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251 CONGRESS ST. PORTLAND, ME 04101

STRAUSS BOURQUE-LAFRANCE

ALIBIS

Dunes is pleased to present *ALIBIS*, new paintings by the Los Angeles and New York based artist Strauss Bourque-LaFrance. Raised in Poland Spring, Maine, this is the artist's first show in his home state.

Bourque-LaFrance's paintings convey the occurrence of various gestures over time. Improvisational and searching, the artist transmits a desire to try several things at once, fusing drawing, painting and collage. Brushy underpainting creates structure for chromatic motifs; shapes are traced atop one another and vary in opacity and depth. Crisply-painted areas of Flashe, a vibrant acrylic paint used for theater sets, provide solidity and structure, only to be broken up by sketchy compositions that veer into representation. In this way Bourque-LaFrance embraces an inbetweenness, makes room for painting to be both read and felt, to be cryptic, camouflaged as well as plainly stated.

Landscape is suggested in the way Bourque-LaFrance divides up his canvases. Horizons anchor his compositions, semi-transparent washes of white create a foggy vista. Cheery yellow stripes might be a sail bobbing in the distance and orbs recall moon phases. However, layering bright solid shapes and pictographic marks, he steers the paintings away from being wistful or nostalgic. The 'scapes he's considering may not be as much Vacationland Maine as they are bumper to bumper traffic on the 405.

Spending more time in Los Angeles, starting several years ago, opened up his painterly vocabulary in terms of color and subject. Layering visual motifs from the city and nature, signage and foliage, paying attention to strange details or visual curiosities, and collating influences from abstract painting, design and domestic objects, he further iterates hybridity in his scenes. The titles of the paintings offer another read – poetic insights that support or complicate his formal decisions. Euphoric Calendar is grid-like, an accumulation of saturated, jewel-tone squares with zigzag annotations; Orphan Eclipses is a medley of color and marks – the words together don't correspond to a celestial event but rather to something solitary like grief or a state of existential uncertainty.

With a background in dance and sculpture, Bourque-LaFrance's experience making objects and performances feels embedded in these paintings. The larger works especially convey a linework that is choreographed or wrapped up in the gravity of a sculptural form (a set of hips or calves for example.) He worked in collage for several years: drawn to the way it offers a physical process of cutting and arranging, builds towards something unexpected or arrived at by chance via psychological impulse. The both/and of collage, its tender patching and violent finality appeals to him for its capacity to convey a range of emotions. Unraveling these former modes of engagement, the show's title, ALIBIS, implies a safety in a personal truth, yet it's a subjective telling. Weaving in and out of self-imposed rules, Bourque-LaFrance moves fully present toward painting as a witness.

-Emily Davidson

Strauss Bourque-LaFrance (b. 1983, Poland Spring, ME) earned a BA from Hampshire College, Amherst, MA; an MFA from Tyler School of Art, Philadelphia, PA; and attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, Skowhegan, ME. Bourque-LaFrance has had solo exhibitions at venues such as T293, Rome, Italy; Exo Exo, Paris, FR; Rachel Uffner Gallery, New York, NY; and the Northampton Center for the Arts, Northampton, MA. He has been included in exhibitions at The Kitchen, New York, NY; Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp, BE; Moran Moran Gallery, Los Angeles; the Crisp-Ellert Museum, St. Augustine, FL; The Clifford Gallery at Colgate University, Hamilton, NY; ICA Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA; The Contemporary Austin, Austin, TX; Abrons Art Center, New York, NY; The Judson Memorial Church, New York, NY; and Sculpture Center, New York, NY; among many others. Bourque-LaFrance was a recipient of the Northampton Arts Council Grant, Northampton, MA; an Artist in Residence at Dance and Process, The Kitchen, New York, NY; and an Artist in Residence at Movement Research, New York, NY. Bourque-LaFrance currently lives and works between Los Angeles, CA and New York, NY.

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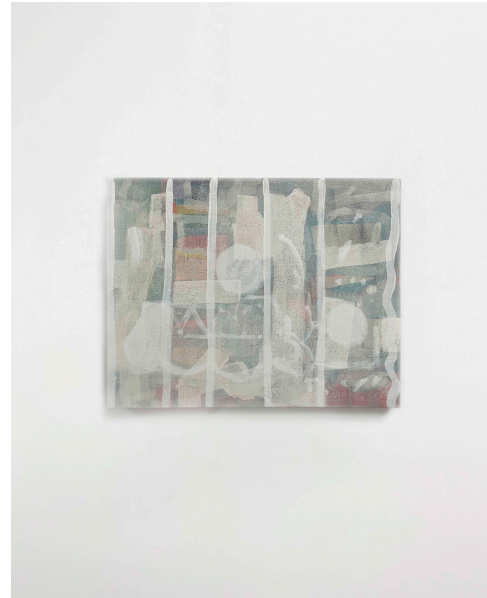
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Ping- Pong- Pine, 2024
Acrylic , flashe, graphite
11 x 14 inches



The Pearl in the Moon, 2024
Acrylic, flashe, graphite
11 x 14 inches



A Cypress Night, 2024
Acrylic, flashe, graphite
11 x 14 inches



Orphan Eclipses , 2024
Acrylic, flashe, graphite
44.5 x 50 inches

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Arbor Triplet, 2024
Acrylic, flashe, graphite
11 x 14 inches



Pink Pea, 2024
Acrylic, flashe, graphite
32.5 x 36 inches



Self-Organizing Tapestry, 2024
Acrylic, flashe, graphite
32.5 x 36 inches



Sad Sonnet (For US), 2024
Acrylic, flashe, graphite, canvas collage
32 x 38 inches

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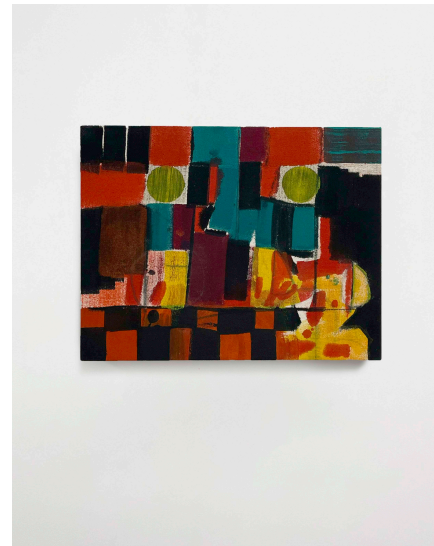
Jewel Thief, 2024
Acrylic, flashe, graphite, canvas collage
35 x 41 inches



Palm Reader, 2024
Acrylic, flashe, gouache graphite, collaged
canvas
27 x 23.5 inches



Casual Casualties, 2024
Acrylic, flashe, graphite, canvas collage
30 x 33.5 inches



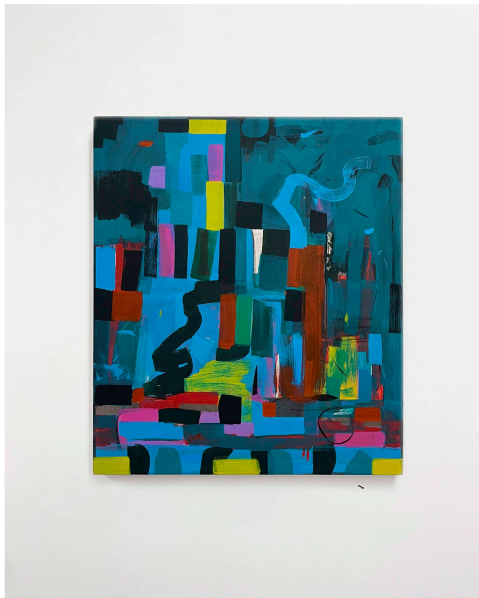
Matador Homage, 2024
Acrylic, flashe, graphite
11 x 14 inches



Octo-Oyster Sketch
Acrylic, flashe, graphite
30 x 33.5 x 1.25 in



The Rage Simulator 2024
Acrylic, flashe, collaged canvas
25 x 22 inches



Smoking Aquatic, 2024
Acrylic, flashe, graphite
23.5 x 27 inches



Oh No Cove, 2024
Acrylic, flashe, graphite, canvas collage
11 x 14 inches