



Over the Influence Presents

Kevin Specht

Afterglow

1 April to 7 May 2023



Kevin Specht, *Walking Home*, 2022, Acrylic on canvas, 121 by 152 cm, 48 by 60 in, Photo courtesy of the Artist and Over the Influence

Over the Influence proudly presents *Afterglow*, an exhibition by Denver-based artist Kevin Specht. This is his first show with the gallery.

Kevin Specht likes contrast. Colossal buildings towering over miniature people. Snow-enconced mountains packed with skiers. Lush, blossoming hillsides abandoned by visitors. Bathing suits in blizzards. Teeming crowds of faceless people. Midnight blue shot through with florescent red. An affinity that might extend beyond his subject matter to Specht himself, a kitchen appliance salesman and a painter. The fifteen works in *Afterglow* utilize color, scale, and perspective to illuminate the multitude of surprising juxtapositions that surround us all the time, throwing the subjectivity of perspective into stark relief.

OVER THE INFLUENCE

WWW.OVERTHEINFLUENCE.COM

HONG KONG | LOS ANGELES | BANGKOK | PARIS



Specht, who started painting after he was gifted a set of acrylics for a birthday ten years before, begins each piece by collaging elements from his extensive collection of photos, archival materials, film stills, and stock imagery. After assembling his cinematic composition on the screen, he turns to the canvas, where he attempts to remove himself as much as possible from the experience of painting, ceding the seat of action to the unconscious. “I listen to music, podcasts, audiobooks, anything to keep me from overthinking what I’m doing with my hands,” explains Specht. “I want the work to emerge on its own.”

The result? Familiar scenes rendered surreal and ethereal where skylines, mountain ranges, and hurried commuters emerge as if from deep within dreams shrouded in enigma and alchemy. Luminous, often monochromatic color washes, striking silhouettes, and uneven, dapple lighting lend the paintings their otherworldly quality.

Rather than venturing to recreate an exact moment or an exact place, Specht allows his memories, emotions, and present experiences to contort and color over the images casting them in entirely unexpected lights. In *Summer Chairlift*, a flourishing, flower-covered mountainside is tinged in deep, melancholic cobalt, and in *Walking Home*, a city street at dusk glows in a rich, antagonistic crimson. While the various blues in *Winter Chairlift* conjure a sense of tranquility and reverence, the blue of *Commuters 2* feels distinctly eerie and unsettling. To view the paintings in *Afterglow* is to experience them as if from within.

While Specht declines to expound upon the specific narratives depicted, preferring that viewers assign their own stories, he points toward his vested interest in time as a recurring thematic element in his work. That the human experience of time is cyclical is evidenced by his attention to changing seasons, transitions between day and night, and even by his use of a chairlift motif, an apparatus that runs in a perpetual loop up and down a mountain. The juxtaposition between the magnificent, primarily unaffected mountains and the towering skyscrapers reminds the viewer of time’s unstoppable force and the undaunting pursuit of progress that follows. Progress urged onward by the hurried commuters rushing to their offices and then, in contrast, enjoyed by the skiers and bathers luxuriating on holiday. In this way, the past and present seem to coalesce, similarly to an afterglow, wherein the light from yesterday’s sun still illuminates today’s sky.



Artist Bio

Kevin Specht (B. 1983, Minneapolis, MN, USA. Lives and Works in Denver, CO, USA) is a self taught painter whose vibrant landscapes and figurative paintings utilize impressionist brushstrokes and heavily saturated palettes drawing inspiration from historical movements such as fauvism and expressionism. Working primarily in acrylics and oils, he introduces a narrative quality into otherwise simple environments that produce hallucinatory and atmospheric scenes. These landscapes and figurative works can exist between representation and partial abstraction creating a magical surrealism quality to the environment suggesting that a transformation is taking place.

Exhibition dates:

1 April to 7 May 2023

Location:

Over the Influence Los Angeles
833 East 3rd Street
CA 90013

Contact:

Krysta Eder
Director
krysta@overtheinfluence.com

Camilla Russell
PR & Marketing Director
camilla@overtheinfluence.com