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Bret Reichman

Feature

Bret Reichman's mischievously sinister paintings tell of a fairy tale gone awry in a dripping nightmare of bright, almost psychedelic colors. In his first New York solo exhibition, this San Francisco based artist pushes kitsch through a sieve of illusionism and childhood fantasy.

In this exhibition "You, oh Queen, are the fairest in the land," Reichman paints lusciously ornate mirror frames with no reflective center. There is either a white void or a continuation of background color where one might expect a mirror. *The poison had put Snow White into a very deep sleep* is an elaborate mirror frame on its side floating in a lurid, dripping field of red that also fills the mirrorless center. A fairy tale turned on its side, thrusting forth the story's most sinister moment. The taunting and enticing line of Snow White's evil witch, "Mirror mirror on the wall, who's the fairest of them all?" gets taken in and spewed back out with the vituperative venom of the nasty witch herself. Toxic, yet beautiful, Reichman cuts through the ambiguous terrain of a childhood story to reach its adult, somewhat evil essence.

Spawned from a different fairy tale, *Stag's Leap* is a bizarre juxtaposition of a stag's head, floating in a darkly colored fog — a hunter's trophy without the baseboard. Impish elves gleefully frolic around the stag's majestic antlers. Compounding irony upon absurdity to evoke duplicity within the imaginary, Reichman's beautifully rendered paintings are a serious playhouse of ideas. They are a place where innocence and eeriness meet.

Alisa Tager



Bret Reichman, *Prince Charming*, 1992, oil on canvas, 36x25 in.