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PREVIEW: “FLATLANDS” AT THE WHITNEY

by Fan Zhong

Abstract painting still commands awe-inspiring prices, but a rekindled love of the figurative has recently seized the art world’s ever-fickle heart. “Flatlands,” an unusually fast-thinking museum show curated by Laura Phipps and Elisabeth Sherman that opened this week at the Whitney Museum in New York, brings together five young art stars—Nina Chanel Abney, Mathew Cerletty, Jamian Juliano-Villani, Caitlin Keogh, and Orion Martin—who have an emancipated view of reality. They are ultra-generous with color, but manipulative when it comes to perspective; they have David Foster Wallace’s tendency to over-pack, and his sense of humor to boot. They choose to see widely rather than deeply, which might be the most representational thing about them—they are just like the rest of us in this hyperconnected age.



1/8. Mathew Cerletty, *Shelf Life*, 2015. Oil on canvas, 50 x 60 in. (127 x 152.4 cm). Courtesy the artist and Office Baroque, Brussels. Photograph by EPW Studio, New York



2/8. Mathew Cerletty, House, 2014. Oil on linen, 50 x 50 in. (127 x 127 cm). Courtesy the artist and Office Baroque, Brussels. Photograph by EPW Studio, New York.