

CUE

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Maggie Crowley: Circuit
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EVERCORE

ARTIST EMPOWERMENT AWARD

This exhibition of paintings by Maggie Crowley, marks the inauguration of the Evercore CUE Artist Empowerment Award. Evercore has partnered with CUE Art Foundation to recognize and support artists at a critical point in their career, empowering them to take new creative risks, and offering the unparalleled opportunity to reach a new audience: the Evercore community. This award also supports CUE's deeply held belief that artistic expression strengthens communities and enriches society, and that all voices deserve to be empowered. The award comprises a generous artist honorarium and a six-month exhibition at the Evercore headquarters. All artworks will be for sale, and available at the end of the exhibition.

Many thanks to Robert Walsh, Brooke Warner and the Evercore senior leadership team for making this opportunity a reality.

ABOUT CUE

Founded in 2002, CUE Art Foundation is dedicated to providing essential career and educational opportunities for emerging and under-recognized artists of all ages. CUE carries out its mission through its core programs, which include solo and group exhibitions for emerging and under-recognized artists, mentorship of artists and writers, professional development workshops for practicing artists, and arts education for high school students.

Maggie Crowley: *Circuit*

ARTIST STATEMENT

I make paintings on 100% silk to talk about workism, peace of mind, ritual, and role conflict. Raised by a hairdresser and an ironworker, I am interested in service and its relationship to value and visibility. Working class professionals rely on hi-vis apparel to decrease the risk of injury while providing the peace of mind to perform a given task. I am interested in exploring this specific "peace of mind" that seems inextricably tied to service, ritual, agency and performance.

My interest in the safety vests first began as a formal investigation. The lines, shapes, and reflective material of hi-vis textiles represent different levels of caution for different types of jobs. I wanted to explore the architecture of this specific garment and would ask people in my neighborhood if I could photograph them while they were working. Most of these people I know personally: one is my neighbor, one tuck-pointed my house, two of these figures were working on the sidewalk right outside my studio window for a few weeks. My interest in the vest also likely comes from growing up around construction workers and service workers, as well as having similar jobs myself. In high school I worked for the streets department in my hometown, painting the roads during midnight shifts.

For years I have been using textiles as a starting point for talking about different things such as consumption, value and the politics of form. There is so much that can be said or implied through shape, pattern and repetition. I choose to depict certain patterns and textiles based on what I consider to be the textures of labor: a heavy plaid work shirt that is faded and worn out at the elbows, a safety vest, hospital scrubs.

My series for the Evercore CUE Artist Empowerment Award exhibition operates collectively as a portrait of a certain set of values. What started as an interest in safety apparel slowly grew into a collection of works that are about repair. The workers are busy, fully engaged in their task and anonymous. This lack of specificity teeters on abstraction and creates tension and an urgency that I think is part of being a worker in this country.

The title of this exhibition refers to Lauren Berlant's theory of "cruel optimism" and what we will endure in pursuit of the American dream. Through work, lives play out in a loop. Berlant writes, "Maybe relinquishing or recalibrating our fantasies of the good life doesn't lead to absolute darkness. It can simply be a matter of coming to grips with different possibilities of communion." *Circuit* is an oscillation between optimism and disappointment, and a constant state of catching up: the cycle of a generation, an economy, the beads on a rosary.

Circuit is also about beauty and honesty. Routines, rituals, and habits honor communion and the passing of time. In this series of paintings, pattern serves as a meditative entry point. A figure is suggested but never fully present. They are walking away, working, biking, reaching, or waiting in line on their lunch break.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Maggie Crowley (b. 1987, Ottawa, Illinois) received her M.F.A. from the University of Chicago in 2013, her M.A. from Eastern Illinois University in 2011 and her B.S. in Education from Illinois State University in 2009. Crowley has exhibited in numerous venues including the Reva and David Logan Center for the Arts, the Evanston Art Center, the Hyde Park Art Center, Area: Lugar de Proyectos in Caguas, Puerto Rico and 65Grand in Chicago. Her work has been featured in the prestigious journal *New American Paintings* in 2017 and 2013. Since 2016, Crowley has co-directed Produce Model Gallery in the Pilsen neighborhood of Chicago, which dedicates a special interest in programming and exhibitions by underrepresented artists. Most recently, Crowley serves on the board of the International Children's Media Center (ICMC) in Chicago, helping to facilitate education programs for under-resourced schools.



Maggie Crowley
Plaid with Bike, 2021
Gouache on silk



Maggie Crowley
Bricklayer with plaid, 2021
Gouache on silk
48 x 36 inches



Maggie Crowley
Brigida with Apron, 2021
Gouache on silk
48 x 48 inches



Maggie Crowley
Sanitation Safety Vest, 2021
Gouache on silk
48 x 48 inches



Maggie Crowley
Meade Safety Vest, 2021
Gouache on silk
48 x 48 inches



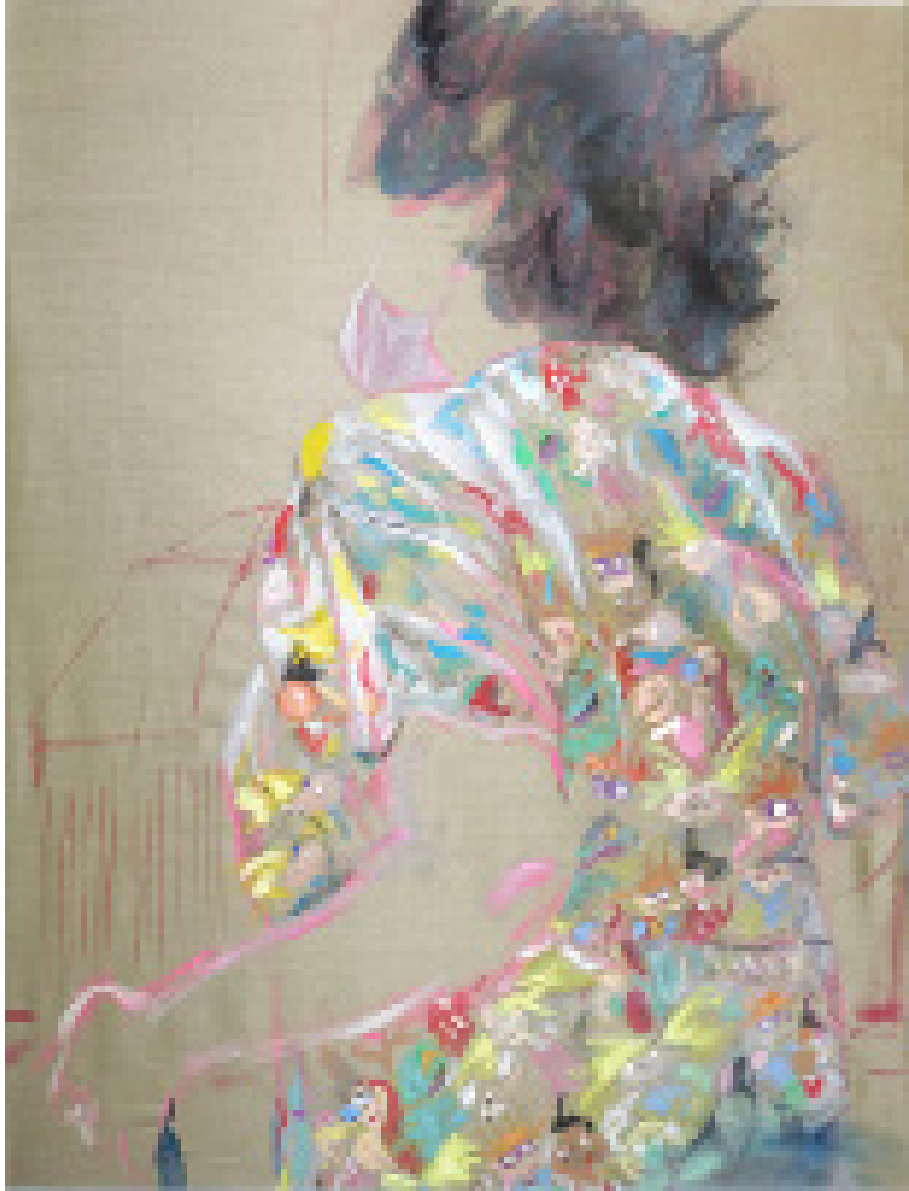
Maggie Crowley
Animal Print Blouse, 2021
Gouache on silk
48 x 48 inches



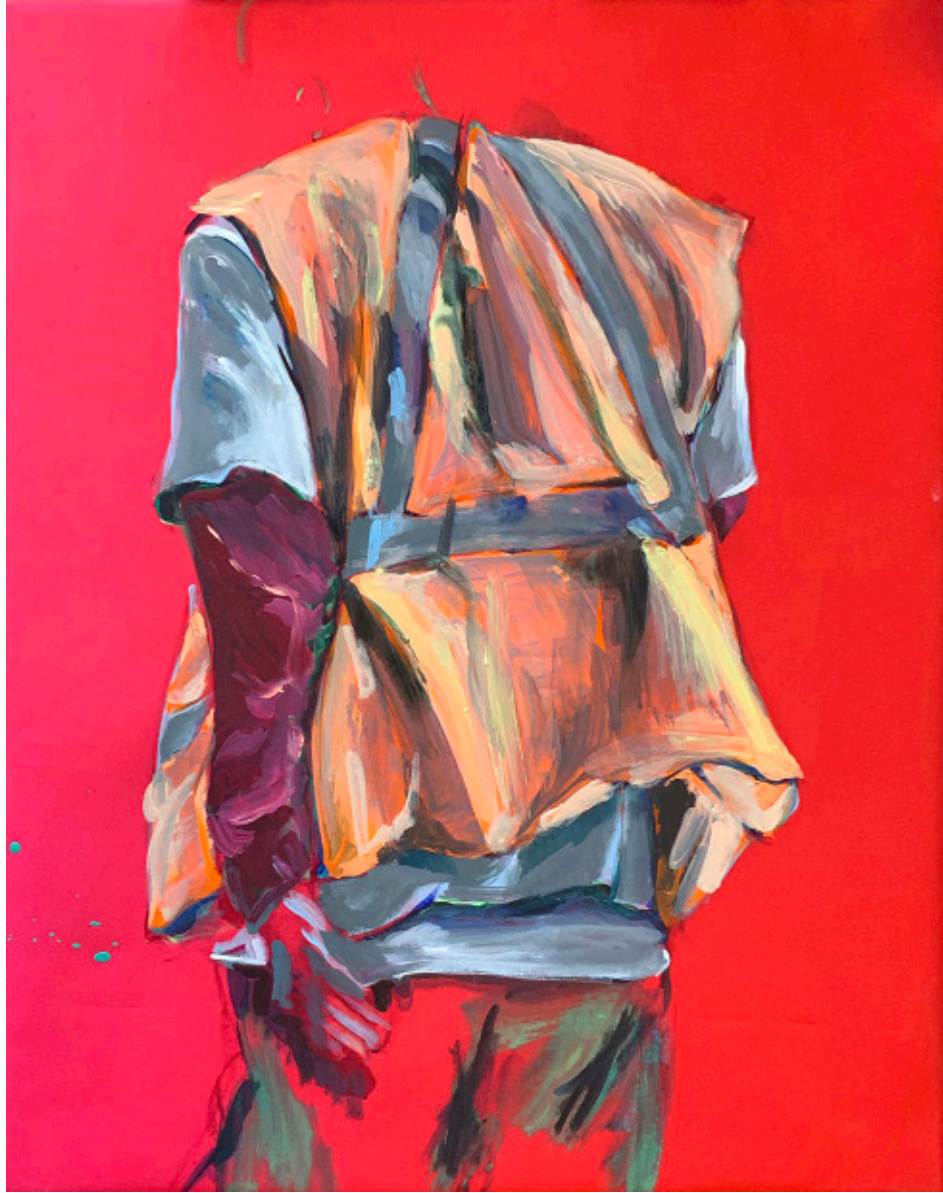
Maggie Crowley
"X" Safety Vest, 2021
Gouache on silk
48 x 48 inches



Maggie Crowley
Union Insulator, 2021
Gouache on silk
40 x 30 inches



Maggie Crowley
Nurse with Rugrat scrubs, 2020
Gouache on silk
20 x 16 inches



Maggie Crowley
Metra Rail Worker on Easter, 2020
Gouache on silk
14 x 11 inches



Maggie Crowley
Sanitation Woman, 2020
Gouache on silk
14 x 11 inches



Maggie Crowley
Roofer (Torres), 2020
Gouache on silk
14 x 11 inches



Maggie Crowley
Fruit Truck (lunch break), 2020
Gouache on silk
48 x 72 inches