

TOTAH

ARCHIE RAND

Sweet Sixteen

July 14th - August 21st, 2021

TOTAH presents *Sweet Sixteen*, featuring new paintings by Archie Rand, on view from July 14th through August 21st, 2021. This is Rand's second solo exhibition with the gallery.

The recent paintings of Archie Rand communicate an alternative history. The materiality of acrylic paint on canvas serves as the substrate for erotic hallucinations, equal parts grandiose and modest, playful and austere. Just like the carefully balanced, otherworldly vistas he depicts, the viewer is invited to linger on each painting and insert his or her own narrative into the images presented there. Titled after the prophets of the Old Testament, the paintings included in *Sweet Sixteen* could be considered open-ended tableaux. The overt sexuality depicted in each work functions like a scrim through which more subtle visual relationships draw the viewer's attention.

Despite their narrative intent, Rand's pictures never suggest a before or an after. Instead, since every figure or scene coexists with very different figures and scenes, the viewer asks what these parts of a painting might mean. In a work like *Jeremiah*, for instance, the man with an erection in the painting's foreground is either content or, less convincingly, form. Figuration touches on symbolism without being inherently symbolic. A hunchback holding a lantern, a dreamcatcher designed like a moon, a woman whose face seems to come from another painting entirely: the totality of these figurative elements, when condensed into the space of a picture, take on potentially symbolic values.

The directness of Rand's work forms a stark contrast to their sexual suggestiveness. However concrete, wilding and explicit his figures might appear, they radiate an aura of innocence. The exactitude of their portrayal reverses back on itself, lending all 16 paintings an indefinite meaning despite the clarity of what they represent. Giving off the storied impression of a dream, the imagery Rand puts to use conveys a multitude of meanings where the mores of social propriety are disabused of their common, utilitarian purpose.

Archie Rand (born 1949) has occupied noteworthy space in the abstract, color-field, representational, and symbolist landscapes over the course of his more than fifty-year career. He first exhibited in 1966 at the Tibor de Nagy Gallery in New York after having attended the Art Students League and later received a Bachelor of Fine Arts in cinegraphics from Pratt Institute. He continues to collaborate and publish with poets such as Robert Creeley, John Ashbery, and Anne Waldman. Rand is currently Presidential Professor of Art at Brooklyn College, having previously been chair of the Department of Visual Arts at Columbia University. Rand's work has been the subject of retrospectives at venues ranging from the Cincinnati Contemporary Art Center to the Museo Palazzo Ducale of Genoa. Public collections include The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Museum of Modern Art, The Whitney Museum of American Art, The Art Institute of Chicago, The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, The Smithsonian Institution, The Brooklyn Museum, The Carnegie Museum of Art, The Bibliotheque Nationale de France, The Victoria and Albert Museum in London, and numerous university archives.

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