

# THE BEACH

763 E 14th St, Los Angeles, CA

## Isabelle Adams

### *Civil Twilight*

Presented by The Beach, Los Angeles

The Beach, Los Angeles, inaugurates its program with *Civil Twilight*, a solo exhibition of new paintings by Isabelle Adams. On the occasion of the exhibition, Oliver Misraje will compose an original screenplay to accompany the presentation.

Portraiture assumes a coherence most people do not possess. Adams' paintings move through the unstable territory between selfhood and performance, intimacy and disguise, sincerity and style, approaching this instability through costume, mask, posture, silhouette, and atmosphere. Her figures arrive disguised, withheld, or only partially disclosed—burglars, skeletons, icons, and dreamlike protagonists occupy interiors and charged thresholds that feel at once theatrical and private. Her images, radiant, lightly vibrating, suggest narrative without resolution. Something has happened, or is about to, but the event remains just out of reach.

The title *Civil Twilight* names the brief interval after sunset when the sun has dropped below the horizon but light remains bright enough for ordinary activity. It is a useful description of Adams' sensibility. Her paintings inhabit states of partial legibility: the hour when forms soften, identities loosen, and distinctions between candor and role-play become harder to maintain. They ask what kind of inner life persists under the conditions of spectacle, speed, and endless self-presentation.

Los Angeles is present here not as scenery but as method. In few places is identity so openly staged, revised, marketed, desired, and discarded. In a city where eras collapse into one another and cultural symbols are endlessly invented and recycled, personhood can feel both manufactured and overdetermined. Eras remain half-visible beneath newer surfaces. Adams understands the city of Los Angeles as a machine of longing in which private feeling and public image exchange clothing. Her paintings neither condemn nor celebrate this condition. They inhabit it, and study it closely.

Painted in thin washes of oil on hand-stretched, oil-primed linen, Adams builds surfaces that possess a dry luminosity, as if emerging through dust or memory. Her paintings move with the logic of dreams: simple forms carry disproportionate emotional weight, ordinary symbols become talismanic, and comedy shades into melancholy. Beneath their wit is a sustained tenderness toward people: their loneliness, vanity, longing, tribal instincts, private mythologies and persistent wish to be known.

In *Civil Twilight*, Adams attends to the strange theater of modern life: the costumes we create for one another, our longing fastened to appearances, and how counterfeit so often arrives wearing the mask of the sacred.