

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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## ***Gathering***

**Kathy Osborn, Ruth Shively, Bradley Wood**



Susan Eley Fine Art, Hudson  
433 Warren Street, Hudson, NY 12534



December 2, 2021 - January 16, 2022  
Opening Reception: Saturday, December 4th, 6-8 PM

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*"New friends can often have a better time together than old friends."  
--Tender Is the Night \**

For the 2021-2022 winter season, SEFA Hudson presents *Gathering*, a group exhibition of figurative paintings by Kathy Osborn, Ruth Shively and Bradley Wood. Composed of works created in 2021, the exhibition highlights atmospheric domestic landscapes and moody interior scenes—their tone colored by the figures that inhabit and shape them. Each artist crafts their vignettes through a distinctive touch and approach: Osborn's highly-staged vintage characters; Shively's impressionistic, intimate portraits; Wood's fantastical, cinematic architectures. Like the artists themselves—viewers become voyeurs into the social interactions and inner lives of anonymous figures.

*"There are only the pursued, the pursuing, the busy and the tired."  
--The Great Gatsby*

A prominent figure in the Hudson creative community, **Kathy Osborn** creates detailed, stylized figurative paintings. Often, her works feature a single person or a pair of people situated in complex interiors. Similar to Shively and Wood's approach—the identity of Osborn's subjects is not explicitly defined, nor are their relationships to each other. Instead, she allows her audience a glimpse into an enigmatic, poignant scene; each painting is filled with potential energy, rather than a discernable narrative or resolution. In the exhibition *Gathering*, Osborn presents nine new pieces, rendered in oil on paper mounted on board. Small in scale and grouped together on

\* All quotes excerpted from texts by F. Scott Fitzgerald

the Gallery walls—the paintings almost read as film stills. The moments that Osborn captures range from a woman stepping out of the shower, an intimate yet mundane personal scene; to a bride and groom in a bathroom, a seemingly tense encounter of estranged emotions; to a man gazing out a window, into the beyond, his back turned to the woman in the room with him as if a stranger. Osborn employs voyeuristic angles, stark contrasts of light and shadow, and reflections in mirrors and objects to craft a moodiness, sometimes a loneliness. The interiors within which Osborn situates her figures evoke the domestic landscape of the 1950's and 60's, based on the decor and their dress. Indeed, Osborn generates her compositions from miniatures: vintage dolls set up in various scenarios in doll houses. She collects these figurines, arranges them, and photographs them before painting to create a cast of characters—yet she leaves their dialogues unspoken.

*“It was always the becoming he dreamed of, never the being.”*  
--*This Side of Paradise*

Like Osborn, **Ruth Shively** primarily draws on vintage source material for her paintings. She uses photographs and other print materials. Typically, these photos are originals from the 1960s and 70s, but also include contemporary models and imagery that evoke the era—with its iconic fashions and interior furnishings. Trained as an illustrator, Shively made a decisive turn toward painting as a mid-career artist. She remains self-taught in the medium, fueled through her own curiosity and experimentation. In *Gathering*, Shively exhibits new works in oil of varying sizes on linen, Mylar and antique papers—some with the notebook edges left visible and frayed as a conscious design element. All of her works emphasize the human figure—yet it is an abstracted rendering of the body. In fact, as she progresses with her painting practice, Shively's techniques lean increasingly toward the non-naturalistic. Facial features disappear and recognizable expressions disintegrate within her simplified interiors and landscapes. Yet, this blurring, this lack of specificity, serves as a catalyst for understanding, for identification. A poetic paradox—this visual erasure actually fosters a more personal, intimate experience. Shively appreciates when a viewer can relate to her subjects, directly themselves or through a memory. She encourages viewers to tell themselves stories, or to envision the interactions and conversations that may be taking place within her compositions. The impetus toward storytelling came from her father, whom she describes as someone with the power to use words to create visuals. In her painting here, she depicts a group of ladies in vibrantly colored dresses out on the town for a luncheon; a gathering of friends relaxing in a verdant garden; a group of children

sitting on a city stoop; a quiet interior with a reclining girl, book in hand. Shively delights in the strangeness of the scenarios that she chooses to paint: there is an ambiguity, a mystery within her sources. Her atmospheric images can be read as places to explore our nostalgia and our sense of being and becoming.

*“And I like large parties. They’re so intimate. At small parties there isn’t any privacy.”*  
--*The Great Gatsby*

In his canvases, **Bradley Wood** envisions interactions between fictional people, mostly detached from a precise time period. Approaching his paintings as if a playwright, he crafts what is “going on in the mind, or internal monologues” for each subject, which he considers “actors.” While the figures in Wood’s paintings remain anonymous, their energy is palpable—alluding to the moods, reactions and impulses that live within us all, those inner worlds that thrive just beyond the surface. Through his colorful, cinematic visions of human contact—viewers can delve into dynamic architectural interiors and imagine the social interactions within: a trio of golfers, apparent friends posing together during an afternoon game; a couple resting on each other, laying on a fluorescent yellow couch in their home; a party scene with acquaintances lounging and conversing, all looking chic and at ease in this cordial communal setting. Wood’s compositions are constructed with the intention to transcend concrete notions of time and place. As he describes, “time collapses” in order to favor creating a mood, an atmosphere—relatable to various audiences in various ways. He relishes the painter’s power to orchestrate an aura that introduces a “weird, strange vibe” for his viewers—where they leave with more questions than answers, more suppositions rather than resolutions. Often, Wood’s figures take the style of elongated, Expressionistic forms—inspired by the likes of Henri Matisse, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, and Kees van Dongen. These art historical influences parallel the literature of the era, specifically the writing (quoted here) of F. Scott Fitzgerald—the master of capturing lively, exterior social scenes, while ultimately conjuring the complex, interior states of the human psyche. Wood’s painted gatherings evoke the tensions present both within our own consciousness and between us all. To the artist, these contrasts—the fête and the morning after—are the most important element of his work; they are “a way to introduce the whole world.”

*“I want to know you moved and breathed in the same world with me.”*  
--*Tales of the Jazz Age*

Press Release Text by Liz Lorenz,  
Assistant Director, SEFA Hudson

## ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

### Kathy Osborn

Kathy Osborn is a painter currently based in Hudson, New York and represented by Susan Eley Fine Art. She was raised in Rochester, NY and earned a BFA from the Road Island School of Design. Osborn was an illustrator for 25 years, with work featured in many major publications: *The Atlantic Monthly*, *Rolling Stone*, *The Washington Post*, *The Chicago Tribune*, *The New York Times*, *GQ*, *New York Magazine*, and *The New Yorker* (including twenty cover images). She has also illustrated eight children's books. In 2014, Osborn began her painting career. Her work has been featured in exhibitions at John Davis Gallery, Hudson, NY (2015), Geoffrey Young Gallery, Great Barrington, MA (2015); Gallery Molly Krom, New York, NY (2015); Art on Paper Fair (2016), Art Miami and CONTEXT (2016); Susan Eley Fine Art, Hudson, NY (2020); and LABSpace, Hillsdale, NY (2021).

### Ruth Shively

Ruth Shively was born in Hastings, Nebraska and received her BFA from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 1988. She moved to New York City during the early 1990s to pursue illustration and work in an illustration studio. Her work has been featured in solo and group exhibitions throughout the United States. Solo exhibitions have been hosted at Spur Gallery, Portland, OR; Basil Howard Gallery, Portland, OR; Anthony Phillip Fine Art, Brooklyn, NY; and Park Row Gallery, Chatham, NY. Shively was awarded an artist residency at Chateau Orquevaux in Champagne Ardenne, France for the Summer of 2018. One of Shively's paintings was recently pictured in an Ian McEwan novel, *Nusschale (Nutshell)*. The artist lives and works in Portland, Oregon and is represented by Susan Eley Fine Art.

### Bradley Wood

Born in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada, Wood lives in Larchmont, NY, and works at his Studio in Portchester, NY. Wood received a BFA from the Rhode Island School of Design in 2006. He also studied art and design at Art Center in Montreux, Switzerland, and new media at CalArts in Valencia, California. Most recently, Wood was part of the residency at Cha North in Pine Plains, NY. He was selected for the AIM program at the Bronx Museum and was awarded a residency at the Woolworth building in NYC through the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council. Along with exhibiting in gallery solo and group shows internationally, Wood was featured in the acclaimed "Human Condition" exhibition in an abandoned Los Angeles hospital in 2016. The following year, he was the recipient of the Moth Art Prize and residency in Ireland. *Gathering* is his second exhibition with Susan Eley Fine Art, after *Figuratively Speaking* at SEFA NYC in 2018.