



Seven Baltimore-based artists on the rise — and on display across the nation

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Tony Shore, 'Painting in the Dark'

Anna Zorina Gallery 532 W. 24th St., New York Through April 6



Tony Shore's 2023 piece "Venice." (Courtesy of Anna Zorina Gallery)

Velvet has historically been associated with royalty and wealth since it's very expensive to make and has a luxurious surface. In more modern times, black velvet has been affiliated with depictions of Elvis Presley, like the Alannah Myles power ballad, and more generally, synonymous with kitsch and camp works of art. However, one Baltimore-based artist has become a champion of the material, using its light-absorbing properties to create night visions in hyper contrast, more like the Renaissance master painter Caravaggio than Thomas Kinkade, the corny "painter of light."

Tony Shore has been painting on black velvet for close to 30 years, depicting white, blue-collar Baltimore life in dusky night scenes where silhouettes and shadows add high drama. In an approach described as "cinematic," Shore portrays quotidian, everyday events, but there's always something vaguely off or possibly threatening about his vignettes. Emerging from the dense, absorbent blackness of the velvet, Shore's figures and scenes are vivid but also mysterious and private. As the viewer of these intimate settings, you're able to peek into these moments to figure out if you are witnessing a crime or an innocent, ordinary happening as they emerge from the shadows.

Shore is a Baltimore native, a graduate of MICA and Yale, and a faculty member of MICA's Painting Department. He won the Sondheim Prize in 2007 and his work has been featured in a number of museum and gallery exhibits in Baltimore, New York, Los Angeles and internationally. This month at Anna Zorina, located in the heart of New York's Chelsea gallery district, Shore's paintings have the opportunity to resonate with an international audience and collector base. And heading to Anna Zorina, which has also exhibited Baltimore-based artists Charles Mason III and MICA graduate Mark Fleuridor, provides a great excuse to buy an affordable train ticket to spend a day visiting some of the world's best art galleries.