is not trying to re-work something for its original function.

EL: As I mentioned earlier, your paintings have often depicted heads, and other forms, as these blobby, elastic, balloon-like spheres (whether deflating or expanding). As you noted, this tactic is even more present in your new paintings. They are filled with these floating orbs, like sunspots or glares, which you combine in certain moments to suggest a density of form, like a body or face. But because of their amorphous quality, these “blobs” create such an acute tension in the paintings, because they suggest a kind of immateriality (like bubbles popping and dissolving). The imagery is always in a state of barely holding together. Can you talk about your continued use of these forms (these blobs or orbs) and how they function for you?

AF: That is an exciting characterization to me. Whatever immateriality is here is probably coming from translucency. I am also interested in translucent paint mixes to the extent that even areas in these paintings that seem opaque are constructed from multiple translucent layers of the same or similar mixes. At first, I was interested in this as a way for things to seem to be “there but not there,” but now I am also interested in pieces of paint both marking a space, creating a plane or form on one hand, and, on the other hand, not quite being there—or at least being wimpy enough that it takes many many layers to get areas to seem a little more insistent. I think this is all part of the relationality or tension between material and description.

EL: I had an idea of what a “sky hole” was, but I laughed when I Googled it and had my hunch confirmed. The term refers to holes in cirrocumulus or altocumulus clouds that appear when water in the clouds has been cooled suddenly and evaporates, often triggered by a passing aircraft. They’re also called “fallstreak holes”...a more ‘serious’ name amid other terms like “skypunch” or “punch hole cloud.” What’s funny to me here is their appearance, which is vaguely extraterrestrial or slightly mystical, matched with the crude and awkward terminology associated with it. It’s like someone witnessing a miracle and then trying to describe it like, “Dude, it was crazy” or “It was so awesome.” The sublime meeting the absolutely ordinary.

In relation to your paintings, your title (Sky Hole) seems to operate a little like this. Although there is this dreamlike, deeply interior element to the paintings—an almost metaphysical quality or suggestion—it all remains grounded, too. There is beauty and poetry here, but also awkwardness, and maybe some humor in the failure to fully communicate? How did you arrive at this title? How do you think about it functioning alongside the work?

AF: I like the feel of it. I think it has a similar feel to what the paintings might generate if they work well. It sort of goes in two directions, as you describe. It rhymes with pie hole and it is just 2 short percussive syllables, which I think can help it have that crudeness

you are mentioning. It reminds me of the conversations about the hole in the ozone layer, which I think has an uncanny relationship with today’s climate change conversations, maybe with some weird nostalgia mixed in. It could also imply something serene and gentle too though: a meditative device, maybe even metaphysical – like a James Turrell.

Sky hole is also just a basic painting term for when a patch of sky peeks through tree foliage, but to me the term seems way too big to just be a basic observational thing. It feels like its implications go way beyond that.

Also, yes to all of the qualities you mention in the paintings! I strive for a range of possibilities like what you are describing. I love your line about humor in the failure to communicate. My basic interest is sincere, but I love the idea that the paintings could be a little smart-ass or even kind of pathetic too.

EL: What have you been reading/watching/looking at/listening to lately?

AF: I recently read *White Noise*. I can't stop thinking about that blob...doesn't seem like anxiety and consumerism have changed much since the 80's, and I am not sure that our world is any less flattened, either.

I seem to need to have something playing on a screen in my studio lately. I have been binge-watching *Shameless* while painting most of the work for this show. Not sure what that does.

I have also started reading Mikhail Bakhtin's *Rabelais and His World*. I read parts of it in grad school and come back to the doubling and inversions in it often. The collision of seriousness and absurdism is just super interesting. I have always had an interest in the grotesque too so I'm looking forward to getting more into it.