

Rivington Arms

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For Immediate Release:

Dan Colen

Seven Days Always Seemed Like A Bit Of An Exaggeration

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Rivington Arms is pleased to present Dan Colen's new work, "Seven Days Always Seemed Like A Bit Of An Exaggeration". Colen's paintings are an experience in the spectacle of opulence. His dramatic compositions encompass an apotheosis of familiar images and a marked absence culminating in a force of staged drama.

Colen's fastidious construction of a masculine lived life unfolds as biblical and cartoon characters occupy a space seemingly just exited. Evidence remains of a human touch, an unmade bed, a half read book, a steamed mirror. Where absence exists a new reality is achieved. Found amid the jumbled possessions lie the objects that lend the paintings meaning.

Toothpaste, sneakers, the Virgin Mary pendant on a bling-bling chain all cohabit and are illuminated equally by the striking light sources that permeate each painting. These super defined areas of light cast the rest of the scenes in God-like importance. The artificiality of the source is also hinted at, following the electrical cords up and off canvas towards the imagined lights positioned above, enhancing a sense of hyper-surrealism.

This 'off camera' light gives the paintings a theatrical quality, as does the tent with its flaps pulled away, a curtain on a stage, revealing someone's abandoned camping belongings. Theatricality is also apparent in the painting of the bathroom interior where the canvas has been left unfinished forcing the viewer to see the ruse, the process - in effect what lies beneath.

The scenes depicted deify everything within the plane. By treating everything with great care and attention Colen reexamines the traditions of the symbolic object in painting, but without ironic effect. His heightened awareness of symbolism points you to its arbitrariness, as opposed to its importance.

Colen creates a realistic space and fills it with the ambiguities that dwell between the fantastic and the known. In placing fairytale characters and religious signifiers in mortal communication with one another he magnifies the actuality of the space they live in, while also tearing it apart. Colen's desired destruction of the plane allows the viewer to engage in a new dialogue with his paintings.