

CRISTIN TIERNEY

June 16, 2023

DRAFT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Joe Fig

Contemplating Compositions

September 8 – October 21, 2023

Opening Reception: Friday, September 8, 6:00 to 8:00 pm

219 Bowery, Floor 2
New York, NY 10002

Cristin Tierney Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of new paintings by Joe Fig entitled *Contemplating Compositions*, a continuation of his 2020 exhibition *Contemplation*. The exhibition opens Friday, September 8 with a public reception, for which the artist will be present. *Contemplating Compositions* will be on view through October 21, 2023.

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The paintings in *Contemplating Compositions* present versions of the same scene: people looking at art, some in galleries, others in museums. Settings run the gamut from crowded blockbuster shows like the New Museum's Mutu exhibition (2023) and the Guggenheim's Alex Katz exhibition (2022-23), to intimate portraits of an individual completely absorbed in an artwork. Started nearly a decade ago, the series illustrates numerous exhibitions from the past few years and chronicles the artist's travels across the country.

When we contemplate an artwork, we often distill a piece down to its elements, analyze what we see, and form opinions. We uncover what is being communicated. Similarly, when making work, artists frequently pause to take a step back, look, and reflect. Contemplation is as intrinsic to the creative process as the actual physical work of making an object. As Fig says, "It's in this moment of seeming inactivity when the artist is working the hardest."

These paintings foreground Fig's emphasis on composition. Fig, beyond replicating a scene of viewers in an art space, is also studying the chosen artists' techniques and mimicking their process. This unique approach is a trademark of his practice. Fig carefully selects the details to highlight in his paintings, from configuring the placement and scale of his spectators to perfecting the balance of light and shadow in a composition. His painting of Stella, Calder, and Thiebaud works at Christie's (2022) exemplifies how he approaches the detailing of various textures, whether it be metal, wood, glass, hair, or paint itself.

Joe Fig (b. 1968, Seaford, NY) has produced a diverse body of work encompassing painting, sculpture, photography, and drawing, in which he examines the role of the artist, the creative process, and the self-made universe of the artist's studio. His work has been exhibited at the Dayton Art Institute, Orlando Museum of Art, Chazen Museum of Art, Fleming Museum, Bass Museum of Art, Parrish Art Museum, Toledo Museum of Art, Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Norton Museum of Art, Hood Museum of Art, and New Britain Museum of American Art. Numerous institutions hold his work in their collections, including the Bruce Museum of Arts and Science, Chazen Museum of Art, Parrish Art Museum, Toledo Museum of Art, Norton Museum of Art, Fogg Art Museum at Harvard University, Hood Museum of Art, Library of Congress, New Britain Museum of American Art, and New York Public Library. Fig is the author of two critically acclaimed books, *Inside the Artist's Studio* (2015) and *Inside the Painter's Studio* (2009). He is the Department Chair of both Fine Arts and Visual Studies at Ringling College of Art + Design. His studio is located in Florida.

Founded in 2010, **Cristin Tierney Gallery** is a contemporary art gallery located on The Bowery with a deep commitment to the presentation, development, and support of a roster of both established and emerging artists. Its program emphasizes artists engaged with critical theory and art history, with an emphasis on conceptual, video, and performance art. Education and audience engagement is central to our mission.

Image

Joe Fig, *Christie's: (Stella: Cinema de Peps II, Calder: Disques Verticales, Thiebaud: Sardines, Opalka: Chronom IV)*, 2022-23. oil on linen mounted on MDF board. 13 1/4 x 16 1/4 inches (33.7 x 41.3 cm).

Inquiries

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