

Ridley Howard

Sky

Exhibition dates: May 22 – June 28, 2025

Reception for the artist: Thursday, May 22, 6-8 pm

Marinaro is pleased to present *Sky*, a group of new small paintings by Ridley Howard with a particular focus on the significance of space.

Howard's paintings exist in a quietly charged place between minimalism and intimacy, realism and abstraction. His work often depicts everyday moments — a glance, a kiss, a figure in repose — yet there is a palpable stillness and timelessness that gives his paintings a poetic and contemplative edge. Howard's ability to make the mundane feel mythic is central to his artistic power.

At first glance, Howard's paintings are deceptively simple. His figures are rendered with smooth surfaces, soft colors, and minimal backgrounds, which echo the aesthetics of 20th-century modernists and classical portraiture. Yet these sparse compositions are loaded with emotional weight. The people in his paintings are often shown in quiet, almost frozen poses: sitting alone in a room, brushing against each other in a hallway, or gazing into the distance. This stillness invites the viewer to pause and look more deeply — not just at the figures, but into them.

What makes Howard's work compelling is the way he balances formalism with emotional resonance. His attention to the geometry of composition — how a head tilts, how a horizon line slices through the canvas — shows his deep understanding of visual rhythm. But beyond this, there is a sense of vulnerability and desire running through his subjects. They feel both universal and specific, anonymous yet intimate. It's as if we're witnessing private moments that carry an emotional echo we can all relate to.

Color also plays a vital role in Howard's work. His palette tends to be subdued but deliberate, using soft pastels or muted tones to set a particular mood. This subtle use of color reinforces the dreamlike atmosphere of his scenes, drawing the viewer into a space that feels part memory, part fantasy.

Howard's work has been compared to artists like Alex Katz, David Hockney, and even Edward Hopper, particularly in how he captures the emotional landscape of contemporary life. Yet Howard's paintings are very much their own — meditative, restrained, and full of longing. He has carved out a space where silence speaks volumes, and where the inner lives of his figures remain delicately, but powerfully, on display.

In a world increasingly saturated with noise and speed, Ridley Howard's paintings offer a quiet, resonant alternative — one that encourages us to slow down, look closely, and find meaning in the smallest gestures.

Ridley Howard (b. 1973, Atlanta, GA) earned his MFA from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts Boston in 1999 and his BFA in Painting from the University of Georgia in 1996. He attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in 2000. He has shown at Andréhn-Schiptjenko, Stockholm and Paris; David Zwirner, Hong Kong; Night Gallery, LA; Perrotin Gallery, Seoul; and James Cohan, NY among others. His work has been exhibited at numerous institutions including The American Academy of Arts and Letters, New York; Museum of Fine Arts Boston; The Atlanta Contemporary, Atlanta, GA; National Academy Museum, New York; High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA; and Knoxville Museum of Art, Knoxville, TN. Howard's work can be found in the collections of Museum of Fine Arts Boston, Boston; Morris Museum of Art, Augusta; and High Museum of Art, Atlanta; and Knoxville Museum of Art, Knoxville, TN. Howard currently lives and works in Athens, GA.

