

# Theta

## **Ty Palow**

Bird World

June 30 - July 31, 2026

*Bird World* presented at Theta is the first solo exhibition by New York-based artist Ty Palow. The debut exhibition includes a cycle of new paintings on panel, built from photographs transferred onto wood-grain surfaces and reworked by hand. Blurring painting and photographic reproduction, Palow explores the afterlives of objects and built environments through a narrative mode that treats the present as if it were already memory, and memory as present. Where his photographs of late-night scenes and daylight flowers fix fleeting moments, their printed and painted images appear to age on contact, and the allure of youth they hold arrives already worn and remembered.

Palow's paintings inherit the vintage quality of design and furniture, objects made not only to be seen but lived with. Drawing equally on the language of antiques and photography, he recasts things designed as heirlooms into artifacts of a bygone luxury. Scalomandre's classical 'Le Tigre' silk velvet is both preserved in print and reproduced in paint, but the tiger stripes have lost their sheen. Elsewhere, an abandoned, late Victorian Eastlake table is salvaged from the street. Palow explores the hauntology of taste: styles that have outlived the cultural worlds that produced them, lingering long after their original glamor has faded.

In other paintings, Palow turns diarist, chronicling an autofictional life in New York that he half-inhabits, half-invents. The spaces are familiar, nostalgic, and deserted, preserving only the traces of those who have passed through them. Torn wheatpasted posters cover the wall above the urinals at the bathrooms of East Village's gay dive Nowhere. Two L stops into Brooklyn, at Williamsburg's Metropolitan Bar, the bathroom window is similarly layered with custom stickers left by regulars and passersby. Acid washes of pure acrylic electrify the wood-panel supports with the psychedelic afterglow of queer nightlife. By day, the cherry blossoms bloom. Boys, imagined and real, pose with twinkish nonchalance—reclining in the back of an intercity bus, listening to music, doing nothing much, just chilling, looking.

*Bird World* takes its name from an alternative title entertained by singer-songwriter Lana Del Rey for her sixth studio album 'Norman Fucking Rockwell' (2019). A musician who has fashioned a cult image of vintage and glamor herself, Lana sings in the post-chorus of her album single 'Venice Bitch': 'And as the summer fades away / Nothing gold can stay.' The summer is only beginning, but the gold has already tarnished and the glitter has settled in 'Bird World'; what remains are the relics of a gilded city dream.

—Chris Chow

**Ty Palow** (b. 1999 Columbus, OH) is an artist who lives and works in New York City. He received a BFA from the Cooper Union in 2021.