



MAGAZINE

REVIEWS

Maine

By Jenna Crowder

Jenna Crowder is a writer and artist working in publication, conversation, criticism, and curation as modes of public practice. Her writing has appeared in The Brooklyn Rail, Art Papers, Temporary Art Review, BURNAWAY, The Rib, and Liminalities: a journal of performance studies, among other places.

Leon Benn at Grant Wahlquist Gallery

June 3–August 22, 2020

30 City Center, Portland

Leon Benn's paintings melt domestic life and landscape together, creating sumptuous and strange environments that remix art history and pop culture with currents of more devastating realities. Benn's first solo show at Grant Wahlquist Gallery in Portland opens on June 3 and features a collection of new paintings of lushly rendered plant life. In their tight and focused compositions, these paintings can be viewed more like kaleidoscopic portraits than landscapes and their subjects ultimately feel a bit melancholy despite the high-energy palette. Gardens are typically distinguished as such due to their manmade status; that the trees and plants in these paintings rub up against architecture, fences, and low walls suggests a different kind of complicity. Here Benn complicates our understanding of the natural world across layers of what it means to create, to care, and to neglect. "Gardening Techniques" is on view at Grant Wahlquist Gallery through August 22, 2020. Hours and more information at grantwahlquist.com.