

## Hugh Steers' "The Nullities of Life" at Alexander Gray Associates, New York

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"Saucepan," 1988, by Hugh Steers (1962-1995, Washington), Oil on gessoed paper, 10.30h x 14.30w in (26.16h x 36.32w cm) © Estate of Hugh Steers, Alexander Gray Associates, New York (Courtesy: Alexander Gray Associates, New York)

Before he passed away because of AIDS-related complications in 1995, [Hugh Steers](#) was a prolific and resonant artist. The Alexander Gray Associates gallery in New York is presenting Steers' later emotive works, from the late 1980s and early 1990s in "The Nullities of Life," on view venue until July 20, 2018.

The exhibition features a selection of paintings and works on paper, highlighting Steers' interest in capturing what he once described as his "nullities of life" — seemingly insignificant moments rendered extraordinary through luminous color, light and evocative forms.

According to the gallery, Steers' art recall his assertion that his work deals in "gorgeous bleakness" through dazzling color, rich fabrics, and the quiet domesticity of daily life. It appears that his art communicates joy even in the face of despair. By painting everyday moments that are imbued with a disconcerting charge, his scenes invite ambiguous narratives of mortality, defiance, and compassion. These themes are omnipresent in "Mr. Coffee," 1993, which portrays a seated man loosely embracing a standing figure in a sparse kitchen. For Steers, such subject matter reflected his own desires. As the artist himself once explained, "I would like to be able to act or have someone care about me the way some of the people in my paintings act or care about each other. It's as if painting it will make it become real."

"Transforming mundane moments and prosaic spaces into tableaux suffused with longing, loneliness, fear, and eroticism, Steers' paintings inhabit a melancholy architecture of intense emotion. As he wrote, 'I think I'm in the tradition of a certain kind of American artist ... Edward Hopper, Jackson Pollock, Franz Kline ... They found beauty in the most brutal forms. I think that's what characterizes America ... that soft glow of brutality.' Capturing the 'soft glow of brutality,' his images — sensuous and unsettling — gain new resonance in a contemporary art landscape informed by a return to figuration and a critical reappraisal of art from the 1980s and early 1990s," says the gallery.

Hugh Steers' work was recently featured in AIDS at Home: Art and Everyday Activism at the Museum of the City of New York, NY (2017) and Art AIDS America, curated by Jonathan Katz and Rock Hushka, at the Tacoma Art Museum, WA (2015); West Hollywood Library and One Archives Gallery and Museum, Los Angeles, CA (2015); Zuckerman Museum of Art, Kennesaw, GA (2016); Bronx Musuem of the Arts, New York, NY (2016); and Alphawood Foundation, Chicago, IL (2016).

*"The Nullities of Life" is on view through July 20, 2018 at Alexander Gray Associates, 510 West 26 Street, New York NY 10001- US.*

*For details, visit: <http://admin.blouinartinfo.com/galleryguide/alexander-gray-associates/overview>*

*Click on the slideshow for a sneak peek at the exhibition.*

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Founder: Louise Blouin