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Goings on About Town “Gregory Edwards”

By Johanna Fateman

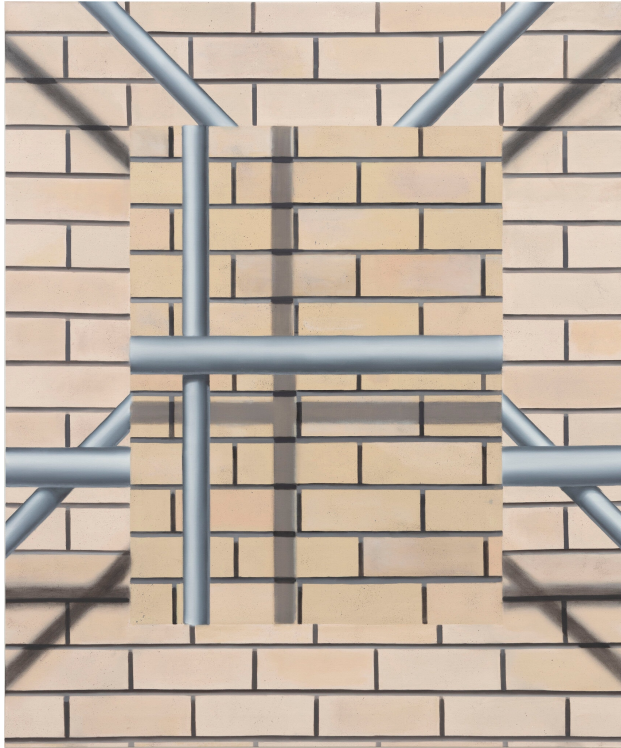
Today’s flâneur likely carries a smartphone, strolling while scrolling and taking pictures of whatever catches the eye. In the crisply rendered series “Pedestrian Paintings” (at the 47 Canal gallery), Edwards conveys this new digitally enhanced experience, nesting images in other images, all derived from his personal archive of street photography. These square canvases exude an observant dispassion—Edwards’s paint handling is uniform and unexpressive—but there’s a considered lyricism in their juxtapositions. One painting shows what looks to be a deflated ball, emblazoned with a smiley face, resting on asphalt in daylight; the toy’s bright yellow echoes the glare of headlights in the image of traffic that frames it. Nearby, a mostly grisaille composition makes shadows its theme—a silhouette of stacked street signs is inset into a scene of sun-dappled concrete. In these paintings, Edwards handily pauses our mode of endless screen time and distraction, offering moments of visual serendipity for contemplation instead.

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January 6, 2021

“3 Art Gallery Shows to See Right Now”

By Martha Schwendener



Gregory Edwards's "Pedestrian Painting 9," from 2018.

Gregory Edwards

The title of Gregory Edwards's exhibition "[Pedestrian Paintings](#)" at [47 Canal](#) is a little disingenuous. Yes, the paintings depict subjects drawn from photographs he takes while walking through New York. They are hardly pedestrian in the other sense of the word, however — which is to say, ordinary, unimaginative or uninspired. Rather, Mr. Edwards's canvases are virtuosic attempts at analyzing how digital hardware and software have changed the architecture of our cityscapes and our brains, and how that translates conceptually into painting.

Buildings, streetlamps and signs, car lights and sidewalks are painted in compositions arranged in concentric squares — or, if you like, pictures inside hand-painted frames that reflect the

collaging of images, particularly in the digital realm. "Pedestrian Painting 9" (2018) and "Pedestrian Painting 2" (2018) use this nested-picture approach, offering slightly discordant views of brick walls, chain-link fences and curling razor wire.

The painting devices Mr. Edwards uses are not unique to him. Artists like [Jamian Juliano-Villani](#) and [Ambera Wellmann](#) employ similar collaging and nesting techniques. Mr. Edwards's ethos is chillier though, suggesting with banality and a hint of menace how we are framed and surveilled by cameras, interfaces and screens. Like the Cubists, who responded to new technologies like cars, photography and cinema in their work — or [Ernst Ludwig Kirchner](#)'s moody paintings of early 20th century European street scenes — Edwards succeeds, however, in showing us how relevant these recent developments are to living in the city, walking, and painting.