

A lone psychological protagonist walks through a series of sparse, if vast, liminal landscapes, uncanny spaces where deserts and seascapes merge with slightly modernist and slightly mysterious interiors and architectures. The skies appear apocalyptically oceanic or on fire, both perhaps the result of pollution or climate change, both ready to swallow the protagonist at any moment. You follow this protagonist through this fraught landscape, through a series of jump cuts, snippets in a novella, the narrative plane constantly expanding but never really resolving. It is this protagonist, perhaps an unreliable one, perhaps the artist himself, who has been leading viewers through his work for the past five years. This same protagonist will lead you through Ish Lipman: The Looming Night, the artist's solo debut in Los Angeles at Praz-Delavallade Projects.

As the son of experimental filmmakers, the San Francisco-born artist Ish Lipman was oriented toward filmic or cinematic interpretations of the world from a young age. Growing up in Echo Park, on the side of a hill, his first experiences of Los Angeles were from a distance. "Seeing everything reduced to a smaller size always intrigued me, the way you are drawn to a patch of desert from an airplane," says Lipman. "My way of getting at that unresolved narrative led me to landscape and architecture."

Initially, that manifested in photography. "But in photography," says Lipman. "I felt limited by the edges of the camera, I couldn't really interfere that much with what I was photographing."

Wanting to study in the woods and get closer to a more direct experience of landscape, Lipman transferred to UC Santa Cruz and began painting emotionally charged, uncanny landscapes that toyed with the more mystical devices of Caspar David Friedrich and the Siennese School. "When things are unresolved that's a good place to start," says Lipman. "And a good place to end, too."

At the Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture, Lipman began to push his protagonist into more sparsely populated landscapes, which are full of empty spaces between lone cacti, empty pools, and vast seas. "The figure is a keyhole into the painting," says Lipman. "I see them as guides to the mysteries in the paintings, they're usually in between movements at a moment of indecision and to me those moments are a fertile place. I have a clearer connection to a landscape in a place of indecision or waiting."

When Lipman began his MFA at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago he was sick of Los Angeles and began to paint the hard-edged cityscapes around SAIC, but after a summer sojourn in L.A. in 2021 he felt a soft longing toward the city and began making works that conveyed his emotional

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impressions of Los Angeles, a psychological space he describes as similar to walking through a desert. “As a city, L.A. provides this isolation that’s not sad or melodramatic but self-reflective and mysterious,” says Lipman. “It was a way for me to reenter this dreamy quality that Los Angeles and California more broadly inhabit. There’s not much tethering people there.”

Titled after three paintings that follow his protagonist on a journey to an unknown destination, *The Looming Night*, is a meditation on this protagonist’s constant pursuit of the horizon line, which is something that only exists in the distance of these paintings. Up close they lose that soft longing, but in the distance they loom large. “It hinges on surrealism but it stays just enough in this world and as a result it’s more unsettling,” says Lipman. “I want to leave enough space to let people get lost in them.”

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Ish Lipman (b. 1995) in San Francisco and raised in Los Angeles. He graduated from the University of California Santa Cruz in 2018 and attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Drawing in 2019. He recently finished an MFA in the painting program at the Art Institute of Chicago. His work has been exhibited at Sulk Chicago, the Green Gallery, and Harper’s, where he’ll have his New York solo debut in 2023.

ABOUT THE GALLERY

Praz-Delavallade has a longstanding relationship with both American and European artists whose practices span a variety of mediums. The gallery was founded 1995 in Paris with an inaugural exhibition that included work by Paul McCarthy, Mike Kelley, Richard Petitbon, Jim Shaw, and Benjamin Weisman. In 1997, Praz-Delavallade was part of a burgeoning art scene in the 13th arrondissement on the eastern side of Paris, along with Air de Paris, Almine Rech, Art: Concept, Jennifer Flay, and Emmanuel Perrotin. Due to its strong connections with artists in Los Angeles, the gallery was known for bringing an international program to the growing Paris art scene, by featuring artists such as Sam Durant, Jim Isermann, John Miller, Analia Saban, and Marnie Weber, among others. In 2010, the Paris gallery moved to its current location at 5 rue des Haudriettes in the Marais and has continued its support of Los Angeles based artists by exhibiting a new generation that includes Matthew Brandt, Heather Cook, Nathan Mabry, Joe Reihsen, Ry Rocklen, Amanda Ross-Ho, and Brian Wills alongside European artists such as Soufiane Ababri, Philippe Decrauzat, Pierre Ardouvin, Thomas Fougérol, and Fabien Mérelle. In the fall of 2016, Praz-Delavallade opened a new outpost at 6150 Wilshire Boulevard—on the renowned thoroughfare in Miracle Mile right across from the Los Angeles County Museum of Art—in an effort to create a bridge between the two cities it calls home.