

# ARTFORUM

## New York

### Joseph Geagan

ROMEO

90 Ludlow St.

June 25, 2016–July 24, 2016

Joseph Geagan documents his scene in a delicate analog mode, with pastel and paper instead of an iPhone. The artist's exhibition here, "Toast for Old Chum," consists of sixteen large drawings depicting Geagan's glamorously louche friends in an electric, expressionistic style. At first glance you think you're looking at East Village denizens, circa 1980-something. But Geagan's not a dyed-in-the-wool nostalgist. Though the artist's pictures are deliberately handmade, they are, paradoxically, suited to Instagram (on the gallery's feed, some of Geagan's subjects pose in front of their representations). The diaristic tone of these works creates a strange intersection of autobiography and allegory. His figures transmit a wide range of characteristics—erotic, hilarious, evil, or incandescent—which we see perfectly in *Village Predator* (all works cited, 2016), a creepy, quasi-self-portrait, and in *The Street Stalker*, a depiction of a Baudelairean pervert malingering on Orchard Street at dusk, looming over splayed nudes.

Polymorphous notions of sexuality and identity are at play. Take *The Fiddling Mykkis*, a group portrait with transfabulous rapper Mykki Blanco. This is a glitteringly queer family, "nuclear" only by sheer force of their all-encompassing charisma. And the debauchers of *Elsie from Chelsea* defy today's norms of productivity or restraint—they embrace the libidinal now. Geagan reconfigures Weimar decadence—George Grosz, Christian Schad, and Christopher Isherwood's Berlin—for New York City, 2016. Surface and style is *self*, my friends, and total liberation.



Joseph Geagan, *The Fiddling Mykkis*, 2016, pastel on paper, 50 x 38".

— Nicholas Chittenden Morgan