

# GLADSTONE

## Aaron Gilbert's Debut Exhibition with Gladstone Opens this March in New York

Solo presentation comprises new paintings exploring the interplay between individuality and community in contemporary culture

Gladstone Gallery presents *World Without End*, an exhibition of new works by Brooklyn-based artist Aaron Gilbert. Known for his paintings that probe the distance between individuals and their communities, the private and the public, and the real and the conjured, Gilbert imagines the personal narratives that quietly unfold in the corners of our shared societal structures. Guided by myth, an uncanny sense of timelessness, and the artist's deep interest in storytelling, these emotionally tender tableaux examine how individuals maintain their humanity in a historical moment punctuated by crisis, the looming peril of systemic collapse, and the increasingly totalizing velocity of consumer-driven desires.

While Gilbert's subjects are often locked in moments of intimate exchange—we might see a couple in a bathroom together, a parent holding their child, an elderly man gazing wearily from a hospital bed—these interactions are nearly always mediated by the literal and symbolic confinement that typifies contemporary urban life. Referencing the containers that define city spaces (including storefronts, apartments, and even our own bodies), Gilbert investigates the complex emotional theater that plays out within all interiorities.

Typically inspired by moments from his own personal life, brief glimpses of interactions he's observed between strangers, or an amalgamation of both, Gilbert's work is particularly focused on endowing his subjects with the agency to circumvent the power structures that dictate their lives. Often including windows, plastic sheeting, glass, and other transparent barricades, Gilbert's paintings probe the invisible mechanisms that quarantine us from one another. Exploring the limitations of even the most familiar of relationships, the artist imagines his subjects subverting the nearly inexorable systems of social taxonomy that have been instituted to organize and control our mutual understanding of desire, love, and community.

Gilbert's paintings are often illuminated by the familiar glow of neon logos, halogen bulbs, or the hot orange tinge of summer sunsets oxymoronically improved by pollution. With his use of light and details that indicate a world touched by magical realism, the artist quietly suggests that his figures' personal interactions extend beyond their relationship to goods, social frameworks, and the world as we know it. Amplifying the strange portals that join surrealism to reality, Gilbert allows us to glimpse a world hidden beneath the prosaic veneer of our organizing principles.

The artist has cited sources including devotional retablos, George Tooker, and Diego Rivera as influences, and his own work suggests a philosophical conflation of all three. Addressing both the dehumanizing qualities of contemporary life as well as the significance of the individual, Gilbert often looks at the myths generated by consumerism as an entry point to addressing cultural crisis. Interrogating the illusion of a choice-based identity offered under the mantle of capitalism, the artist frequently incorporates corporate logos in his work, including the Adidas and AT&T symbols that appear throughout this exhibition. Looming large in his dreamscapes, these familiar emblems seem to function as 21st century replacements for the mystical hieroglyphics of another time, their vacuum of meaning highlighting contemporary culture's attachment to totems stripped of all spiritual significance. Juxtaposing intimate narratives with the dystopic depersonalization generated by commodity fetishism, Gilbert's fictions search for the moments of magical connection that occur both on our city blocks, and behind other people's walls.

### **About Aaron Gilbert:**

Aaron Gilbert (b. 1979, Altoona, PA) lives and works between New York and Los Angeles. Gilbert received a BFA in painting from Yale University in 2005 followed by a MFA in painting from the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) in 2008. Gilbert also holds an Associate of Science in Mechanical Engineering Technology from Penn State University (2000). Gilbert's work has been

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exhibited with Sant'Andrea de Scaphis, Rome; PPOW Gallery, New York; Chris Sharp Gallery, Los Angeles; Lyles & King, New York; and Deitch Projects, New York. Gilbert's work is in major public collections including the Whitney Museum of American Art, Brooklyn Museum of Art, Hammer Museum, Studio Museum in Harlem, Columbus Museum of Art, High Museum, and RISD Museum. Aaron Gilbert has also been the recipient of many awards including the Colene Brown Art Prize in 2022, Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation Grant in 2015, and was named the 2010 "Young American Painter of Distinction" by the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Gilbert has held residencies at Fountainhead Residency (2013), Yaddo (2012), Lower Manhattan Cultural Council Workspace Residency (2008), and American Academy in Rome Affiliate Fellowship (2008).

**Exhibition Details:**

March 7 – April 19, 2025

Opening Reception: March 7, 6–8pm

515 West 24<sup>th</sup> Street

New York, NY 10011

**About Gladstone Gallery:**

Gladstone Gallery is recognized for its embrace of experimentation and visionary practices. The gallery has long been an active partner with artists pursuing catalytic ideas and engaging with pressing issues. Headquartered in New York, Gladstone's impact extends globally with galleries in Brussels and Seoul, enabling it to present new bodies of work and evolve its program to advance the practices and reach of its artists through time. Alongside its work with contemporary artists, the gallery is a steward of the legacies of pivotal historical artists and an advocate for the enduring power of their work. Gladstone is led by a team of partners who spearhead its long-term vision and program, building on the values of its founder Barbara Gladstone.

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