

Jesse Mockrin
NIGHT GALLERY

March 12, 2016-April 16, 2016

- Meg Whiteford

Jesse Mockrin's solo exhibition of paintings, "The Progress of Love," abounds with lissome motifs—a crown of roses, fanciful androgynes, King Charles spaniels, beribboned doves—that compose a gilded time spent meandering the hedges of a leisurely existence. The figures throughout are supple and boneless evocations of Botticellis or genderless Little Lord Fauntleroy's indulging in some mischief or superficial pleasure. Mockrin tapers these characters via the canvases' margins, focusing on hems and décolletage. You know, the feminine details. This oblique placement of her subjects curves the gaze toward the ambiguous, suspending the viewer in the romance of looking. In *Moonage Daydream*, 2015, does the hand bind another's arm or is it reaching to tie its brother? Or is it instead unraveling the rope? Is the figure of *The Timid Lover*, 2016, plucking from a rosebush or recoiling from having pricked her finger upon its thorns? The narrative fluidity here is set against vacuous black backgrounds, an ascetic displacement that heightens the paintings' intricacies to the realm of Drama. Their sensuality peekaboos from behind satin curtains and flutters to the surface.

But the decadence of such a life, like a fashionable silk ribbon or a vase bursting with cut orchids, is destined to deteriorate. We are as beholden to the past as we are to the future—life and death. These paintings are ornamental potpourri to perfume a fetid room, modish vanitas for a momentary and luscious life.



Jesse Mockrin,
The Timid Lover, 2016,
Oil on canvas,
37 x 25 in.