

CRISTIN TIERNEY

Joe Fig: Contemplation

September 1 – October 17, 2020

Cristin Tierney Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of new paintings by Joe Fig, entitled *Contemplation*. It opens on September 1st, and continues through Saturday, October 17th.

The paintings in *Contemplation* present versions of the same scene: people looking at art. Some are in galleries, others in museums. Settings run the gamut from crowded blockbuster shows where the visitors take prominence, to quiet and intimate portraits of an individual completely absorbed in an artwork. Begun in 2016, the series illustrates numerous exhibitions from the past few years, and chronicles the artist's travels across the country.



When we contemplate an artwork, we break it down to its elements, evaluate what we see, and form opinions. We consider what is being communicated. Contemplation is something artists constantly do. When making something, artists frequently pause to take a step back, look, and reflect. Far from passive, contemplation is a busy action. It's as intrinsic to the creative process as the actual physical work of making an object. As Fig says, "It's in this moment of seeming inactivity where the artist is working the hardest."

These paintings are all the more poignant in the era of COVID-19. A visit to an exhibition was an experience that once provided a moment of escape and reflection. Now that same experience is restricted or altogether denied to us. This series of works began as an exploration of an ongoing, routine activity for members of the art-loving public. It has taken on a sense of melancholy and nostalgia, pitted against the backdrop of a pandemic. Images that once communicated open-ended moments of rumination are now charged with a sense of loss. In Fig's words, "It will never be the same again."

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Joe Fig (b. 1968, Seaford, NY) has produced a diverse body of work encompassing painting, sculpture, photography, and drawing, in which he examines the role of the artist, the creative process, and the self-made universe of the artist's studio. His work has been exhibited at the Orlando Museum of Art, Chazen Museum of Art, Fleming Museum, Bass Museum of Art, Parrish Art Museum, Toledo Museum of Art, Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, and New Britain Museum of American Art. He is the author of two critically acclaimed books, *Inside the Artist's Studio* (2015) and *Inside the Painter's Studio* (2009), and is the Department Head of both Fine Arts and Visual Studies at Ringling College of Art + Design. Fig works and lives in Sarasota, Florida.

For more information please contact Candace Moeller at candace@crisintierney.com.

Image: Joe Fig, *Hilma af Klint: The Ten Largest, Adulthood #6, 7 & 8/Guggenheim*, 2019. oil on linen mounted on MDF board. 18 1/4 x 22 inches (46.4 x 55.9 cm). Courtesy the artist and Cristin Tierney Gallery, New York.