

An abstract painting featuring a vibrant palette of colors including purple, teal, orange, light green, red, and yellow. The composition is dominated by large, bold brushstrokes and geometric shapes. A prominent teal shape is on the left, a large orange shape is at the top, and a large red shape is on the right. The bottom section shows a yellow and red area with dark, expressive brushwork.

# TUREEN

April 5- May 18, 2024

*Made Up Men*  
*Kyle Thurman & Danny McDonald*



# *Made Up Men*

In both fine art and mass media, consumers fetishize the origin story. The Freudian journey from childhood to villainhood, or dreamer to maker, is a prerequisite told in the hopes of satisfying an audience eager for meaning in a world of dead ends. The works in the exhibition by Kyle Thurman and Danny McDonald do not withhold their origins. The paintings and sculptures on display present imagery well-worn in the public sphere—body armor, action figures, Halloween masks, these are the building blocks of a cultural penchant for nurturing masculinity. But the succor they offer in their making is less flagellating, less prescriptive of a remedy to the worst of maleness than it is an acknowledgment of the instinct to play pretend.

But this question of social ill and its origins is elegantly sidestepped by Thurman and McDonald. There is an undeniable use value in the history of their source material and the perpetration of violence it no doubt conjures, but the ability of pure aesthetics to transcend the political is these artists' lasting achievement. What do we do with the detritus of toxic masculinity heaped on our world by a ravenous consumptive engine? That dark legacy proves ripe fodder for McDonald's readymade amalgams. Gracefully balanced on a Warholian high wire, they float above their grotesque source material as proof of art's ability to evade the pigeonholing of cultural capital. Their glee is infectious and in their viewing McDonald's humor is felt as strongly as is his critique. His play becomes our play and the virility of their origin stories is neutered. This boyhood is "different."

Thurman's paintings similarly evade the ontology of their plasticized source material. These images culled from mass media, online forums and three dimensional models of body armor are lavishly rendered in such saturated color that they become nearly abstracted, a queering of hero cosplay that inverts its macho trappings. The viewer may recognize the outline of a form from an action movie or associate the subject of a painting with a darker, more militaristic facet of contemporary life. Yet the lasting impression is one of rapturous joy, as much in the viewing as in the making. Thurman's work in the exhibition, as does much of his previous work, isolates tropes of masculine aesthetics for careful examination. But these latest paintings eschew introspection for a more unbridled expression of form and color. This armor melts into rainbow bliss.

The artists' material trove in which the viewer finds themselves has dark origins; these were black tickets taken by McDonald and Thurman to a subconscious burdened by a quotidian kind of consumptive violence—the everyday atrocities on which cultures are built. What can art make of such conditions? Dispassionate engagement with these core terms of masculinity prove fruitful not for their absolution but rather their proposition for an alternative, radical mode of self-expression. The works in the exhibition propose neither an escapist fantasy nor a brutal summary but rather a sublimation of such material into their own invitation to play, one that turns on the redemptive force of aesthetic beauty.







Kyle Thurman, *Dream Police (your lungs)*, 2024, Acrylic dispersion, gouache, oil, and watercolor on panel in artist's frame, 49 $\frac{7}{8}$  x 73 $\frac{7}{8}$  x 2 $\frac{7}{8}$  in. (framed), 126.70 x 187.66 x 7.32 cm (framed), KT0002





















Kyle Thurman, *Dream Police (my guts)*, 2024, Acrylic dispersion, gouache, oil, and watercolor on panel in artist's frame, 49 $\frac{7}{8}$  x 73 $\frac{3}{8}$  x 2 $\frac{7}{8}$  in. (framed), 126.70 x 187.66 x 7.32 cm (framed), KT0001















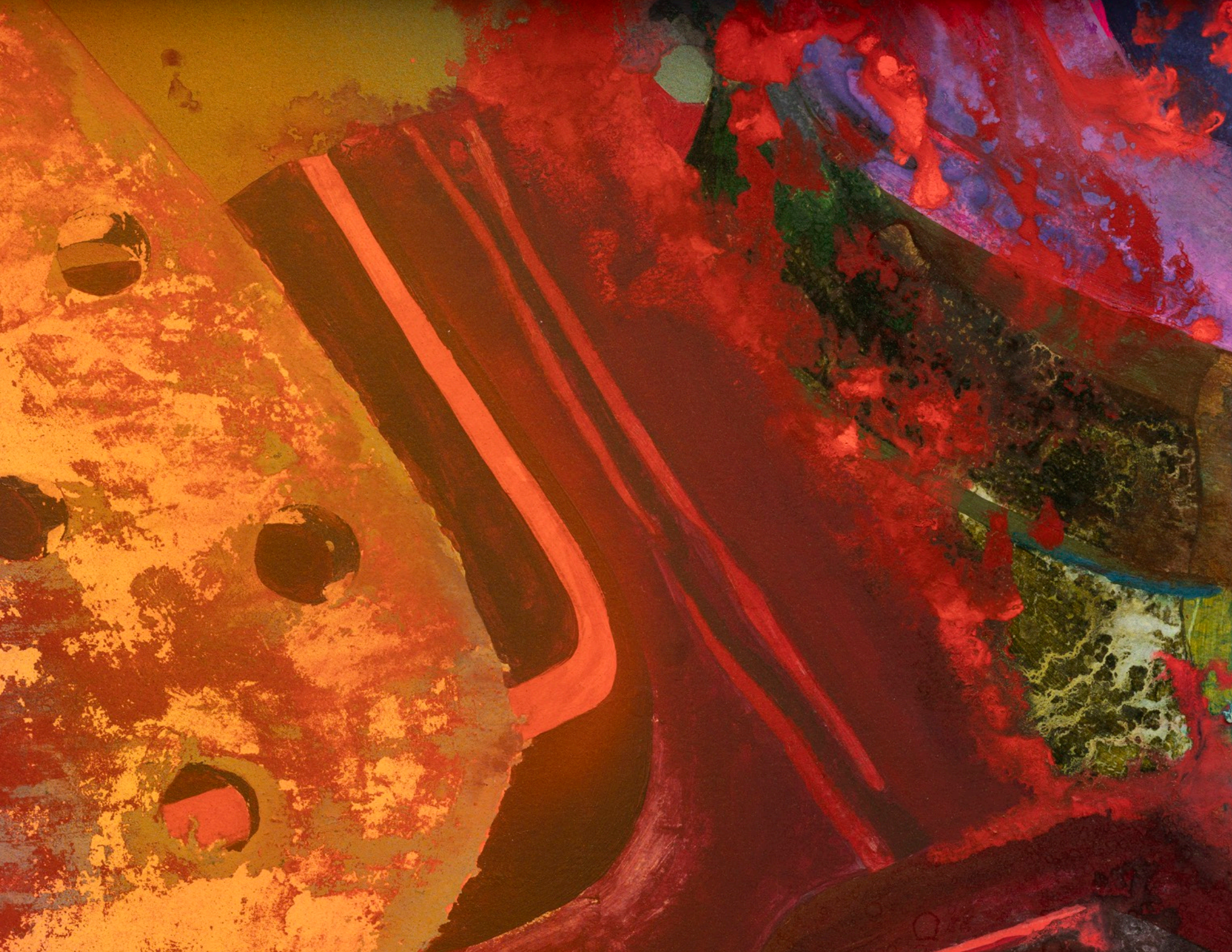


Kyle Thurman (b. 1986), *Dream Police (our arms)*, 2024, Acrylic dispersion, gouache, oil, and watercolor on panel in artist's frame, 49 $\frac{7}{8}$  x 73 $\frac{7}{8}$  x 2 $\frac{7}{8}$  in. (framed), 126.70 x 187.66 x 7.32 cm (framed), KTH0002

















Danny McDonald, Pearl & Swine , 2024, Mixed media, 13¼ x 6½ x 7 in., 33.66 x 16.51 x 17.78 cm, DM0002





Danny McDonald, The Late V.I.P., 2022, Mixed Media, 16 $\frac{1}{8}$  x 7 $\frac{7}{8}$  x 10 $\frac{1}{8}$  in., 41 x 19.99 x 27 cm, DM0003









Danny McDonald, The Dark Secret, 2022, Mixed Media, 12¼ x 13 x 7⅞ in., 30.99 x 32.99 x 18.01 cm, DM0001









Danny McDonald, Post-Plague Cruise Caper, 2022, Mixed media, 16½ x 7⅞ x 10⅝ in., 42.01 x 19.99 x 27 cm, DM0004













Danny McDonald, Father, Son & Friendly Ghost, 2022, Mixed media, 18 $\frac{3}{8}$  x 10 $\frac{1}{4}$  x 9 $\frac{1}{2}$  in., 46 x 26.01 x 24 cm, DM0005,







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