

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## Bruce Cohen | Recent Paintings

Reception for the Artist  
Saturday, February 20, 5-7pm

On View  
February 20 – April 2, 2016

Leslie Sacks Gallery is pleased to present *Bruce Cohen: Recent Paintings*. This exhibition will feature the latest in a series of oil paintings by renowned Los Angeles artist, Bruce Cohen.



Bruce Cohen's paintings are in a word: captivating. The immaculate application of oil and flawless rendering of imagery compels deep engagement and contemplation. These mesmerizing paintings are unapologetically beautiful, toeing the line between pleasant and surreal. There is always something more than meets the eye as Cohen explores spiritual narratives and metaphors suggestive of human presence, but without a figure ever inhabiting the scene. The late painter Paul Wonner, Cohen's friend and mentor, said of his paintings, "I feel sometimes that I am looking at a place where some tremendous, mystical event has just taken place. The people concerned have just moved on out of sight, but there remains on the scene the residue of a magic moment."

Bruce Cohen is a painter's painter; genuinely concerned with the theoretical and technical aspects of painting. His grasp and competency of the medium are profoundly evident. The paintings are a combination of observations, memories and invented details, which paired with his mastery of the material, instinctively draws the viewer into his world. Working from maquettes and small color studies, he begins first with graphite renderings of light and shadows and then moves into what he calls the "observation collage process." This process, which combines memory and reality, elicits his characteristic surrealist style. There is an enigmatic otherworldliness that carries throughout Cohen's work. Writer John Seed has aptly asked, "How long has the window been opened, you have to wonder? What just happened? The image is crystal clear, but the events surrounding it are not." And like Cohen himself, there appear to be concealed elements; yet neither he nor the paintings are hiding anything.

Bruce Cohen has been painting for over forty years. He comes from a deeply art historical background, which has unquestionably informed his work. Most apparent is the nod to Dutch 17<sup>th</sup> century still lifes and floral paintings. Dutch still life painters demonstrated mastery of the medium with meticulous detail and tightly rendered compositions. Nothing is out of place and everything is purposeful. Cohen invents his realities and just as Dutch painters combined flowers that did not bloom within the same seasons, there also exists an unreality to his precise paintings. Also evident is the influence of Surrealism. It is in the unconscious memories of time and space that brings about the surreal. As with Rene Magritte and Max Ernst, stylistically, Cohen's refined brushwork and his commitment to the illusion of three-dimensionality, accentuate the dreamlike quality of his interiors. Cohen's paintings, though pretty, are also dramatic. He is a master of shadow and light, at once accepting and rejecting realism. Similar to the film sets of German Expressionist movies, which disoriented viewers with their disregard for conventional perspective and proportions. Cohen deliberately exaggerates and dramatizes a scene to affect an emotional response.



Bruce Cohen's paintings are held in numerous esteemed public and private collections, among them the Santa Barbara Museum of Art, San Diego Museum of Art, San Jose Museum of Art, Frederick R. Weisman Foundation, Palm Springs Desert Museum and Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, among others.

Leslie Sacks Gallery is located in the Bergamot Station Arts Center in Santa Monica (2525 Michigan Avenue, B6). Gallery hours are Tues-Fri 10-6, Sat 11-6. The gallery is online at [lesliesacks.com](http://lesliesacks.com). Email [galleries@lesliesacks.com](mailto:galleries@lesliesacks.com) or call 310 264 0640.

*Hi resolution jpeg's available upon request.*