

**Fredericks & Freiser** is pleased to present a solo presentation of new paintings by **Sam Mattax** (b. 1995; Springfield Missouri) at the Independent. In these five commanding canvases, Mattax continues to develop a painterly language that is as visceral as it is precise—where dense mark-making, architectural fragments, and passages of raw canvas cohere into compositions that feel at once chaotic and composed. These are paintings that hold together even as they threaten to unravel.

Working with thick, physical layers of pigment, Mattax builds each surface as a kind of excavation. Forms—suggestive of fairground tarps, harlequin patterns, and the ribs of umbrellas—emerge from the accumulated strata like unearthed artifacts. But these are not symbols or quotations; they are embedded in the very process of painting. What we see is not a depiction of American places, but the residue of having lived through them. Each work carries the physical evidence of its making—paint dragged, carved, reasserted—emphasizing not just image but effort, not just surface but struggle.

Mattax's work offers a fresh contribution to the lineage of painters who have engaged the American landscape as a site of both personal and cultural memory. Yet where earlier approaches often relied on irony or critical distance, his is resolutely intimate. These paintings are less about ruin than about what persists: rhythm, color, gesture, belief. There is an insistence in this work—a commitment to building meaning out of mess, form out of feeling.

At a moment when much contemporary abstraction leans into atmospheric beauty and polished ambiguity, Mattax proposes a different direction. His paintings advocate for material honesty and emotional immediacy—for work that is felt as much as it is seen. At the age of 29, Mattax demonstrates a fluency with abstraction far beyond his years and the confidence to offer an urgent and grounded vision for what abstraction can be now.