

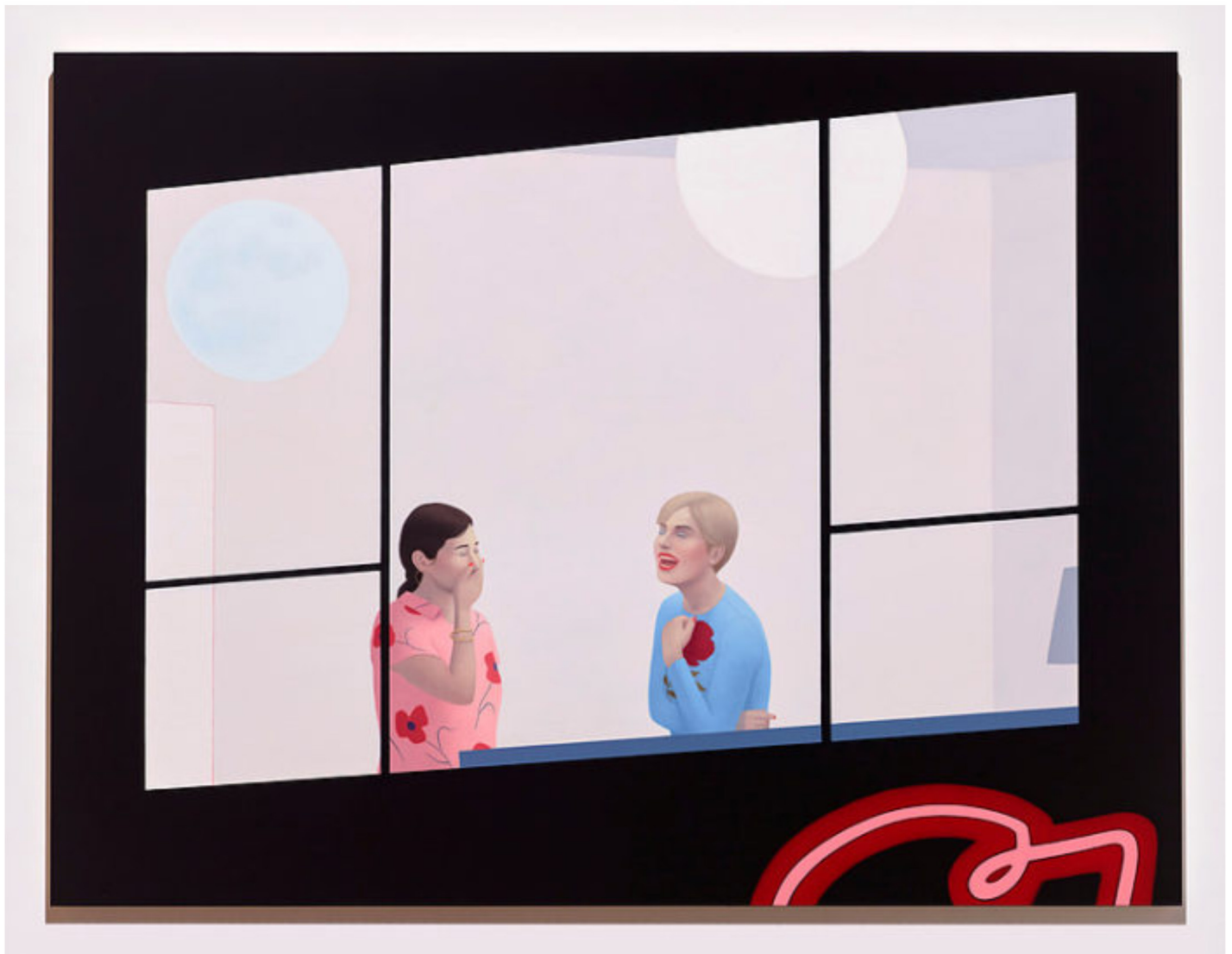
Ridley Howard's Travel Pictures at Marinaro Gallery

— 1 WEEK AGO by [KATE MENARD](#)

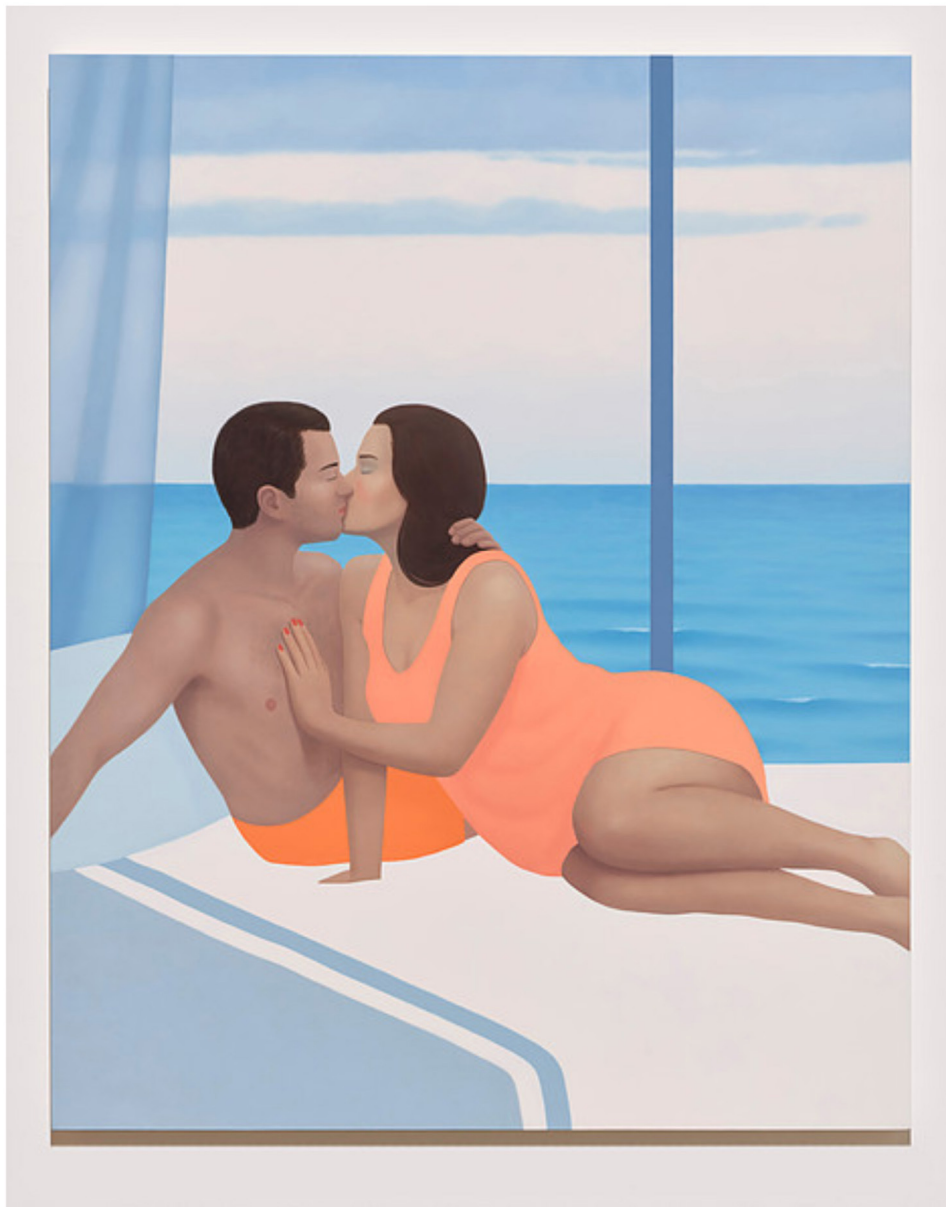


Ridley Howard's *Travel Pictures*, on view at Marinaro Gallery, are studies in contradiction. They are warm and cool, emotional and detached, quotidian and surreal. They are screenshots of somewhere and nowhere. They are personal and ubiquitous.

Though Howard's recent work is perhaps most recognizably in keeping with the paintings of Edward Hopper and Alex Katz, his influences range from the Renaissance master Fra Angelico to Pop artists such as Ed Ruscha and Rosalyn Drexler. Some of his floating, airborne figures and cloud-dotted blue skies also evoke the surrealist paintings of René Magritte. And there is a continued fascination with the Bauhaus artist Josef Albers going back to a 2013 show of Howard's at the Savannah College of Art and Design's Atlanta campus inspired by Albers' masterwork, *Interaction with Color*.



In *Over the Star*, Albers' influence is apparent in Howard's measured lines and color blocking, while displaying Hopper's propensity to leave viewers peering into interior scenes from a sidewalk or a window across the way. The figures, more akin to the smiling faces seen in Katz's work, share a hearty laugh, the joke unknown to us. The pinks and reds the women wear on their shirts, lips, and fingertips emit a heat that pops against the cool blues and lavenders which make up the painting's background.



Ridley Howard, Miami Beach View, 2017, oil on linen, 40 x 50 in, 101.6 x 127 cm.

With *Miami Beach View*, strongly reminiscent of Hopper's *Rooms by the Sea*, Howard drifts away from his frequently fragmented views of lovers sharing a kiss or positioned in various more provocative sexual poses to providing us with a full body view of a couple's tender in-bed embrace. As in *Over the Star*, the colors worn by the figures, as well the tan with which their skin is brushed, provide warmth at a center surrounded by cool blue—here a more literal briskness evoked by the waves just beyond the window. With this piece, Howard's crisp lines veer away from abstraction, existing as elements of the simple bed-spread pattern and the large picture window.



Ridley Howard, *Kissers in the Mountains*, oil on linen, 60 x 72 inches.

Kissers in the Mountains consists of two frames—one containing a range of mountains seen from a distance, the other composed of two couples kissing in close-up—and may be partially inspired by

Howard's love affair with film. It's as if he has created a kind of jump cut. But the misty grey-blue mountain tops serve much the same function as the seawater in *Miami Beach View*, offering an abrupt contrast to the backdrop of sunny yellow against which the couples lock lips.



Ridley Howard, *Passeggiata, Rome*, 2017, oil on linen, 72 x 96 in, 182.9 x 243.8 cm.

In *Passeggiata Rome*, the work which owes the most direct debt to Magritte, unpruned trees and unevenly cut grass create blurred edges not seen in the other pieces. The only straight line is one that feels implied as the intended route of the feminine legs which walk the air across a winding road clearly intended for cars and bicycles. Her feet—outfitted with heels matched to an urban setting and colored a stunning salmon—almost appear to glow.

While loosely connected to specific locations, the figures in Howard's *Travel Pictures* do not interact with their surroundings but seem isolated and caught up in their own private narratives.

His meticulous attention to color and composition allow Howard to develop pieces that are a beautiful mingling of figurative and abstract processes, leaving one with a feeling of electrified calm.

Travel Pictures

Ridley Howard

May 3 – June 18

Marinero Gallery

319 Grand St. 2nd Fl