

GENE'S

Leash by Michael Kennedy Costa

**Opening: Saturday, October 26th, 2024 from 4 to 6 pm
October 26th to November 30th, 2024**

Underpainting is a sport of fiction. To call it so somehow distorts the timeline of a painting's operations. One is not setting off under the blanket of night to build the walls for the house with an already weathered roof. The walls, the stairs, the wooden floors, and recessed pantries are the aforementioned and structural "under," declared only after the fact, but always already there. Underpainting, like fiction when it performs its insidious suspension, need not be incanted. This is the state of arrival in Michael Kennedy Costa's newest suite of paintings: we are caught unawares, already immured.

And this is the bewilderment. At 8x16," we are alert to our bodies, floating though they may be; our feet have evaded us as our perpendicular cleaves the paintings' horizontal. As heads scan surfaces, pleading for entry, our eyes report back to the cartesian body while our minds dive under. Somehow they can because of this two-head-scaled format. There's a surreptitious breath their composition holds as our eyes sprint their width almost to run away from the staid mirror size and simultaneously defeat it. It is within this athleticism that our gaze is returned. Pricked by "figures" that emerge (colored-pencil marks, sgraffito, pulsating declarative forms), our sight is seized. Contrastive palettes and crisp delineative marks lock our eyes and so too our gait; still, escape is viable, though dialectically only already within.

The penetrative stare of these paintings swells our temples; the tides of their composure beckon haste, with time only to glance their lunge, shut our eyelids, and plunge through for refuge. The deciduous layers of these surfaces tap our skulls to stir vision, but that which these paintings awaken does not belong to us. If it did, our sight would tell us our legs still had feet. Here, incarnate is fiction's ruse. Rousing the plot's pentimenti to squelch the first person in its third person rapture, the mis-recognized underpainting inverts itself. Our linear read is imbricated: painting there becomes circumstantial witness here. Sultry and deeply material, Kennedy Costa's painted-under surfaces recast vision to the thing that sees.

— Mona Welch, Los Angeles, 2024

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GENE'S



Dying Form, colored pencil, graphite, and flashe on linen, 8 x 16 inches, 2024

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Walking Stick, colored pencil and flashe on canvas, 8 x 16 inches, 2024

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Fence, colored pencil and flashe on canvas, 2024, 8 x 16 inches, 2024

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Edge of Me, colored pencil and flashe on linen, 8 x 16 inches, 2024

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Clock, colored pencil and flashe on canvas, 8 x 16 inches, 2024

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Leash, colored pencil and flashe on canvas, 8 x 16 inches, 2024

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Follower, colored pencil and flashe on linen, 8 x 16 inches, 2024

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New Body, colored pencil and flashe on canvas, 8 x 16 inches, 2024

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Circle, flashe on linen, 8 x 16 inches, 2024

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Vanishing Door, colored pencil and flashe on canvas, 8 x 16 inches, 2024

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Ruin, colored pencil and flashe on linen, 8 x 16, 2024

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