



**Over the Influence presents**

**AUSTIN HARRIS**

**The Apple Doesn't Fall Far From The Tree**

**January 28, 2022 - March 12, 2022**



**Austin Harris**, *The Apple Doesn't Fall Far From The Tree*, 2021, Oil on panel, artist-made Poplar frame, latex paint, 109.2 x 129.5 cm, 43 x 51 in, (AH 21.010)

**Over the Influence** is thrilled to debut *The Apple Doesn't Fall Far From The Tree*, a new painting exhibition by Austin Harris. This marks the artist's first presentation in Hong Kong, and the second with the gallery. This series dives deeper into Harris's relationship with his childhood and explores the tropes of modern-day toxic masculinity.

Harris's practice is an exploration and critique of the environment he spent his formative years in. Growing up in a rural community, the artist was surrounded by hyper masculine behavior, drugs, alcohol, violence, and misogyny from both his peers and family. As time went on, Harris began to understand these values and behaviors were not authentic to himself and was consequently becoming a product of this environment. While his peers seemed to be following in their parents' footsteps, the artist began to work against the perceived norm.

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While his parents frequented prison and county jail, and friends drank to drown their demons, Harris used art as a coping mechanism. Painting gave the ability to turn the experiences from his childhood and turn them on their head, expressing the anger and sadness through a lens of hope and humor.

Throughout this exhibition, Harris critiques themes of toxic masculine traits, behavior, and heroes. Harris expresses his empathy and continues hope for change through scenes and poignant figures that are imbued with a wry humor. The clown motif seen throughout the series exemplifies the hyper-masculine performance that Harris felt his father, friends, and himself acted to fit in. In *The Apple Doesn't Fall Far From The Tree*, the namesake of the series, Harris conveys a father son relationship that is overrun by this performative masculinity. While the son still dons the clown costuming, showing he is innately following in his father's footsteps, the artist shows there is still hope for the boy. While the father is still chained metaphorically and literally to his outdated beliefs, the son is free from chains. This conveys hope to the viewer; hope for the boy, the father, and oneself, that we are all not destined to be products of our environments, and we have autonomy over who we become.

#### **About The Artist:**

Austin Harris was born in Bellevue Washington, Sept 3<sup>rd</sup> 1995. Harris spent the early part of his life in Seattle, Washington. Moving frequently from school to school, one thing he held consistent, was his passion for drawing. At a young age He gained both technical skill and inspiration from his father. At age 11, Harris moved to Ellensburg, WA where his family ultimately chose to reside. Harris consistently found himself spending most of his time drawing and chasing his creative desires. With the influence of his high school art teacher, he decided to pursue a career in the arts. In 2018, as a first generation college student Harris Received his Bachelor in Fine Arts with a focus in painting at Central Washington University. Harris then moved to New York where he received an MFA in Painting at the New York Academy of Arts in 2020. Just weeks before graduating Harris was offered a Solo show in LA with Over the Influence and has since had an International show in London with Ramp Gallery. Harris currently lives and work in Brooklyn New York.