

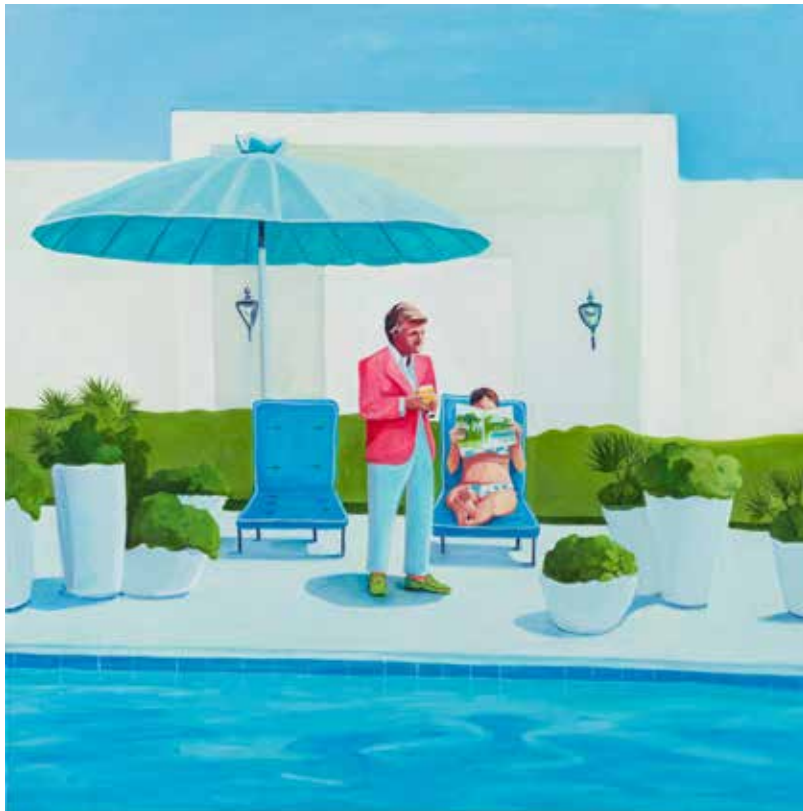
RACHEL LEE HOVNANIAN

BEYOND THE HEDGES

Paintings by Rachel Lee Hovnanian

March 8 - March 22, 2024

C O U N T Y, Palm Beach



Uncle Henri, Rachel Lee Hovnanian, 2023

Palm Beach, Florida – We are pleased to announce that Miami-based conceptual artist and painter **Rachel Lee Hovnanian** has unveiled her latest series of paintings at C O U N T Y in Palm Beach. Artist Hovnanian created this new work during the lockdown of Covid. **BEYOND THE HEDGES** features 9 large-scale oil on canvas depictions of individuals and couples in outdoor pool and garden settings, accompanied by 9 mixed-media oil and acrylic on canvas paintings of women's robes fading into wallpaper or fading into the depths of garden hedges and a collection of work on paper robes. She combines unexpected imagery using printed photographs, painting, advertising, and mixed media to create heavily layered canvases, images of nature, and reconfigured landscapes, creating a hyper-real environment. The lush green foliage may appear inviting and beautiful, but it also serves as a barrier that reinforces the sense of isolation and confinement that each experiences in the painting. The paintings depict individuals who have created a walled paradise for themselves, each cut off from the world and each other by abstract petrified plantings surrounding them. The bright blues and greens of the pool, pool house, garden, topiary, and hedges stand in stark contrast to the aloof, blank faces of the people depicted in the artwork. The pandemic brought unprecedented challenges, including isolation, fear, and uncertainty. In response, this work offers vibrant hues aimed at transporting the viewer to a realm of reflection, meditation, and hope. The strong colors symbolize Hovnanian's belief in resilience and enduring spirit, fostering a sense of unity and optimism in the face of adversity.

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Her paintings show how individuals have become disconnected from the world and each other, trapped in a cycle of consumption, synthetic substitutions, and desire surrounded symbolically by luxurious hedges and plantings. The impenetrable protective hedges are a barrier between a synthetic paradise and the outside world. The stark pool and pool house areas surrounded by hedges, serve as a symbol of restraint and captivity. The hedges also symbolize how power shapes our social interactions, creating a sense of separation and distance between those with access to the pool or garden and those without access.



Flamingo Pink Robe, Rachel Lee Hovnanian, 2023

Rachel Lee Hovnanian comments,

"The happiness derived from constant technological connectivity and communication results in the deterioration of genuine human experiences and meaningful connections. In this hyper-real world, we may have lost touch with our real selves. The constant texting and consuming have possibly left us feeling empty, isolated, and disconnected leading to a spiritual aloneness. Technology and synthetic substitutions may mask emptiness, but meaningful connections with others are essential for real pleasure and the Covid lockdown underscored this for me. I felt that the absence of genuine human interaction can erode the joy that technology promises. I hope that this work shares the power of our sense of community belonging and our need for meaningful relationships."

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Rachel Lee Hovnanian was born in West Virginia and raised in Houston, Texas. Hovnanian is a Miami-based artist whose multidisciplinary practice explores the complexities of modern feminism, ideals of perfection, and the effects of media on the collective consciousness. She received her BFA from the University of Texas, Austin, and has since exhibited in solo and group exhibitions in the United States, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East.

In December of 2023, Hovnanian opened her new studio with *Perception*, an intimate presentation of artworks from her oeuvre. Also In 2023, Hovnanian's *Mind the Body* installation was selected as part of a group exhibition in Pietrasanta, which later was exhibited as part of a group exhibition of female sculptors, *The Divine Feminine*, on view at the Ann Norton Museum and Sculpture Gardens until April 2024.

Upcoming in late March 2024, Hovnanian's solo exhibition, *You Are Not Alone, Angels Listening*, will be on view at Chiesa di Sant' Agostino in Pietrasanta, Italy, alongside an installation of a monumental large-scale sculpture, *Poor Teddy in Repose*, in the Pietrasanta Square. Hovnanian's upcoming exhibition in Pietrasanta is accompanied by a special book titled, *You Are Not Alone*, which will publish anonymous confessional messages from Hovnanian's 2022 Biennale presentation of *Angels Listening*. Her work is in the collections of private individuals, corporations, and museums.

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ABOUT THE GALLERY

C O U N T Y is located in Palm Beach, Florida. Established in 2016, the gallery hosts contemporary works by emerging and mid-career American, European, and African artists, including VR, sculpture, new media, and painting. The gallery's artists have featured works and are included in the following public and private collections: Centre Pompidou (Paris, France); Museum of Modern Art (New York); the Pérez Museum (Miami), Rubell Museum (Miami, D.C.); the British Museum (UK); the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Hammer Museum (Los Angeles), The Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York); the Moderna Museet (Stockholm), the Bunker (Collection of Beth Rudin DeWoody), West Palm Beach, FL; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (CA); the Stedelijk Museum (Breda and Amsterdam, Netherlands); Hall Art Foundation (US); the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago (Chicago, IL); Kadist Foundation (San Francisco), Zabudowicz Collection (London, UK); Louvre Museum, (Paris, FR); Cleveland Institute of Art, (Cleveland, OH); K11 Museum of Art, (Shanghai, China); Kiasma Contemporary Museum of Art, (Helsinki, Finland); Carnegie Museum of Art, (Pittsburgh, PA); among others.

C O U N T Y
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