

ALEXANDRE

Brett Bigbee



Brett Bigbee
Small Realities

November 4 – December 21, 2023
Reception for the artist Saturday,
November 4th, from 3 to 5 pm

Alexandre
25 East 73rd Street, New York 10021

New York . . . Alexandre is pleased to present *Small Realities*, an exhibition of artist Brett Bigbee's recent work. Featuring eighteen works from 2018 through 2023—many of which will be on view for the first time—the exhibition displays a departure from the figurative works for which Bigbee is most known in favor of investigations of complex allegorical imagery.

Focusing on somewhat recognizable yet otherworldly creatures and scenes, the exploratory work in *Small Realities* marks a new era in Bigbee's career—in the artist's own words: "I explore a path toward freedom as a visual storyteller." Nature—real and imagined, inner and outer—is a through line throughout the exhibition. With influences ranging from 16th Century Mughal miniatures, Early American folk painting, and the meme culture of our contemporary society, Bigbee's works in *Small Realities* explore themes of temptation and loss of innocence through animals—real and imagined—and lush, verdant vignettes of foliage. *Small Realities* will be accompanied by a catalogue with a new text by independent curator Suzette McAvoy. "Testing himself, 'I don't hold back, I give it my all,' Bigbee sets a high bar, addressing the scope of human frailty and resilience," McAvoy writes. "'The artist's role in society is to try to make signposts in this world of magic,' he adds. His art is a gift to those who stop and see."

Brett Bigbee has been making paintings for nearly four decades. He spent much of his career creating painstakingly detailed portraits characterized by a sense of tranquil intimacy, abundant symbolism, and a near photo-realist level of precision. His subjects were mostly his family members and were heavily based on extended periods of observation. His labor-intensive technique of slowly building up the image through successive layers of unmixed color meant that it often took him several years to complete a canvas. Originally from Jacksonville, North Carolina, Bigbee studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. He received a Fulbright grant to travel and study in Italy following his graduation in 1985, and the influence of the Renaissance works he studied there is evident throughout his oeuvre. He now lives and works in Maine.

Image: Brett Bigbee, *Man No Man*, 2023. © Brett Bigbee. Courtesy Alexandre Gallery, New York.

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