

**PATRICK SHOEMAKER**

***Fire on Fire***

February 25 – April 2, 2016

Opening Reception: Thursday, February 25, 6-8PM

Anna Zorina Gallery is pleased to present the solo exhibition, *Fire on Fire*, featuring the paintings of Patrick Shoemaker. The artist depicts his subjects incited by a flaming passion essential to the polar ends of the spectrum between love and hate. Fire embodies the same double-edged character of a pharmakon, a dual reference to both a cure and a poison in ancient Greek, the substance is a remarkably vital resource that can be deadly as well. The reflexive nature of the exhibition title *Fire on Fire* reveals an ambiguous center of the inherent binary interpretation. This self-reference can allude to an opposition of divided forces or to the fueling of the element's volatile power through unification. Visually, this indistinct relationship is represented in Shoemaker's paintings by representing figures in interactions of unclear intention. Outstretched hands and claws interlock in a hug or possibly a violent grasp.

Shoemaker reflects upon representations of stories and values from previous cultures with a focus on how their imagery connected to a unique oral language. Shoemaker mimics the loose brushstroke style used in depictions of animals found in cave paintings meanwhile infusing a contemporary approach with the use of bright color and lush layers of oil paint. This method represents our current viewpoint on the visual remnants of a society relegated to the past. Portrayals of a lifestyle can provide clues to the particular elements of routine, religious beliefs, or emotions. These universal rudiments of human life are now skewed through a different contextual understanding. Human's relationship to nature is unclear. Was the animal depicted upon the cave wall a beast, a pet, or a god? Due to the slipperiness of modes of communication, these stories are able to transform into myth and folklore. Shoemaker captures how the ambiguity of a story's faded intention perhaps makes the message more compelling and personally applicable. He allows for the viewer to decide his intrinsic sentiments. Through avoiding a succinct visual representation, Shoemaker casts an ambivalent view of what was left behind by the unknown artists of the past, and thus captures the entire spectrum of meaning.

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