



art + crush

August 15- September 10 2014 Opening reception: August 15th 7-10pm Gallery hours: Friday- Saturday 11-5pm

Platform Gallery is pleased to present **art + crush**, on view at 116 W Mulberry Street. This group exhibition will highlight the concept of the art crush- a phenomenon where an artist would admire, follow, and be inspired by another artist. Following the different ages and stages of art crushes, this exhibition will include the works by painters: **Xinyi Cheng, Benjamin Degen, Louis Fratino, and David Humphrey.**

Crushes are more popularly recalled as painfully beautiful experiences of infatuation. They are loyal loves from afar that usually end in some sort of odd admiration. Due to the expanse of the internet, crushes can now blossom without even the slightest of communication. To develop an art crush, an artist must be faithfully dedicated to support and awe of another artist's work and studio practice. Artists have always looked to their superiors and peers for inspiration and guidance. Some have gone so far as to create their own adopted family of generations of past artists that they believe will continue to influence their work. Art + Crush is an investigation into the relationships between the crusher and the crushed.

art + crush began with the work of Louis Fratino, a BFA Painting candidate from Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA) expected to graduate in Spring 2015. Fratino, a Maryland native, creates work from an elusive standpoint looking back into his life experiences. His paintings look back to specific memories that are poignant in their simplicity. Fratino creates a visual logic through pinpointed detail and vibrant colors. A candy wrapper or a sock will have the same amount of detail and precision as a figure. His grasp on the mundane in its sad and humorous qualities has already received recognition. Fratino was awarded the Morris Louis '32 Scholarship from MICA (2014) and has recently attended the Yale Norfolk Summer School of Art and Music for Painting. When asked about his current art crushes, Fratino gushed about the work of Xinyi Cheng and Benjamin Degen. Crossovers were apparent, and it became essential to introduce the artists to each other.

Xinyi Cheng, born in Wuhan, China, recently graduated with an MFA from the Mount Royal School of Art at MICA. She describes herself as an artist that, "paints hairy white men and warped interior space." Her works stems from a need to create work that is evocative of not only her emotions, but multiple layers of feeling that evolve over time. Similar to Fratino, Cheng's structure of space within her paintings and etchings are based on her logic. Combined with her use of light and temperature, each moment is seen as a sticky still frame in time. Cheng spent the summer at Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, and will be attending Wassia Artist Residency. Her work has also been shown in New York, New Jersey, Boston, and Maryland. Cheng reciprocated Fratino's art crush when notified, and both artists actually follow each other's studio practices. In addition to admiring Fratino's paintings, Cheng expressed interest in the work of David Humphrey.

It was a delightful surprise to hear interest from both well-established artists, Benjamin Degen and David Humphrey, about showing their work in **art + crush**. Both humble artists seemed tickled by the idea of having their crushers introduced to them, and were actually impressed by the talented work produced by Cheng and Fratino. Degen, Cooper Union graduate and New York City based artist, creates work based on the interplay of elements from Eastern and Western culture. Fratino and Degen both look to American Folk Art and Mughal miniature paintings as a source of inspiration. Degen's figures represent a flatness that is integrated into his compositions through the thick layering of paint in the textured patterns surrounding the figure. Both the subject of the work and the painting as an object are balanced with the equal attention. Degen has had solo exhibitions at Susan Inglett Gallery, Guild and Greyshkul Gallery and Museum 52 in New York City as well as Kantor Feuer Gallery in Los Angeles, and Medium Gallery in St. Barthelemy (French West Indies). His work has been featured in group shows in the US, Europe and Asia. His artworks are included in the permanent collections of the MoMA, The Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, and The Collezione Maramotti.

To bring the **art + crush** to a full circle, David Humphrey, similar to Fratino received his BFA from MICA. Since then, Humphrey earned an MA from New York University and attained international recognition for his work. Humphrey looks to reinvent and create from the idea that everything has already been invented. He enjoys copying amateur work, and working with the idea of creating with naivety. Humphrey, similar to Cheng plays with sexual undertones, but approaches the subject fast and loose. Humphrey has shown nationally and internationally and he has received a Guggenheim Fellowship and the Rome Prize among other awards. His collections include the Museum of Art, Carnegie Institute, the Cleveland Center for Contemporary Art, the Denver Art Museum, the Goetz Collection, Munich, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Fine Art, Boston, the Walker Art Center, the Whitney Museum of Art, and the Yale University Art Gallery, among others.