



Myles Starr, Pinar, 2020, oil on polyester, 90 x 65 cm

Myles Starr Diploma exhibition  
*with great suffering comes great fried chicken*

Is a good diploma exhibition like a debutant at their first ball: respectful, learned, ready to be welcomed onto the market?

Or, like an intimate gathering before a plane back to the New World: the best moments relived, a last-minute confession, and a glance towards the future? A belief in the latter is what guided the development of this work.

I started with the material for the largest painting. I had been eying my bedspread since before it was mine. The thick, monochrome cotton interested me since I was a child. After sleeping with it for five years and knowing that I didn't want to waste the space in my suitcase home, I asked the same question I ask every object: Does it have the potential to be a good sculpture? Stretching it, I found it made a good ground, but there was more to be done.

The further development of the piece started with painting flowers. Their ambiguity and beauty have rewarded my work over and over again. Then, I went back to tools which worked for me previously: a fountain and a bag. Finishing the piece required some calls to people depicted in paintings on the opposite wall, some this month, many over the past five years, and I got there. A good sculpture and a good painting, maybe even in one.

When I painted those people, I knew I had trouble painting small and I always steer towards trouble. Any artist can do what they do well, but I want to confront what I do poorly. Despite their diminutive size, small figurative paintings are a mountain I want to climb, precisely because they present an uncomfortable, and therefore, fertile ground for exploration.

When it comes to sculpture, I live by reduction. In the studio and in life, I keep as few objects as possible, that way the ones that need to speak can do so. The box and its contents were my studio's centers of gravity. I couldn't throw them out. They had too much sculptural potential and they survived countless cullings. They are their own work now.

The painting of schafgabe on polyester is a taste of what is to come and where my work is strongest. When I use a lot of empty space and a dry damaged brush, painting not to depict while at the same time not abandoning figuration, I believe I have something to give to art and to painting in particular.

Myles Starr