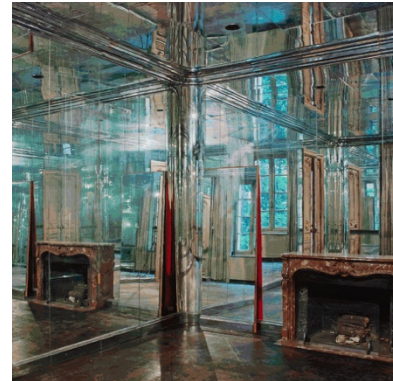


New York Exhibition

DORIAN FITZGERALD

FITZCARRALDO

March 23 – May 13, 2023



Dorian FitzGerald, *Salon, Rue du Bac, Paris* (2022),
Acrylic and acrylic caulking on canvas mounted
on board; unique, 108 x 156 in, diptych.

Arsenal Contemporary Art New York is pleased to present a solo exhibition of the Canadian painter Dorian FitzGerald. The text below is written by Clint Roenisch, the founder and director of the eponymous gallery located in Toronto, Canada who has been working with FitzGerald for over a decade.

FitzGerald has spent the last two decades meticulously crafting a compelling, often monumental body of works, several of which have taken years to finish. His various lines of inquiry revolve around a central tenet: that the excesses, the follies, the deceptions and indulgences, the grand edifices, the opulence, the waste and plunder, the vanities, the subterfuges and the chummy pacts of the wealthy and the powerful, are all fodder for scrutiny. His subjects have ranged from the outdoor stage at the secretive Bohemian Grove during a production of Faust, a fake crown of costume jewelry made by the British to impress the King of Adra and help them facilitate their slave trade, to the staggering array of sunglasses collected by Elton John. In this regard, FitzGerald has been compared to a contemporary court painter, albeit one who fully understands the paradox of using ostensibly beautiful works of art to deliver barbed comment on the very subjects he has so painstakingly rendered.

Anchoring the exhibition is a pair of monumental paintings, both depicting a room in a Parisian apartment designed by Valerian Rybar & Daigre Design Corporation, a New York- and Paris-based firm renowned for providing the most lavish interior design and decorating for society doyennes from Miami Beach to Marakkesh in the 1970s and 1980s. *Aquarium (Taboo)* (2018) shows a vibrant aquatic scene, with dazzling exotic fish and a mesmerizing array of coral. But the fish are black market, the coral has been pilfered, the 240-gallon tank is overcrowded with 53 specimens and the entire enterprise is kept alive by a complex system that is wholly unnatural and requires constant vigilance to prevent collapse.

FitzGerald's large paintings are constructed with acrylic paint (and occasionally caulking) in a slow, precise method that the artist has refined in his studio over several years. The pre-process involves researching imagery, preparing it with custom software, making a large-scale acetate transfer onto canvas and then building up the paint slowly in a manner that resembles a kind of pointillism filtered through vector graphics. Both colour theory and the physical properties of paint, such as drying times and viscosity, are brought to bear in the setting of the final image. The infinite patience and granular attention to detail suggest a kinship with Tibetan sand painting. While the latter, once finished, is soon wiped away to drive home the impermanence of all things, FitzGerald's works tend to hold a mirror up to that innately human wish to be exalted and remembered in the minds of others before the scythe comes down, as it inevitably does for queen, shepherd (and artist) alike.

- Clint Roenisch

Dorian FitzGerald (b. 1975 in Toronto, Canada, lives and works in Toronto, Canada). FitzGerald completed his Bachelor of Arts in Art and Art History at Sheridan/University of Toronto Mississauga. A selection of recent exhibitions includes: *Fabulous Fabergé, Jeweller to the Czars*, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (2015); *The Painting Project*, Galerie de l'UQAM, Montreal (2013); *Quebec and Canadian Art, 1980-2010: New Acquisitions*, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal (2011); *Empire of Dreams: Phenomenology of the Built Environment*, Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art, Toronto (2010); *Carte Blanche: Volume 2, Painting*, Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art, Toronto (2008).

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