

# JARVIS ART

## PRESS RELEASE

**Archie Rand**

**Heads**

**March 18 - May 2, 2026**

Jarvis Art is pleased to present Archie Rand's solo exhibition of recent paintings, *Heads*. Rand typically produces series of paintings derived from contemporary poetry, Scripture, or the art canon, but his most recent works are created with a less specific premise. The series exhibited in *Heads* represents a form of metaphysical figuration in which fundamental questions regarding reality and existence are confronted. Situations override protagonists and initial interpretations require closer consideration. This highly idiosyncratic visual language is devoid of inhibition and driven by a recklessly unaccountable imagination.

Rand's relentless engagement with series represents an anthology that provides a coherent structure to his practice. He prefers to focus on a painting as part of a broader, overarching narrative. His paintings are deeply autobiographical, morphing and melding poignantly imbued source material. The humanity visible in his raucous and lurid colored tableaux is anchored in the experiences of his life. Rand is concerned with engaging a discursive and emotional fact. He asks, what are the child's affections and attractions to the image when one has not yet been taught to intellectually parse perceptions?

Vivid archetypes of the comic book page produced an atmosphere of pictorial saturation for his generation. Growing up in Bensonhurst, Brooklyn in the 1950s, Rand's first artistic inspiration came from comic books. As Jewish American artists of the 1940s were ostracized from broader artist communities, many engaged in comics, which some artists instinctively recognized as a Jewish visual language. Illustrators such as Will Eisner and fellow Lafayette High School alum, Maurice Sendak, specialized in caricature that influenced that sense of displacement in Rand's work.

As a product of postwar American urban culture, Rand was immersed in the remains of early twentieth century children's story books. It's worth noting that these were produced at a time when print was the main medium for the dissemination of images and these were painted by highly gifted illustrators. Rand's paintings repurpose fairy tale iconography including clowns, knights, witches and idealized families to express current real-life anxieties and vulnerabilities. Discussing this dynamic, Barry Schwabsky has noted that Rand's work "inspires imagery worthy of the world's most profound children's book."

Rand understands that with some older artists there is a reversion to instinct. Interrogating memory uncovers a source for this crucial appetite, one that is devoid of instruction. Sendak digs up Laurel and Hardy, Malcolm Morley paintings recall the V-2 blitzes on London; Joan Snyder insists on the integrity of impulse whilst Guston paints his early fascination with cartoons. There is no irony here; this is affection made corporeal.

Rand's voracious consumption of images, which started as a young child in Brooklyn, can be interpreted as foreseeing the ocean of images we experience through our screens every day in contemporary culture. He considers prescient questions regarding the impact of technology, which upends any hope of belief in the validity of any image to ask what can we really know today from pictures?