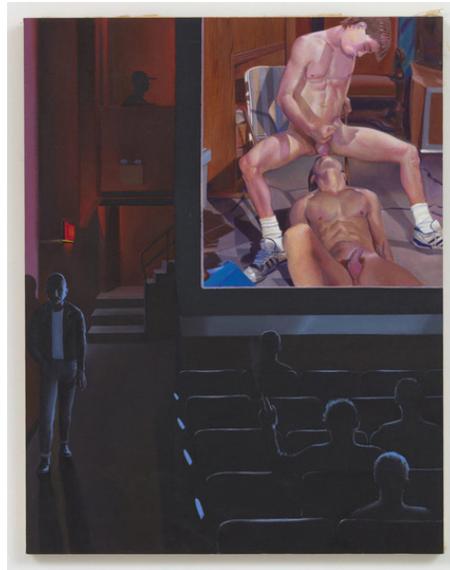


ARTFORUM



Patrick Angus, *I Get Weak*, 1991, oil and acrylic on canvas, 36 x 28 1/4."

Patrick Angus
BORTOLAMI
39 Walker Street
January 15–February 27, 2021

Among the homo triumvirate presently installed across Bortolami's TriBeCa complex—which includes a presentation by Tom Burr and "Lucky For Men," a group show curated by David Rimanelli—is an exhibition of paintings and drawings by Patrick Angus (1953–1992), providing the ensemble's retro smut and rhetorical prelude. Angus's images feature a number of art-historical references, including Picasso (whose name appears in the title of a self-portrait), David Hockney (Angus's atmospheric, corporeal shading owes a great deal to the British painter), and Jean Cocteau and Andy Warhol (their lissome linework courses through many of the artist's sketches here). More significantly, his paintings *Hanky Panky*, 1990, and *I Get Weak*, 1991, capture what is for many an unfamiliar—or distantly remembered—mode of looking and desiring.

These two canvases, which depict the Gaiety and the Prince—Times Square porn theaters of yesteryear—exhume the subcultural haunts Angus and so many others frequented throughout the latter half of the last century. In both paintings, a gaggle of men sit and stand, their eyes glued to the erotic films playing on screen. If gay sex is now readily accessible online—along with Truvada ads, Buttigieg-brained liberalism, and the contemporary gay figurative painting that ascends alongside them—Angus's work reanimates a markedly different culture of sexual possibility in which its televisual capture was still precious and distinctly communal. Indeed, except for the lone figure exiting the theater in *Hanky Panky*, the audiences in both paintings pay rapt attention to the debauchery unfolding on-screen. The skin flicks, like the cigarettes scattered around the room, are savored, lingered over.

Surrounding the aforementioned canvases is a sea of intimate portraits of friends and lovers rendered on paper. One might imagine these pictures as extensions of the time Angus spent in places like the Gaiety, the natural outgrowth of his quest for congress and copulation. Here the sexual and the social become confused and mutually imbricated, part and parcel of the smoky, libidinous tableaux Angus invites us into.

— Blake Oetting