

:: GRANT WAHLQUIST GALLERY

Benjamin Hawley: All this and not ordinary

4/14/23 – 5/20/23

Grant Wahlquist Gallery is pleased to announce “All this and not ordinary,” an exhibition by Benjamin Hawley. The exhibition will run from April 14 through May 20, 2023. The gallery will host a reception with the artist on Saturday, April 15th, from 4 – 6 pm.

Hawley’s debut solo exhibition, “All this and not ordinary” presents paintings ripe with patient, considered observation. Atmospheric, subtle, and veering towards abstraction, Hawley’s pictures are the result of attentive contemplation of quotidian shapes and phenomena: a plume of steam in winter; the curve of a loved one’s kitchen counters; an unexpected mound of snow; the lip of a favored bowl. The artist returns to these forms again and again, reducing them to their essential attributes while imbuing them with feeling through subtle shifts in color. Impeccably painted and coolly seductive, Hawley’s works are reveries of concentration that reward close and affectionate looking. This is a modernist project, existing somewhere between the photographs of Ellsworth Kelly (their forms and curves illuminating his paintings) and the paintings of Suzan Frecon (their repeating shapes and marriage of reduction and expression), and one with a curiously ambiguous sense of scale and subtle use of shadow that is all its own.

The exhibition takes its title from the opening lines of Gertrude Stein’s “Tender Buttons”:

A CARAFE, THAT IS A BLIND GLASS.

*A kind in glass and a cousin, a spectacle and nothing
strange a single hurt color and an arrangement in a
system to pointing. All this and not ordinary, not
unordered in not resembling. The difference is spreading.*

Like Stein, Hawley attends to the particularity of his sources—what makes them commonplace and miraculous at once, their simultaneous singularity and kinship with other things in the world. Here the cumulative effect of Hawley’s non-identical repetition of forms is paramount and demonstrates the philosophical thrust of his practice. No two things are exactly alike, nothing can be identically repeated, and differences do indeed spread, yet in all this the world is not unordered. In the postmodern digital age of dwindling attention spans, Hawley explores modernity’s legacy with an eye towards tenderness and freedom.

Benjamin Hawley received an MFA in painting from Boston University in 2022 and a BFA in painting from Barton College in North Carolina in 2017. He lives and works in Boston. His work has previously been presented in group exhibitions at venues including the Painting Center, New York; the Lancaster Galleries at the Mount Gretna School of Art, Lancaster, Pennsylvania; Morgan Lehman Gallery, New York; and Piano Craft Gallery, Boston.

The gallery is located at 30 City Center, Portland, Maine. Gallery hours are Wednesday through Saturday, 11 am to 6 pm, and by appointment. For more information, visit <http://grantwahlquist.com>, call 207.245.5732, or email info@grantwahlquist.com.