

**Spencer Sweeney**  
**Larry Rasberry and The High Steppers**  
**The Modern Institute, Aird's Lane**  
**6<sup>th</sup> June – 27<sup>th</sup> August 2025**  
**Preview: Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> June 2025, 6 – 8pm**

Spencer Sweeney's *Larry Rasberry and The High Steppers* takes the human figure as its principal subject, with his energetic paintings encompassing the genres of portraiture and reclining nude, and shifting between styles. He has spoken about painting as a 'balancing act between careful consideration and reckless abandon, both of equal import' and this attitude is evident throughout the exhibition. The works are developed intuitively in a solitary and contemplative studio practice which involves the artist reaching a state of tension or delirium, allowing his creativity to bridge the conscious mind with dreams and fantasies.

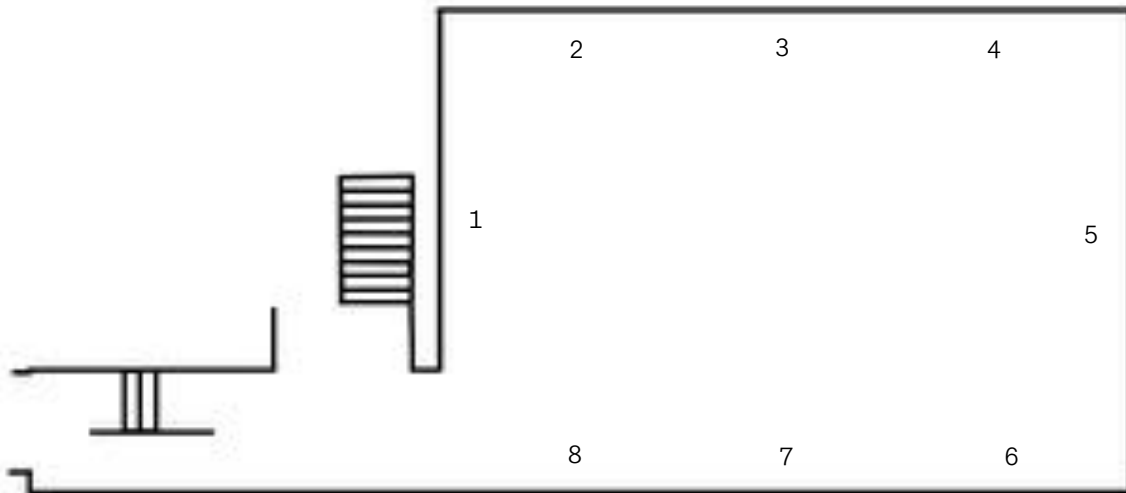
The title of the show emerged from a similar unfiltered process. Sweeney scrawled the band name on a loose sheet while painting, after hearing it on the radio. He uncovered it again later, when preparing for the show and felt it produced a compelling but fun disconnect with the enigmatic personalities in the paintings. The random association creates a push and pull with their imagery, lending a set of light-hearted ideas, however misleading, which can be brought to interpret them.

For Sweeney, on a conceptual level, his method relates to Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung's (1875-1961) understanding of the 'active imagination', a meditation technique designed to welcome and track the formation of personalities, narratives and environments from the unconscious. Sweeney has effectively worked in this way since his school days, often painting indoors during breaktime under the supervision of his art teacher. Through this formative method, new characters and ambiguous spaces suggest themselves and are then supplemented with additional information and sources from photography and film. Images are worked and reworked into a final composition, with Sweeney creating the illusion of movement with his strokes, developing textures and pattern through a varied repertoire of mark making, often drawing on art historical precedents.

Sweeney began working with traditional painting genres in the early 2000s and these formats continue to be productive in the studio. Reclining nudes are the key motif in three expansive paintings. While the figures are in repose, momentarily stilled, they are also vehicles for considering connections between humans and the environment, distinctions between public and private space, and the energy and movement of our daily rituals. In *Untitled*, 2025, the main character's head and hair echo with a crowd of hills or cloaked figures in the background, while in *moonlit blue*, 2022, the figure is alone, peaceful and benevolent. These works are interspersed with a set of imagined portraits, which represent a more intense encounter. Sweeney develops their expressions to create unique personalities. They often appear to be reacting to something just off-picture, consciously leaving space for the viewer's imagination.

Spencer Sweeney (b. Philadelphia, 1973) lives and works in New York. He is an artist, musician, DJ, and founder of legendary New York nightclub Santos Party House (2008-2016). A monograph of Sweeney's career was published by Kiito-San in 2018. Selected solo exhibitions include: 'Perfect', The Brant Foundation, Greenwich (2022); 'The Pastels', The Modern Institute, Bricks Space (2019); 'Spencer Sweeney: Self-Portraits', Gagosian Gallery Park & 75, New York (2018); 'The Grey Leg', Cahiers D'Art, Paris (2016); 'Wake Up and Make Love', Gavin Brown's Enterprise (2015); 'SHE', C-L-E-A-R-I-N-G, Brussels (2014); 'Monads and Party Paintings', The Modern Institute, Glasgow (2014); 'Berlin Paintings', VeneKlasen Werner, Berlin (2013); Twig Gallery, Brussels (2012); 'Nudes', The Green Gallery, Milwaukee (2011); 'Egyptian Diving Board Part II', Gavin Brown's Enterprise, New York (2010); 'To NY with Love', Don't Projects, Paris (2010); 'Our Gang', The Modern Institute, Glasgow (2008). Selected group exhibitions include: 'Everything Is Personal', TRAMPS, New York (2020); 'Painter's Painters: Gifts from Alex Katz', High Museum of Art, Atlanta (2014); 'Do Your Thing', White Columns, New York (2012); 'That was Then ... This is Now', PS1, New York (2008). 'Subway Series', Bronx Museum of the Arts, New York (2004); Hysteria Glamour, Tokyo (2001).

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|---|---|---|--|---|--|
| 1 | <i>self-portrait Egyptian Violet</i> , 2024<br>Oil on linen<br>50.8 x 40.6 cm<br>20 x 16 in                                       | 2 | <i>Susans</i> , 2025<br>Oil on linen<br>46 x 35.2 x 3.5 cm<br>18 1/8 x 13 7/8 x 1 3/8 in                         | 3 | <i>moonlit blue</i> , 2022<br>Acrylic and sennelier oil pastel on canvas<br>264.5 x 259.4 x 7.6 cm<br>104 1/8 x 102 1/8 x 3 in |
| 4 | <i>Auto-portrait 5</i> , 2023<br>Oil on linen<br>50.6 x 40.7 x 3.5 cm<br>19 7/8 x 16 x 1 3/8 in                                   | 5 | <i>In the Park</i> , 2025<br>Oil pastel, oil paint on canvas<br>161 x 214 x 3.5 cm<br>63 3/8 x 84 1/4 x 1 3/8 in | 6 | <i>Kembra/ Aishling</i> , 2025<br>Oil on canvas<br>46.5 x 35.9 x 3.4 cm<br>18 1/4 x 14 1/8 x 1 3/8 in                          |
| 7 | <i>Cheryl</i> , 2025<br>Oil, oil pastel, dry pastel, pigment stick on linen<br>185.2 x 234 x 3.5 cm<br>72 7/8 x 92 1/8 x 1 3/8 in | 8 | <i>Blue in Violet</i> , 2025<br>Oil on linen<br>50.8 x 40.8 x 4.2 cm<br>20 x 16 x 1 5/8 in                       |   |  |