

Press Release From: **The Contemporary Art Modern Project**

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***Thomas Donaldson and Danse Russe:
An exploration of movement and the hidden self***



A Solo Online Exhibition featuring **Thomas Donaldson**

For this online exhibition, **The CAMP Gallery** has selected a series of Thomas Donaldson's figurative works that express movement, both through the positioning of subjects in his pieces as well as the movements of color, texture, and lines across each work. His technique involves the use of a thick impasto paint with wide brush strokes, and what Thomas like to call "happy accidents", where the paint moves spontaneously across the canvas. The result is an image that comes into place as a figure from a distance, one that is wild, amorphous, and vague when seen up close. In this exhibition, we hope to show the implicit beauty in movement, in freedom and in dance. The kinetic expressions of male and female figures, both dresses and undressed,

crouching and stretching, alone or with a partner, show the multifaceted ways in which our bodies express themselves through movement.

The nudity of most of these pieces makes reference to the visceral freedom one can feel in privacy, when one does not need to put on the literal and figurative "clothing" required by public spaces. In this sense, this series is akin to the poem "Danse Russe" by Puerto Rican-American poet William Carlos Williams. Williams, highly influenced by his Caribbean, multicultural upbringing, was also one of the leading members of the Imagist movement of the 20th century, a movement that celebrated direct language use and an experimentation with different rhythms and rhyme schemes. Much like Donaldson does in his paintings, Williams brought forth a unique perspective, coupled with a license for freedom of expression by not subscribing to the artistic repressions of his time. In the poem *Danse Russe*, featured below, Williams writes of existing within his own body, much like the visual experience of Donaldson's pieces.

Both the artist and the poet reveal to us the side of ourselves that is somewhat beastly, but nonetheless fully human. They show the parts of ourselves that look not at our imperfections in the mirror, but at the whole of our bodies with curiosity and fascination and allows us to move freely without the prying eyes of others. To stand, to stretch, to move, and to appreciate our own bodies in front of the mirror as unique expressions of nature, are some of the most intimate and grounding things a human being can do. In his renderings of such moments of intimacy, **Donaldson** teaches us to better appreciate the bodies we inhabit for the uses they serve and the implicit beauty of their unique details. In an era where our perceptions of beauty are completely warped by artificial enhancements and photo editing, such self love feels harder and harder to achieve. However, in the light of this now year-long COVID-19 pandemic, and the social isolation it has implicated, people have been forced to look into themselves with intention, revealing the rumblings that exist inside every person and are often merely quieted by distractions. **Donaldson's** work acts as a foil to the imagery we see in current pop culture because it celebrates imperfection as a quintessential part of our humanity. It also reflects the intimacy of solitude, privacy, and the id that is so often hidden.

Feel free to appreciate the beauty of **Donaldson's** models in his works, but knowing that their beauty comes from their humanity, and that such beauty resides in each individual, just as Williams shows an appreciation for his own body "against the yellow drawn shades".

Thomas Donaldson is a British figurative painter and lecturer based in Asia. His work is inspired by other figurative artists such as Edvard Munch, Egon Schiele, and El Greco, as well as abstract artists like Antoni Tàpies. His work has been shown in cities all throughout the world, including New York, Burgen, Shanghai, and Bangkok. The Contemporary Art Modern Project (CAMP for

short) is an art gallery based out of North Miami that seeks to enterprise artists in all stages of their careers by not engaging in the fiduciary restrictions often common in the art community. By integrating virtual and in person experiences to promote their artists, we bring forth a global repertoire of artists and their work to the forefront of what we do.

DANSE RUSSE

BY WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS

If I when my wife is sleeping
and the baby and Kathleen
are sleeping
and the sun is a flame-white disc
in silken mists
above shining trees,—
if I in my north room
dance naked, grotesquely
before my mirror
waving my shirt round my head
and singing softly to myself:
"I am lonely, lonely.
I was born to be lonely,
I am best so!"
If I admire my arms, my face,
my shoulders, flanks, buttocks
against the yellow drawn shades,—

Who shall say I am not
the happy genius of my household?