

# THE MAILROOM

**BEN COWAN: GUARDED GARDENS**  
28 AUGUST, 2024 - 15 NOVEMBER, 2024



The Mailroom is proud to deliver a solo exhibition by American artist Ben Cowan. *Guarded Gardens* presents a series of work that investigates property boundaries drawn by gates and shrubs that distance pedestrians from fully accessing the facade of buildings. Celebrate with the artist during our exhibition's opening reception on Wednesday, August 28, 2024 from 6pm - 9pm at The Yard - Herald Square.

Blending optimism, nostalgia, and curiosity Cowan's paintings highlight cropped vantages of hedgerows, windows, and architectural adornments from the perspective of an inquisitive pedestrian. Finding beauty and joy within a sense of urban community, Cowan celebrates the aesthetic details that define distinct neighborhoods. Yet each work is not merely a portrait of a building, but instead is a composite creation built from the artist's own experiences and imagination.

With a witty sense of voyeurism, Cowan captures the contradiction of a shared pride in community alongside the ever-present restrictions of private property within New York City. Each dwelling communicates its own character while remaining partially obscured by wrought iron gates, curling vines, abundant flowering plants, or dense shrubs. Pairs of windows appear to nearly wink with their asymmetrical openings, or lit interiors, taking on an almost human sense of personality.

This celebration of distinct urban residential architecture investigates the different psychological moods that shift as twilight turns night, and as the bright sun beats down during the heat of the day. With a wide range of houses, buildings, and apartments depicted, there is sure to be a similar satisfaction in taking in the whole show echoing that of a robust walking tour across the boroughs.

**Ben Cowan** was born and raised in Ann Arbor, Michigan. He received a BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, and an MFA from Indiana University. Cowan's work has been shown in solo and group shows throughout the United States including New York City's 550 Gallery and The Painting Center. He has been featured in *Fresh Paint Magazine*, *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Brooklyn Review*. Cowan's work is in private and public collections including The University of Scranton (PA), Ann Arbor District Library in Michigan, and The Racquet Club of Chicago.