

Bill Saylor: *LOW LEVEL HIGH*

March 9–April 22, 2023

Opening Reception: Thursday, March 9, 6–8 PM

Lower Level

Magenta Plains is pleased to present *LOW LEVEL HIGH*, Bill Saylor's third solo exhibition with the gallery. Consisting of four new monumentally scaled paintings and a sculptural bench, this exhibition is a testament to Saylor's uniquely powerful gestural abstraction and the continued evolution of his work on such a substantial scale.

This new body of work continues to build on Bill Saylor's career-long experimentation in painting and expressive world-building. In this iteration, he has embraced a more aggressively iconic style, bringing in fragments of his well-known creatures and placing them amidst a muscular abstracted field. These compositions are exercises in material with dense, thick passages of paint, distinct from the artist's sketchier, graffiti-inspired compositions yet combining elements of action painting with his characteristic iconography of marine and reptilian life.

These massive paintings represent a new step for Saylor, expanding beyond what he calls "the body gesture" to work with a kind of graphic mark-making based on similarly scaled visual references, such as maps of weather patterns. Drawing across hundreds of miles of landscape, these maps provide inspiration for a looser, more textural style of painting than is typical to Saylor's oeuvre. The exhibition also includes a sculptural bench in the mode of Franz West: this semi-circular seat is inhabited by one of Saylor's totemic busts. An extraterrestrial with a serpentine aspect, this figure brings the lounging viewer into the volatile world of Saylor's paintings.

LOW LEVEL HIGH speaks to this group of paintings in several ways. On a literal level, the title references the uniquely high ceilings of the lower level gallery space and how Saylor's paintings fit within them. In line with Saylor's visual inspiration for these works, "low level high" is a meteorological term which refers to a ribbon of air in the lower atmosphere which transports warm, moist air from the equator to more northerly regions of the Earth, as well as a cheeky reference to the artist's psychedelic experiences. Embracing all the dimensions of his practice in this exhibition, Saylor explores the depth of his uniquely evocative world with dynamic painterly bravado.

Bill Saylor (b. 1960, Willow Grove, PA) has held solo exhibitions at Magenta Plains, New York, NY; Galerie Julien Cadet, Paris, FR; Leo Koenig Inc., New York, NY; The Journal Gallery, Brooklyn, NY; and Loyal Gallery, Stockholm, SE. Two-person shows include *Bill Saylor & Josh Smith* at Hiromi Yoshii Gallery, Tokyo, JP; *Bill Saylor & Aidas Bareikis* at Shoot The Lobster, New York, NY; *Bill Saylor & Donald Baechler* at Makebish, New York, NY; and *Mason Saltarrelli and Bill Saylor* at Shrine, New York, NY. Saylor was included in *Animal Farm* at the Brant Foundation and has participated in group exhibitions at Venus Over Manhattan, NY; CANADA, New York, NY; Martos Gallery, Los Angeles, CA; MIER Gallery, Los Angeles, CA; Ceysson & Bénétière, Luxembourg and Yerba Buena Art Center, San Francisco, CA. Saylor's work was also included in *Contemporary Painting* curated by Alex Katz at the Colby College Museum of Art in 2004. In 2010, Saylor collaborated on the zine "Ho Bags" with Harmony Korine and he was an artist-in-residence at the Chinati Foundation in Marfa, TX. Bill Saylor lives and works in Upper Black Eddy, PA and Brooklyn, NY.