



HARLAN LEVEY PROJECTS
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ZACH BRUDER

Hardscrabbled

June 8 - July 15, 2017

Harlan Levey Projects
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ZACH BRUDER

1984, Cleveland, Ohio. Lives and works in New York, NY

Get your facts first. Then you can distort them as you please. – Mark Twain

Hardscrabbled is the first exhibition in Belgium of Cleveland-born, New York-based painter Zach Bruder. Through a direct and graphic style, Bruder depicts intertwining religious, social, and often tragic narratives that are cribbed from an extensive archive of historic imagery and cultural myth. Trauma and anxiety run through the works, with various personal and civic fears enacted in delusional pasts and failed futures. The source material is that of frequent archetype, but the works deny a singular reading of either the source material or of the artist's intentions.

Throughout the works of the exhibition, Bruder imbues his motifs and references with a wry humor, turning assumptions and resonances back on themselves. In one series of paintings, Bruder depicts tightly-cropped solitary figures, each surrounded by a murky haze. The men assume a range of positions and roles: a backwards-looking figure sporting a red tuque, a silhouette in a trench coat bent forwards, a reclined demon with horns and pointed tail. The lone, wandering figure appears over and over again, its ambivalent references shooting back and forth: from Mark Twain, to Job, to the laborers of the contemporary workforce. In one work, *Crouching Figure*, an ape sits pensively, its inclusion simultaneously invited and challenged by its alien countenance.

A number of Bruder's recurring motifs are present within the exhibition, with many of them pointing towards relentless expansion. In *Filling In*, the outline of a simple house is reimposed upon itself, spreading outwards on the surface of the canvas. In another, *Western Pleasure*, a desert landscape is rendered in a verdant green, suggesting mankind's aspirations to colonize and terraform distant planets. *Previous Universal Moment* shows stars and orbs springing forth from a mountain range, pulling from an ancient, contested flat earth. These conquests are not without cost, though. In *Bad News Itself*, industrial structures appear in flames, and in *Departure*, two riders circle a blood-red lake. *Remove Doubt* and *Only Handle It Once* both show Casper-like ghosts carrying packages to be delivered, straddling the line between cute and horrifying.

Steeped within an endless stream of coded images, Bruder's paintings struggle with the worry that Groundhog Day is here again (and again) (and again) (and).

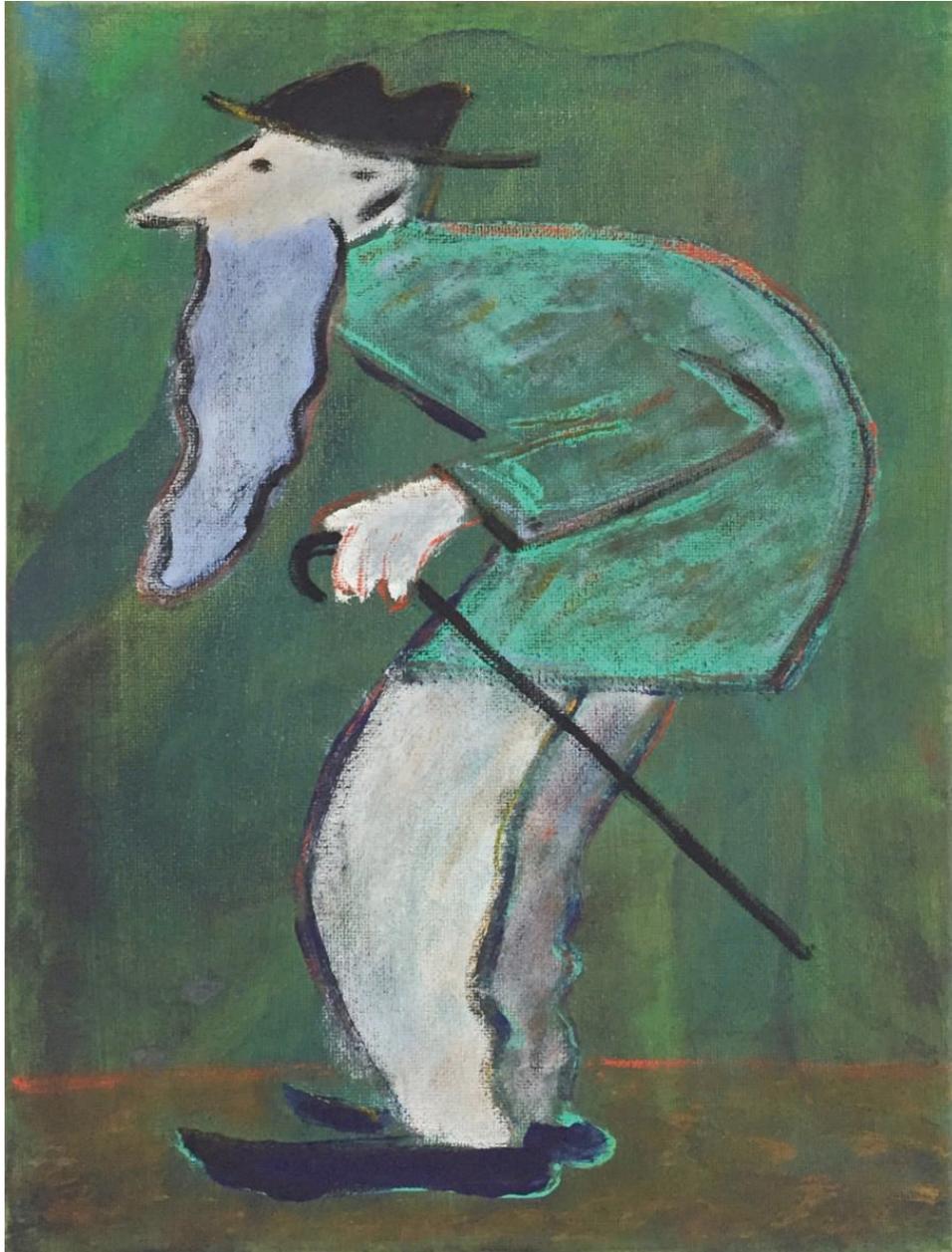
Zach Bruder (b. 1984) received his BFA from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2006. Recent exhibitions include "The Present Tense" at Ratio 3, "Monument Around" at Galerie l'inlassable, "Record Lines this Summer" at Magenta Plains, "Plant in Repair" at Gregory Lind Gallery, and "Unwelcome Guest" at LaMaMa Galleria. Bruder lives and works in New York, NY. This is the artist's first exhibition at Harlan Levey Projects.



Zach Bruder, *Hardscrabbled* exhibition view at Harlan Levey Projects, 2017



Zach Bruder
Arts & Letters, Acrylic and Flashe on canvas, 22x28inches/55,9x71,1cm, 2017



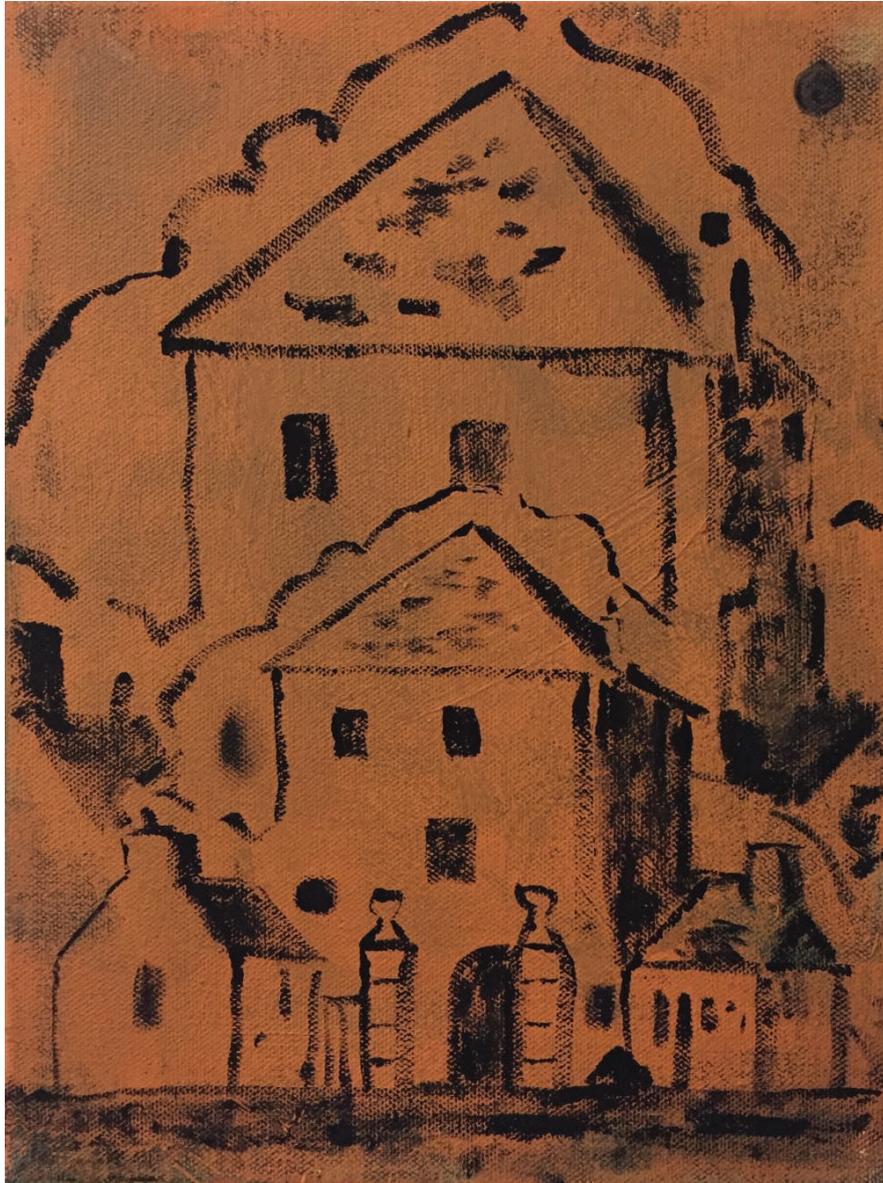
Zach Bruder
Auld Land Syne, Acrylic and Flashe on canvas, 12x9inches/30,5x22,9cm, 2016



Zach Bruder
Bad News Itself, Acrylic and Flashe on canvas, 26x20inches/40,6x50,8cm, 2017



Zach Bruder
Choice of Father, Acrylic and Flashe on canvas, 20x16inches/50,8x40,6cm, 2017



Zach Bruder
Filling in, Acrylic and Flashe on canvas, 12x9inches/30,5x22,9cm, 2016



Zach Bruder
Only Handle it Once, Acrylic and Flashe on canvas, 20x16inches/50,8x40,6cm, 2017



Zach Bruder
Remove Doubt, Acrylic and Flashe on linen, 36x40inches/91,4x101,6cm, 2017



Zach Bruder
Scrupled, Acrylic and Flashe on canvas, 8x10inches/20,3x25,4cm, 2017



Zach Bruder
Souise, Acrylic and Flashe on canvas, 14x11 inches/35,6x28cm, 2017



Zach Bruder
Crouching Figure, Acrylic and Flashe on canvas, 14x11 inches/51x41cm, 2017



Zach Bruder
Departure, Acrylic and Flashe on canvas, 22x28inches/55,9x71,1cm, 2017



Zach Bruder
Toiler, Acrylic and Flashe on canvas, 10x8inches/25,4x20,3cm, 2017



Zach Bruder
Western Pleasure, Acrylic and Flashe on canvas, 28x22inches/71,1x55,9cm, 2017



Zach Bruder
When By Edict, Acrylic and Flashe on canvas, 14x11 inches/50,8x40,6cm, 2017



Zach Bruder
Previous Universal Moment, Acrylic and Flashe on canvas, 16x12inches/40,6x30,5cm, 2016-2017