

# NICHOLAS METIVIER GALLERY

## BEN REEVES | *YACHT ROCK*

PRESS RELEASE

September 7<sup>th</sup> – September 21<sup>st</sup>

Nicholas Metivier Gallery is excited to announce *Yacht Rock*, a new exhibition of paintings and works on paper by Vancouver-based artist, Ben Reeves. The exhibition will be on view Saturday, September 7<sup>th</sup> through Saturday, September 21<sup>st</sup>. There will be an artist talk with John Geoghegan, Associate Curator of Collections and Research at the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, on Saturday, September 7<sup>th</sup> at 1PM followed by an opening reception with the artist through 3PM. Please [RSVP here](#).

In his latest body of work, Ben Reeves constructs landscapes filled with a sense of leisure found in the Canadian outdoors: windsurfing, paddleboarding, sailing, skiing and skating. His gesturally painted vignettes are perpetually sun-kissed and invite us to recall our own fond memories of similar activities with their intense pink, blue and yellow hues.

The title of the show, *Yacht Rock*, is derived from the genre of music synonymous with the Doobie Brothers, Steely Dan, Toto and Canada's own Gordon Lightfoot. Its discography includes much-loved anthems like "Long Train Runnin'" and "Hold the Line", songs suffused with a 70s-80s ethos of prosperity and escapism. The music that fills a yacht rock playlist is catchy, idyllic, and highly produced.

Reeves' paintings are similarly utopian, and in turn, they call out their own production. Reeves is acutely aware that landscape painting as a genre relies on the construction of an ideal, romanticised place rather than a mimetic representation of reality. His impastoed surfaces that simultaneously describe realistic subjects while revealing the physicality of the medium itself, allude to this paradox.

*"I think of yacht rock as a weird mix of the genuine and ironic. I feel the same way about these paintings. They celebrate utopic beauty and joy while the excess of it on display alludes to a subtle doubt or impossibility that underlies these notions."* - Ben Reeves

Essential to yacht rock is the idea of escape. Reeves captures the human urge to get away from the harsh realities of the world by embracing nature. In one of the larger paintings in the exhibition, a windsurfer's sail partially obscures them from our view. They are adrift alone in a sea of deep blues and purples, above them the sun sets in a canary yellow sky. The work is also an example of Reeves' impressive facility with oil paint, encouraging it to mimic the object or material it is describing both in rendering and feeling. The sail of the windsurfer is so thinly painted that the texture of the canvas can still be detected, allowing us to believe in its translucency revealing the shadow of a figure behind. The water on the other hand, is

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painted in thick, impastoed brushstrokes that physically differentiate the surface of the rough water with the smooth sail.

In contrast to the larger canvas works in the exhibition where the compositions are largely fabricated from Reeves' memory and intuition, the subjects for the oil on paper works are sourced primarily from everyday scenes captured with his own iPhone. This relatively recent medium for Reeves has opened new avenues for inspiration - they allow for more freedom and spontaneity which in turn has impacted his approach in other areas of his practice.