

## George Rush at Belle Isle Viewing Room

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These nine small gouache paintings presented at Belle Isle Viewing Room were made as part of a larger series that will debut at The Contemporary Dayton, an upcoming solo show featuring over 200 new pieces by George Rush.



*Quantitative Easing*

The scenes in these nine paintings were based on cell phone pictures that were taken at the Barcelona Pavilion, a modernist building designed by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and Lilly Reich, built in 1929. While using this famous pavilion as the backdrop to the figures in these scenes, interactions with modern architecture come into play to highlight a sensorial experience that underlines the qualities of modernist and minimalist thought. This particular building is known as an important structure within the history of Modern architecture and the presentation of van der Rohe within the city of Detroit is also interestingly relevant. Mies van der Rohe's work has existed within the city of Detroit as an oasis in the form of high-rise apartment buildings and condominiums that certainly seem to live in contrast to their neighboring communities. Mies van der Rohe himself was known for his ability to achieve extreme clarity and simplicity in his designs, calling his buildings "skin and bones" architecture with the motto "less is more" or "God is in the details". Despite the fact that the philosophy that drove Modernist architects, like van der Rohe, was focused on transparency and accessibility through the stripping of ornament, the price to interact with such spaces is defined by class, especially in a city like Detroit. But, for those who are able to access these spaces, minimalism's ability to get to the point allows for alternative dimensions of awareness to take place, triggering a hyper-focus on the present moment as if inside a lens of observation.



*Paradox of Thrift (detail)*



*George Rush at Belle Isle Viewing Room*

It is not a surprise that Rush would present such scenes, as he has been carving a place for himself within modern abstraction for years, incorporating an array of aesthetic references, utilizing and tweaking pre-existing techniques, and inventing his own, to add to the ongoing conversation. His informed perspective allows for a level of confidence in decision making that feels sure and is convincing. There is a focus on the collaging of elements, as if every moment and everything is a component of a temporary still-life. As a foundation, this perspective seems to have been feeding the practice of George Rush. In addition to the conscious use of mark-making, color, composition and subject matter, the layering that takes place within the images produced by the artist over the years, and their relation to the spaces they are in, continuously form abstractions out of our surroundings.



*Production Gap*



As seen in the works at Belle Isle Viewing Room, the visual layering that took place when interacting with the Barcelona Pavilion contributes to a sort of muddled feedback loop of shadows and reflections that influence how the subjects and objects are perceived. This creates a multi-layered visual experience that is underlined by the fact that the paintings are also framed and behind glass, adding another layer of reflection. An interesting phenomenon here is that while the paintings are being viewed by real humans in the space, there is again a visual looping as the figures in the space at Belle Isle Viewing Room mimic the figures in the paintings. This recalls previous exhibitions by George Rush where he introduced wall paintings as backdrops to the artworks that were installed in a space. Not only do the spaces he chooses to exhibit in often resemble the spaces in his paintings, but various other elements, like the wall paintings for example, allow his work to continue to mirror and echo. The backdrop type line work added to white walls in previous exhibitions mimic and expand the paintings outside of their frame just as the figures looking at the paintings do, contributing to the projection of the painted world into the world outside of the painting and allowing viewers to feel immersed as if they are inside paintings themselves.



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[www.belleisleviewingroom.com](http://www.belleisleviewingroom.com)

**GEORGE RUSH**

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