



M A R K M I L R O Y

C O W B O Y U P

JUNE 17TH - JULY 30TH, 2023

Opening Reception

June 17th 2pm - 6pm

Hawk + Hive

Andes, NY

www.hawkandhive.com

Mark Milroy's narrative paintings exude a certain kind of magic. He is deeply engaged with memories of growing up in St Thomas, Ontario, a childhood where the woods, lakes and rivers formed a backdrop to unsupervised escapades and the wildest of high jinks. This engagement with the wonder of the natural world, and the stimulation of experience throughout his life, provide fertile material for this body of work. The oil paintings, ranging from portraiture and landscape to still-life (and sometimes all three in a single work) blend the line between truth and fiction, they tell compelling, ambiguous stories sprung from memory, coupled with the power of artistic invention. For Milroy, this ambiguity leaves space for the viewer to come to the paintings with their own interpretation:

"I draw upon experiences and poignant moments from my life for imagery, my goal is to convey some of the very honest moments of humor, oddness, frustration, joy, wonder, and pain that I have felt. Everything I choose has meaning to me and to the world that surrounds me. I attempt to make paintings that are poetic and filled with metaphor."

The phrase "cowboy up" originated from the world of rodeo and cowboy culture, but transcended its initial context to become a symbol of perseverance in the face of adversity. It embodies a mindset of resilience, self-sufficiency, and a never-give-up attitude. Milroy grew up surrounded by children in a family with 5 siblings, an extended group of childhood friends and is himself the father of two sons. He explains the figures in the series representing the notion of youth and boyhood, but also as versions or ideas of himself. About the phrase, he writes:

"...cowboy up" encompasses so much of what I feel, and have felt, it naturally belongs to these paintings. We are all faced with challenges through life, and it's about how we respond. You dust yourself off and get on with it".

Milroy has captured something of the zeitgeist in this series, with a new generation of artists returning to narrative and representational painting as a form to offer fresh perspectives of the world we live in. Autobiographical narratives allow the artist to infuse the work with experience, memory and a sense of identity. The power of Milroy's paintings lies in their ability to provoke thought, illicit an emotional response and engage viewers in a conversation about the human condition.

Milroy received his MFA from The New York Studio School of Painting, Drawing and Sculpture a BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and has exhibited in galleries in New York City, Brooklyn, Chicago, LA, Sag Harbor, and Canada. His work has been featured in Architectural Digest Spain, Vogue Living, Domino, The Paris Review Daily, Columbia: A Journal of Art & Literature. Milroy's work has been written about in City Arts Magazine, Domino Magazine, The East Hampton Star, New York Arts Magazine, The New York Times, Tokion Magazine and The Washington Post. He teaches a portrait class at the National Arts Club NYC and is Artist in Residence at Marymount NYC. He was awarded a Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant in 2023. He lives and works in Brooklyn, NY.

Exhibition Preview [HERE](#) Catalogue Essay [HERE](#)

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