

Ross + Kramer is pleased to announce the gallery's first presentation of Nicole Wittenberg's paintings entitled *Powder Your Face with Sunshine*. This is also the gallery's first in a series of presentations to take place in the viewing room at 515 West 27th Street in tandem with the gallery's regular programming. Usually a private space, the viewing room will be made public for a series of focused presentations by one or more artists.

*Powder Your Face with Sunshine* features three new large scale oil paintings and four smaller oil paintings on panel. These works began as pastel drawings that Wittenberg made en plein aire in coastal Maine and Newport, Rhode Island over the last year (people familiar with Newport will recognize the gate from just outside the Breakers Mansion in *Cliff Walk*). Once she returned to her studio in New York City, she transposed her drawings onto larger, sometimes much larger, canvases.

Using a technique informed by Edgar Degas, Wittenberg chose to paint these works against effervescent pink grounds to brighten or "lift" subsequent layers of translucent oil paint. She is chasing "the sensation of nature," which she feels can be, "channeled through the experience of color and scale." While some images practically ask to be rendered on a large scale, like *Dusk*, others require a greater sense of intimacy, like her series of small sunsets. The resulting paintings capture an ethereal quality of light as though dusk were suspended throughout the entire day.

David Salle, writing about her work noted that while she began her career painting from photographic sources, in the past few years, she has begun painting and drawing from direct observation: "her primary subject has been nature, specifically bodies of water, seen both from the vantage point of dry land, and also the water observed from a boat. Water is a notoriously difficult subject. First of all, water moves, is never still. And it is reflective – sunlight changes it, as does the sky. Wittenberg handles all these layers of difficulty with naturalness and aplomb."

The title of the presentation comes from a song popularized by both Dean Martin and Doris Day in the late-1940s. Wittenberg, whose work has historically been informed by film, music, photography, fashion, and culture in a more general sense, connected to the lyrics--*The future's brighter/ When hearts are lighter/ Smile, smile, smile*. Painting these works during such a time, lends us this sort of sunny optimism as we look towards the future.

This is the gallery's first exhibition with Wittenberg soon to be followed by a solo at the gallery's East Hampton location this summer.

Nicole Wittenberg (b. 1979, San Francisco, CA) lives and works in New York City and Maine. Most recently, the artist has shown her work at Nina Johnson, Miami; The Journal, New York; and Skarstedt, New York in an exhibition curated by David Salle. Her work is included in the several institutional collections including: Aishti Foundation, Beirut, Lebanon; The Albertina, Vienna, Austria; Boston Museum of Fine Art, Boston, MA; Bowdoin College Museum of Art, MA; Colby College Museum of Art, Waterville, ME; Farnsworth Art Museum, Rockland, ME; High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA; Portland Museum of Art, Portland, ME; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York.