

PETER CHARLAP
RECENT WORK
NOHO M55 GALLERY
MARCH 11 - 29, 2026

“My first observation of Charlap’s figurative oil paintings is that they follow an internal logic of painting that dictates how everything should be painted, including the composition, color choices, form, details and patterns, and the quality of light... the paintings represent a kind of singularity on the canvas, that is the sum of the figures and the worlds or stories that collide and merge together as a cohesive vision.”

- artist and critic Chunbun Park, 2023, Emerging Whales Collective

From March 11- 29, Noho M55 Gallery will host an exhibition of recent paintings by Peter Charlap. The exhibition focuses on the series of large scale figure paintings begun during Covid that featured in Charlap’s previous exhibition at the gallery in April of 2023. The subject matter continues to examine people in daily circumstances. Each of the twelve 60” x 40” canvases depicts figures in unremarkable situations, the drama residing in the manner with which they occupy the rectangle and activate the picture plane. Some of the paintings utilize restricted palettes, such as grisaille and color opposites.

In addition to the paintings there is folding screen titled, “A Decorative Screen”. The content is a narrative that takes place on opposite sides of the screen.



Artists have traditionally painted on screens as above Edouard Vuillard on the left and Pierre Bonnard on the right. Interestingly, in the painting below, by Vuillard, the Bonnard screen is seen behind a sofa.



In his previous show Charlap characterized his approach to making paintings in terms of engaging in a conflict between the artist and the artwork. As the work unfolded the conflict evolved from a battle to a game, with both the artist and artwork finally at peace upon completion of the work. In the current series the approach has evolved. Rather than a conflict, the artist coaxes the image from the painting, trying to recognize cues and prompts that appear in the work as it unfolds. The process is not unlike a seance in which the artist is open to the inputs of the painting. Embarking often with only a rudimentary sketch the painting takes place without a specific goal in mind.

Due to this process, seeing the paintings objectively is an obstacle. He uses photographs of the paintings extensively as well as image editing tools, especially Autodesk Sketchbook, to examine potential directions with the work. Often, a variant of the work will appear through this process as is the case in this exhibition.

Peter Charlap (b. 1949, NY, NY) lives and works in the Hudson Valley. He attended the University of Pennsylvania (BFA) in 1972 and the Yale School of Art (MFA) in 1977. His work is included in the permanent collections of the Albrecht-Kemper Museum of American Art and the Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center.