

Morgan Presents

Hollywood at the Hearth: Willie Stewart & Walter Robinson
October 27th—December 10th, 2022
155 Suffolk Street, New York, NY 10002



Sex sells quickly, dreams require budgets and marketing campaigns. For close to a century now America, and more specifically Hollywood, has sold dreams domestically and abroad. The dream business touches each major industry on the planet, seeping into everything from flashy billboards to product design. That Americana can be simultaneously embodied by a white-picket fence, a dapper Humphrey Bogart, and a gun-toting Clint Eastwood, attests to Hollywood's power to craft our perceptions. This shaping of culture occurs specifically when Hollywood enters the home, seeping into our day-to-day lives. Through individually opposing practices, presented here as a dialogue, or perhaps even dialectic, Willie Stewart & Walter Robinson probe the Romanticism—and disquieting underside—of the dream and industry of *Americana*.

Stewart's pictures hold a secret. Defying the constraints of the canvas, Stewart envelops the viewer in an architectural construction. This is not to say that his primary concern does not belong to the realm of painting, but rather that his conception of painting and its potential is closer to story telling and prop building—where every mark and element exists as part of the communication of a larger narrative, simultaneously unconcerned and intensely preoccupied with both authenticity and artifice.

Robinson's pictures revel in artifice, while speaking directly to the most sincere and primal regions of our imagination. His cinematic, pulp-romance figures lead dangerous, thrilling and lustful lives—and Robinson's only certainty may be that at least a part of each of us desperately wants this. Robinson's cinematic figures of leading men and women populate Stewart's domestic landscapes, while simultaneously turning their nose at such quaint domesticity.

Is Stewart's piece *Homes* the realization of the picturesque, pined for picket-fence, or rather a premonition of a final, inescapable resting place? While Robinson's brushstrokes map out the contours of action, leaving us to fill in the world around his figures, Stewart trains our eye to notice the details in the commonplace, as if dissecting the remnants of a crime-scene while simultaneously helping his grandmother pick out new wallpaper that matches her drapes.

This juxtaposition between the fantastical and the domestic, that of the glamorous silver screen and rural Tennessee, parallels the tension between the dream of *Americana* that is marketed to the consumer, and the harsher lived experience.

Each of these artists draws us in with an enticing visage, yet if we scratch this surface, we uncover something about ourselves we wish we hadn't. Each a master of his craft, whether in Stewart's use of colored pencil, or Robinson's approach to neo-expressionistic paint handling, both artists probe the American subconscious. Stewart & Robinson are preoccupied with what the individual yearns for, and whether these desires spring from our own conceptions or are rather the result of an effective marketing campaign by *Americana*[™]

Willie Stewart (b. 1982, Gallatin, TN) lives and works in New Haven, CT. He received an MFA in Sculpture from Yale University (2018), and his BFA from The Cooper Union (2016). Stewart's work has been exhibited in solo exhibitions at Nicelle Beauchene Gallery, New York, NY; Morán Morán, Los Angeles, CA, and Pioneer Works, New York, NY. In 2014, Stewart attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, Skowhegan, ME.

Walter Robinson (b. 1950, Wilmington, DE) has lived and worked in New York, NY, since 1968 when he arrived to attend Columbia University, where he studied Art History and Psychology. A retrospective exhibition of 80 paintings was organized in 2014 by Barry Blinderman for the University Galleries at Illinois State University in Normal, IL. The exhibition traveled to the Moore College of Art and Design in Philadelphia, PA and Jeffrey Deitch in New York. A 1986 sheet painting, *Baron Sinister*, was recently acquired into the permanent collection of the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, and exhibited in the exhibition, *Fast Forward: Paintings from the 1980s*.

Morgan Presents is a New York exhibition space founded and directed by Morgan Aguiar-Lucander, an independent curator, writer, dealer, and advisor to both artists and collectors.

Morgan Presents invites pairs of artists to create an exhibition that offers a new perspective into their practice. Morgan Presents is not a representing gallery, and no one artist will exhibit twice during the run of the program. Morgan Presents intends to offer an insight into today's emerging vanguard of painting and sculpture in collaboration and dialogue with established artists and galleries both domestically and abroad. A hardback publication, cataloguing each exhibition, will be published at the conclusion of the project. The curatorial program will be presented out of 155 Suffolk Street in Manhattan, commencing from September 2021.

For press inquiries please contact Morgan Aguiar-Lucander at morgan@morgan-presents.com