

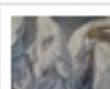
Art
Derek Buckner: *Recent Paintings*

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Derek Buckner: *Assemblage #2*, oil on canvas. Courtesy of George Billis Gallery



George Billis Gallery says:

This series of paintings by Derek Buckner exemplifies his painterly virtuosity as well as his formal concerns by focusing on the play of light and shadow over the folding undulations of drapery. These works cross the line between abstraction and realism and by focusing in on large folds of drapery and large pillows pressed up against one another they function both as still lifes and landscapes as well as abstractions. The works are simultaneously beautiful and comforting yet somehow constricting and claustrophobic in their voluptuousness. In two of the larger paintings, "Conspiracy" and "Multitude" Buckner takes this subject matter further by incorporating shrouded figures. The figures are covered with large white material and grouped in close configurations, creating a complex shadow play. The effect is both reminiscent of ancient artistic traditions as well as contemporary imagery. It is through his expressive use of paint and his gestural approach to the subject that he is able to evoke a wealth of emotion while playing with notions of eroticism, fear and ambiguity.

“ If this exhibition was your first introduction to [Derek Buckner's paintings](#), you'd be forgiven for branding him a classicist, even a (gasp) academic. He has a penchant for working on series in which a single main subject is explored in variations on a theme; in this case, it's white linen, a classical choice to be sure. But last time, it was marshmallows, and the time before that, UFOs. He does not abandon realism altogether, but rather uses diverse images as excuses for rendering his expressive, color-inflected whites. Nor does he allow his compositions to ever completely dissolve into abstraction, despite the fact that color-field passages are where all the action is. Reverential and iconoclastic, whether it's mottled, overcast skies or bunched-up, overstuffed pillows, what Buckner really paints is always the same thing: qualities of light. ” - *Shana Nys Dambrot*