

HOLLIS TAGGART

Hollis Taggart Presents French Painter Thomas Agrinier's First Solo Show in NYC

The Pursuit of Happiness On View September 7 – October 7, 2023

August 9, 2023 – Hollis Taggart is pleased to present *The Pursuit of Happiness*, the French artist Thomas Agrinier's highly anticipated first solo show in New York City. Created over the past two years, the eleven paintings in *The Pursuit of Happiness* showcase Agrinier's masterful ability to depict a sense of motion and fluidity through his distinctive blend of abstraction and figuration. The painter's unsettling scenes baffle the eye, seamlessly moving from highly realistic details to abstract patterns that are at times interrupted by defined bold-colored shapes recalling cartoons or comics. *The Pursuit of Happiness* will be on view on the first floor of Hollis Taggart from September 7 through October 7, with an opening reception on Thursday, September 7, from 5-8PM.

Thomas Agrinier (b. 1976) is a Paris-based self-taught painter whose deep appreciation and personal study of music, art history, and film is evident throughout his work. While Agrinier's dramatic paintings are unmistakably contemporary, they are firmly rooted in art history, replete with references to themes and scenes explored by the artist's predecessors. The exhibition also features a myriad of more contemporary cultural references, from a scene from John Cassavete's film *A Woman Under the Influence* featured in an eponymous painting, to the band Guns N'Roses, whose members are featured against a spray-painted galactic background in *The Pursuit of Happiness* (2022).

Agrinier's figures are in constant metamorphosis, appearing as if viewed through the window of a fast-moving car. The painter's warped figuration borders on the grotesque, with faces and bodies blurring and stretching into unfamiliar shapes and smears. Although it may not be immediately apparent, the paintings in *The Pursuit of Happiness* are also notable for their tremendous use of color, with Agrinier often employing a rainbow palette in the construction of a single face. This celebration of color is enhanced by Agrinier's experimentation with patterns, which sometimes disrupt his figuration like an abstract glitch.

The semblance of motion in Agrinier's paintings is also often interrupted by elements that appear stylistically out of place, like the cartoon-like hand, a reoccurring motif that tempts the viewer to create a narrative continuity between the works on view. The seemingly contradictory styles as well as the skillful ease with which Agrinier moves between them results in a body of work that resists categorization and unsettles the viewer, capturing the instability of life and the uneven perception of time.

Agrinier was born in Lyon, France in 1976. His solo exhibitions include Mark Hachem, Paris; Galerie Estace, Paris; and Galerie Dukan, Paris. He has also shown at BLAM Projects, Los Angeles; Ostrale Biennial for Contemporary Art Dresden; Scope Basel with Galerie Estace; and at Art Paris Art Fair with Mark Hachem. He lives and works in Paris.

About Hollis Taggart

Founded in 1979, Hollis Taggart presents significant works of American art, showcasing the trajectory of American art movements from the Hudson River School to American Modernism and the Post-War and Contemporary eras. Its program is characterized by a deep commitment to scholarship and bringing to the fore the work of under-recognized artists. The gallery has sponsored several catalogue raisonné projects, most recently for the American Surrealist artist Kay Sage, and has been instrumental in advancing knowledge of such artists as Alfred Maurer, Arthur B.

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Carles, and more recently, Theodoros Stamos, Marjorie Strider, and Michael (Corinne) West. In the summer of 2019, the gallery announced the formal expansion of its primary market business and focus on the presentation of contemporary work. It continues to expand its roster of contemporary artists, focusing on emerging and mid-career talents. With more than 40 years of experience, Hollis Taggart is widely recognized by collectors and curators for its leadership, expertise, and openness, on matters of art history, market trends and opportunities.

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