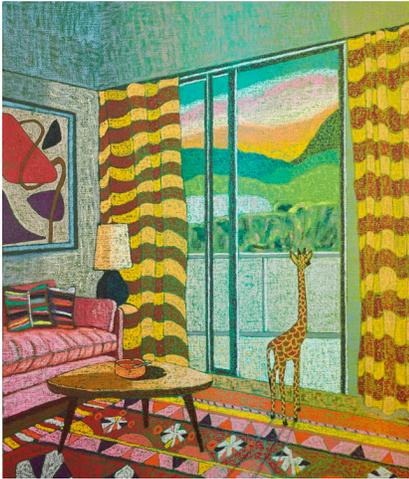


# DEREK ELLER GALLERY



## JJ Manford

### *Moon Salon*

October 14 - November 13, 2021

Opening Reception: Thursday, October 14, 2021, 6-8pm

Derek Eller Gallery is pleased to present a solo exhibition of new paintings by JJ Manford entitled *Moon Salon*. Ruminative and impressionistic, Manford's compositions are arranged cinematically, with an attention to balance, color, and lighting. Primarily domestic interiors, with glimpses of the outside world, the paintings assemble elements both real and imagined and conjure a space of unexpected possibility.

Utilizing oil stick, oil pastel and Flashe on burlap or linen, Manford renders a surface which glows and vibrates. Evoking both Edward Hopper and Wes Anderson, his scenes are filmic and painterly, combining patterned rugs, modern furniture, an array of art objects, as well as picture windows looking out on moonlit urban streets or bucolic sunsets over rolling hills. The works of art (or reproductions of art) are often two dimensional and framed, creating a striking tableau of framed pictures within a framed picture. For Manford, the work is foremost about curating and painting, as each piece is carefully constructed both in terms of the selection of depicted objects and the creation of an overall environment. He explains, "the paintings are built from the ground up, and the color temperature, saturation, and shifting of the under painting(s) determines what is possible...I will layer intuitively, with an attention to the direction, quality, and temperature of light in the constructed environment, and as edges meet, and the painting builds, the color choices become clearer and clearer."

In *Interior with Giraffe Sculpture and Calder Print*, Manford composes a quixotic scene in which a giraffe is framed by a sliding glass door and brightly striped drapes. Also in the room is a mid-century walnut coffee table, a geometric patterned rug, and a framed print by Alexander Calder. Like most of Manford's paintings, there is no human presence. The giraffe, like the cats and dogs who make recurring appearances in other works, breathes animated life into the painting in the absence of people. Yet without humans, the viewer is left to wonder, "What sort of person would inhabit this home?" Who would make these aesthetic choices, acquire these particular cultural artifacts, gravitate toward these architectural features? This desire to conceptualize the inhabitant and/or project oneself into the environment creates an open-ended narrative defined by the viewer's individual subjectivities.

"Painting something feels like an exorcism or catharsis," Manford writes, "I paint to no longer want something or to rid it from the realm of desire." So too does the artist engage in a kind of projective relationship to his compositions. By curating his scenes with art historical works or poster reproductions, along with folk and outsider art, his own paintings, record albums, etc., Manford can vicariously inhabit this idyllic and culturally vibrant domestic scene of his own making. Like Joseph Cornell, choosing and organizing his images within a rectangle, Manford paints a Mose Tolliver, a Miro vase, a Kachina doll, or a Tibetan tapestry, juxtaposing these disparate objects and creating "image constellations" within a surprising new galaxy.

JJ Manford (b. 1983) lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. He received a BFA from Cornell University in 2006, a Post-Baccalaureate certificate from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2009, and an MFA from Hunter College in 2013. Most recently, his work has been exhibited in solo and two-person presentations at Harper's East Hampton, New York; The Pit, Palm Springs, CA; Arts + Leisure Gallery, New York; John Davis Gallery, Hudson, NY; and Freight + Volume Gallery, New York. Manford is a co-founder of the artist collective Underdonk as well as an adjunct professor at Pratt Institute.

Derek Eller Gallery is located at 300 Broome Street between Eldridge Street and Forsyth Street. Hours are Tuesday - Saturday 11am to 6pm, and by appointment. For further information please contact the gallery at 212.206.6411 or visit [www.derekeller.com](http://www.derekeller.com).