



Self Portrait.  $24 \times 20$  inches, oil 2008

Ben Fenske's latest works confirm our earlier convictions that he is one of the most important young painters in this generation's "Slow Art" movement. This movement is marked by a return to refined traditional painting techniques, while attempting to paint the truth and the beauty experienced in our contemporary life. Here we exhibit a new series of powerful interiors, which add a new layer to his already strong body of work. Fenske's trademark brush strokes, which are bold, unfussy, and accurate in tone and color, show even more confidence this year.

These paintings mark a turn toward more psychological subjects, adding a somewhat more serious tone to his oeuvre. Notable amongst these strong interiors is "The Break Up". This nearly 3 x 4 foot painting has it's sorrowful subject, with her head buried in her crossed arms, slumped over a table which is ironically draped in the Florentine color of rebirth, lavender. The extra chair at the table raises a question; could the chair be for the recently departed mate, or perhaps she is waiting for another to console her? The gloom is countered by the joyous play of color and light warming the scene.

"My Room", is another intimate view of a private space, however, this one evokes sanctity and solace, with an archetypal Vermeer

composition of light flooding in from a un-shuddered window in the upper left corner. "Cary's World" catches the moment a single female figure enters a room glowing with the light streaming in from the window on the far wall. This work recalls some of the great impressionist works of the 19th century, while accurately depicting a contemporary expatriate's life in an apartment in Florence. The reflected sunlight on the floors reminds me of the Gustav Caillebotte (1851-1894) "The Floor Scrapers", while the perfectly placed dashes and dabs of color recall the interiors of Pierre Bonnard (age – age?).

Ben Fenske (b. 1978), a native of Minnesota, has been splitting his time between Sag Harbor, New York and Florence, Italy over the last three years. Although we mentioned two French impressionists, Fenske is far more influenced by the 19th century Russian painters Isaak Il'ich Levitan (1860 – 1900) and Ilya Repin (1844 – 1930), as well as lesser known mid-20th century Russian painters. This grand yet naturalist landscape tradition is especially clear in one of his most refined landscape paintings to date, "The Road" which is also the largest painting in the show at 40 x almost 60 inches. Before briefly studying at the Bougie Studio in Minneapolis and then the Florence Academy of Art in Italy, Fenske started painting at 19, with Joseph Paquet in St. Paul.

## BEN FENSKE Recent paintings

27 June to 26 July, 2009





My Room 40 x 31.5 inches, oil on linen, 2009



Road 40 x 59 inches, oil on linen, 2008

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Secret Beach 31.5 x 47 inches, oil on linen, 2009

Cary's World 31.5 x 40 inches, oil on linen, 2009

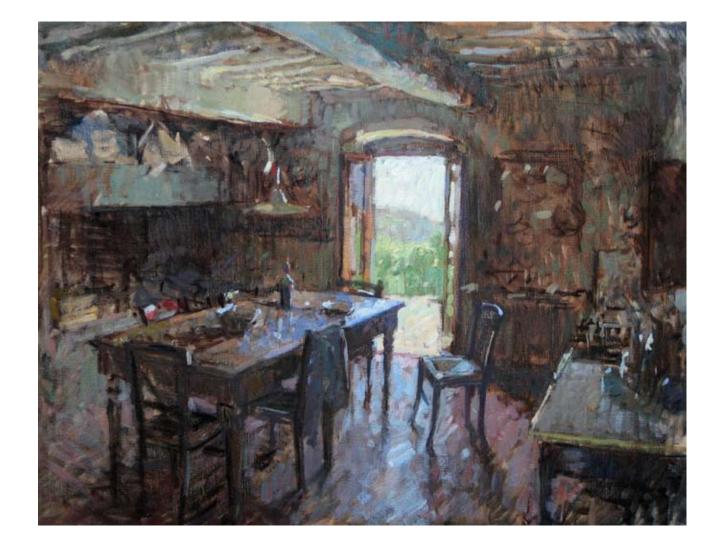




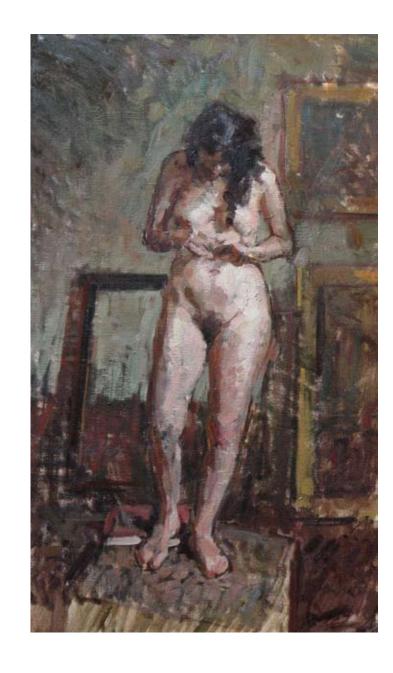
Moonrise, Gibson 24 x 35.5 inches, oil on linen, 2009

The Breakup 35.5 x 43 inches, oil on linen, 2009

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Sunny Day 27.5 x 35.5 inches, oil on linen, 2009



Nude 18 x 29.5 inches, oil on linen, 2009

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Red 24 x 20 inches, oil on linen, 2009



Cary in the Kitchen 29.5 x 24 inches, oil on linen, 2009

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July Sketch 20 x 24 inches, oil on linen, 2009

Break up Sketch 31.5 x 24 inches, oil on linen, 2008

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Coffee 12 x 8 inches, oil on linen, 2009



Cloud Shadow 12 x 20 inches, oil on linen, 2009



**September Day** 22 x 35.5 inches, oil on linen, 2009



Table and Chairs 14 x 18 inches, oil on panel, 2009



Nude Sketch 8 x 12 inches, oil on panel, 2009



Clouds 12 x 16 inches, oil on panel, 2009



Tim Guitar 8 x 12 inches, oil on linen, 2009

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