



Tony Bluestone

## *The Passenger*

September 9 - October 8, 2022

Preview: September 8, 6-8 pm

Opening Reception: September 9, 6-8 pm

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

Freight+Volume is pleased to present *The Passenger*, a new body of work by Tony Bluestone. Just as the title suggests, *The Passenger* invites the viewer along for a ride through the world as Tony wishes it might be. These paintings—figurative in the sense that they are overflowing with figures—are abstracted and refracted through Tony’s deft and comedic strokes of color, until they become potently more than life.

“Isn’t it funny how things happen? All the shapes we make,” The Girl (played by Maria Schneider) says to David Locke (Jack Nicholson) in Antonioni’s *The Passenger* (1975). Tony borrowed the title for this show from, among other things, that film. And echoing The Girl, standing amongst these paintings, we marvel at how things happen and all the shapes we make.

So many! Tony could render the world exactly as it is, frame the social agreements of how things happen—how a body sits, a cloud billows. (Ask to see Tony’s sketchbook, the early drawings for these paintings are uncannily lifelike, as though charcoal rubbings of a moment.) But what’s the point in portraying a world people already believe in? Instead, Tony applies this virtuosity to looking at the shadows and highlights that, through their relation to one another, create an instant. Tony is working hard in these paintings, making sure we don’t forget that through our relationships we can re-make the world. These luminous reinterpretations of daily life are vibrating reminders of a specifically queer effort to resist the received structures of the ‘real’ world, proposing a shift in perspective every step of the way. Make-believe till you make it believed.

Tony’s whimsical manipulation of pigment and line (a blob a torso, an arm more color than strength) is not a shrug of indifference to form but, instead, the exact opposite, a spotlight on the emotional and structural qualities that turn the vibration of shapes and colors into a person’s experience of themselves and the world. In *Little Deaths*, Tony reanimates the experience of a person diving, of their friend diving in first, of Tony recalling the memory, so that the vantage point of the painting gets constructed out of this collaborative experience. There is a synesthesia at work; watching the painting feels like, no, *is* the dive—the curled toe, the fear when you start to jump, the ecstasy in the plunge, imagining someone watching you and someone watching them, the momentary oblivion of immersion. The diver in the painting is about to splash into their reflection (which in a comedic twist, has much better form), their relationship to their reflection is the catalyst for the disturbance to an otherwise calm surface, a literal and metaphoric ripple effect.



Until we enter the gallery, Tony's community is the star of the show. Painted from memory, their expressions are amalgamations. The typically salient social cues of everyday interactions become skewed as the laugh of one day merges with the upset outcry of another. Like all of the other paintings in the show, *Set and Setting* is painted from first-person perspective. And like the other paintings in the show, the perspective is not Tony's alone. Members of Tony's community are gathered within the shared frame of an outdoor theater, playing a mutual-game of make believe, and we are called in to do the same. Standing in front of *Set and Setting*, presumably on center stage, we return the audience's gaze, a mutual looking between two subjects. It is a fun-house mirror of witnessing and being witnessed that is ever exponential. And it repeats throughout the show as the role of the viewer shifts from work to work; the filmographer in *The Passenger*, the friend about to lose in *The Gambler*, blocking the wind in *Ritual*, googling "lesbian sex" in *I Just Googled "Lesbian Sex"*. The viewer is the final—and necessary—participant in Tony's paintings, their role to complete another cycle of relationships as they stand before the paintings and watch them progress.

Tony doesn't need to paint real life because Tony is really in life, making these paintings colloquial and skewed, mystical and quotidian, nudging us towards a complex shared experience. There seems to be a sort of entropy in looking at Tony's paintings; the more you stand there, the more that colors vibrate into something else, the more that depth appears, and the more that line transforms. Watching the paintings as a whole and individually, a further extrapolation of the theme suggests itself: a proposal for how we might rearrange ourselves into a better whole.

-Lydia Okrent



## Tony Bluestone

### Education

2001 Bard College, Annandale, NY. B.A, Department of Art

2014 Hunter College, New York, NY. MFA

### Solo and Two Person Exhibitions

2022 The Passenger, Freight and Volume, New York, NY

2022 (Upcoming) Tending, Gertrude, Great Barrington, MA

2021 Yoga Body, Prattsville Art Center, Prattsville, NY

2019 Critter Sitters, La Mama Gallery, New York, NY

2018 An Instant's Compass, Elaine L. Jacob Gallery, Wayne State, Detroit, MI

2017 Action Paintings, Larrie (Curated by Ashton Cooper), New York, NY

### Selected Group Exhibitions

2022 Plays Well With Others, Freight and Volume Gallery, New York, NY

2021 GMT, White Columns Online, (Curated by Sahal Hassan), New York, NY

2021 Where I End and You Begin, Richard and Dolly Maass Gallery, Purchase, NY

2020 Pungent Dystopia, Freight and Volume, New York, NY

2019 RomCom, Good Naked, Brooklyn NY

2019 Detroit Art Book Fair, AWHRHVAR, Detroit, MI

2019 Highway Blues (Curated by JJ Manford), Underdonk, Brooklyn, NY

2018 Cast of Characters, (Curated by Liz Collins), Bureau of General Services-Queer Division, New York, NY

2018 Wanderings and Wonderings, performance at Storm King Art Center, New Windsor, NY

2018 Drawings (Curated by Jason Fox), Frieze Art Fair; Canada Gallery, Randall's Island NY

2017 Other Romances Rachel Uffner, Curated by Em Rooney Gallery New York, NY

2017 The Exhibition of Work by Newly Elected Members and Recipients of Honors and Awards, The Academy of Arts and Letters, New York, NY

2017 Invitational Exhibition of Visual Arts, Academy of Arts and Letters, New York, NY

2017 Spread, Left Field Gallery, San Luis Obispo, CA

2016 Syntagma, Eugene Lang at The New School, New York, NY

2016 Verb List, Etay Gallery, New York, NY

2016 Wild Seeds, Temporary Agency, Brooklyn, NY

2015 Bacon Friday, Performance with Amanda Pohan (curated by Guadalupe Marvilla), Present Company, New York, NY

2015 Her(e) & Now, (curated by Judy Pfaff), N.A.W.A, New York, NY

2015 Alliance Biennial, (curated by Kat Griefan), St. Nicks Alliance, Brooklyn NY

### Awards/Residencies/Lectures

2021 DNA Artist Residency, Provincetown, MA

2020 DNA Artist Residency, Provincetown, MA

2020/21 Prattsville Art Center Community Residency, Prattsville, NY



2019 Rema Hort Mann Nominee  
2018 Artist Lecture, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI  
2018 Basil Alkazzi Detroit Residency, New York Foundation for the Arts, New York, NY  
2017 Resident at The Shandaken Project at Storm King  
2017 John Koch Award, Academy of Arts and Letters  
2017 Panelist at No Man's Land Panel Discussion, Temporary Agency, Brooklyn, NY  
2015 Finalist The Basil H. Alkazzi Award for Excellence in Painting  
2014 Resident at Vermont Studio Center

#### **Publications**

2020 Hoosac Journal #6, Wheel of Fortune 1 and 2!  
2018 Lavender Review, Issue 18  
2018 Hoosac Journal #2, Dear Lover in writing  
2018 Maake Magazine, Conversation with Mark Epstein  
2016 Ginger Zine Volume IV.  
2012 Exit Strada print volume II

#### **Collections**

Leslie-Lohman Museum of Art  
Wayne State University Art Collection

#### **Teaching Experience**

2022 *Critic in Painting*, Rhode Island School of Art and Design, Providence, RI  
2020-Present, *Adjunct Associate Professor of Painting*, Cooper Union, New York, NY  
2020- Present, *Adjunct Associate Professor of Painting*, SUNY Purchase, Harrison NY  
2018-Present, *Adjunct Associate Professor of Painting*, Hunter College, New York NY  
2019, *Adjunct Associate Professor of Painting*, Marymount College, New York NY  
2019 *Visiting Critic*, Pratt University, Brooklyn, NY  
2018 *Visiting Artist*, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI



## Tony Bluestone



Tony Bluestone (b. Englewood, New Jersey) received an MFA from Hunter college and has participated in residencies including The Shandanken Project, The Basil Alakazi Residency in Detroit, DNA Residency in Provincetown and The Prattsville Art Center. She has had solo shows at Elaine L Jacob gallery at Wayne State University in Detroit, at Larrie Gallery and a Two-Person Show at La Mama Gallery. She has had work in group shows at Rachel Uffner, Freight and Volume, the Academy of Arts and Letters, the New School, Etay Gallery, and Left Field Gallery, and has also performed written works at Storm King Art Center. In 2017, she was awarded the John Koch Award by the Academy of Arts and Letters. Bluestone is a teacher at Cooper Union and Hunter College