

## Nolan Simon

### *Other People*

March 1 – April 7, 2019

The toes of a New Balance sneaker touch a studio floor. The figure's foot is extended, but without strain. The body rests outside the frame. Another painting depicts a similar step, but this foot wears a semi-brogue. The floor is a dark, celestial speckle, and blends with the pattern of a curiously weightless sock. Thin black shoelaces arc downwards like the ears of a young dog.

A hand, sporting a gold wedding ring, holds the style section of a Sunday broadsheet. Splashed across the front page is a photograph of another hand, which fastens the laces of a brown shoe. A headline declares "Life an..." but the rest of the text cannot be read. Split down its middle, the scene is modeled like an unbuttoned garment that frames the soft shadows of a naked torso. Dotted by a few small moles, the torso intrudes into the painting's foreground.

A face, withdrawn in contemplation, is reflected in a window. Transparency, in this image, is a trap. Head tilted, and eyes directed at the ground, the subject evades the viewer.

Phrases are repeated in Nolan Simon's paintings, but with strange misalignments. The brushwork is careful yet subtly disobedient. There is a process of translation, but it is impure. A foot is washed in tea. A teacup catches the liquid. There is a sense that a spillage is only just contained.

Feet, hands, chests and backs populate Simon's gaze, but we see less of the limbs that conjoin these. At once objective and unfixated, each painting takes a found photograph as its source. The connections that surround the original images are difficult to trace, their context shed in the oceans of visual information that submerge the everyday world. A person becomes a pair of hands lifting an iPhone, and its unbearable mass, above purplish, lukewarm bathwater. In these detached, fragmentary portraits, questions about intimacy are posed. Privacy is staged. Spontaneity is contested. Meaning builds like waves rippling against the side of a tub as the body, gliding gently downwards, rests.