

Anthony Iacono *Glimpse*

Exhibition dates: May 11 – June 17, 2023
Reception for the artist: Thursday, May 11, 5-8 pm

*Walked through the park on my way crosstown.
Eye contact with a horse in a Bob Mackie crown.
Waiting for the birds, trying not to slip,
On the woody paths that smell of shit.*

Marinaro is pleased to present *Glimpse*, Anthony Iacono's third exhibition with the gallery. Iacono is a New York based artist who works primarily in collage from painted papers. Influenced by the graphic aesthetics of prints and posters, he depicts figures in seemingly everyday scenarios that are offset with coded language and suspense. These new intricate painted collages tell a story of his experiences birdwatching, a recent hobby he began during the pandemic, and the activity's parallels to historically queer cruising spaces that blur the line between public and private.

I caught covid early on in the pandemic and was locked inside for weeks - my only visitors were the birds out my bedside window. They were my entertainment. They spoke their secret language. And they seemed protective which was comforting. After that, birding became my new way of life - waking up early, throwing on camo pants, and getting lost in the woodsier parts of the park to find my feathered friends. It was a waiting game. You find yourself hanging around, getting hypnotized by the leaves, hoping to see movement in the trees and trying to decode camouflage through their disguise. Birding takes patience. It's an act of meditation. There's a lot of pacing back and forth and anything can happen at an instance. You can't plan for it. Some days you see hundreds and some days you see none- it relies on chance. But you keep going back looking for more. It's a different park once the sun sets and the nighthawks are out. Even at dusk, night watchers are desperate to catch a glimpse of something- and in these shadowy paths comes ultimate freedom. This public space has a lot of private going on. Everything looks ordinary until you make eye contact...

Through these new works, Iacono examines discrete aspects of queer life and their resonance with birdwatching. These commonalities involve observation and recognition. Sometimes the worlds of birding and cruising even coexist in spaces where communication is limited and signals usurp conventional interactions. When homosexuality was still criminalized (it still is in some places), queer people were forced to congregate underground. Once these locations were exposed, they moved into neutral spaces, sometimes in plain sight. Parks or tearooms took on multiple functions. While these meeting spots enabled physical desire, they were also safe places for connection and community where one could be authentic and not questioned.

In this exhibition, scenes include an anonymous figure sitting on a park bench after sunset, a loitering torso fading into the shadows, and a man behind trees pointing his binoculars vertically towards the night sky. Iacono inserts the figure into foliage and camouflage serves as a major theme, both literally as a visual device and metaphorically as bodies communicate a subtext of discretion- all as the viewer keeps a careful lookout for bird sightings. The works' physicality itself is easily misread, first appearing as flat airbrush painting or digital image, while in person they are collages abundant with paint, cut edges, and texture. These works tell a story of anticipation.

Reading List:

Espinoza, Alex. *Cruising: An Intimate History of a Radical Pastime*. Los Angeles, CA, The Unnamed Press, 2019.
Delany, Samuel. *Times Square Red, Times Square Blue*. New York, NY, New York University Press, 1999.
Humphreys, Laud. *Tearoom Trade: Impersonal Sex in Public Places*. London, UK, Routledge, 1975.

Anthony Iacono (b.1987, Nyack, NY) received his MFA from Virginia Commonwealth University, Sculpture + Extended Media in Richmond, Virginia and BFA from the School of Visual Arts, New York. He attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in 2013 and has been an artist in residence at the Museum of Art and Design in NY, Sharpe-Walentas Studio Program, LMCC Workspace, and ISCP. He has had solo exhibitions at P.P.O.W. Gallery, The Approach, Capsule Shanghai, The Spite Haus, and Marinaro Gallery where he is represented. In 2017 he was a recipient of the Toby Devan Lewis Fellowship Award. He currently lives and works in New York.