

# *No Regrets Because You're My Sunshine*

Lorenzo Amos

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The Intimists knew that a painting of a room was not just of a room, but also the feeling of it. What it means, in other words, to be able to feel it, which is another way to prove you were alive. Domestic interiors are still sniffed at, dismissed as sentimentality. But it's not sentimental to find beauty in the banal, because that's where most of us live. Nor is it sentimental to have an interior life, and to be able to let the rest of us see what it looks like.

When I say that Lorenzo works from home I don't mean he takes conference calls from his kitchen, or that he has a spare room he uses as a studio, which he doesn't. I mean he treats the walls of his apartment like canvas, that he cakes his walls in sprays of jittering marks, snatches of dialogue and lines of poetry, that his walls are thick with globs of paint accreting into impasto raised like an aggressive braille that insinuates itself into the room. I mean that he lives, literally, in his art, and the place that he works from is a home of the mind. It's cramped and claustrophobic and exhilarating, one of those fifth-floor walk-ups with a taffy-stretched entry corridor and windows that let in the canopy of the low-slung neighborhood outside. Lorenzo is like that too: a cluttered mind, brought up between downtown and Milan, self-taught and spilling out with the art he wants to share.

Still, the apartment is too cramped to fit the canvases Lorenzo is painting, so in the neighborhood's grand punk tradition of C-Squat and ABC No Rio, he's been using the gallery as his studio. Inside he's made it into a kind of domesticated version of Dan Colen and Dash Snow's hamster nest: books splayed opened in the middle of the floor; prints of photos he's taken of friends turned muses turned subjects fanned like playing cards, pairs of his paint-splattered jeans legs akimbo. Heavy curtains block out the street traffic. The Velvet Underground hums softly in the background. It's a facsimile of his home, which feels right, because facsimiles of home are precisely what he's after.

Lorenzo's pictures recreate his apartment walls in near-mimetic detail: the same spray of loose marks, the same scuffed and smeared baseboards, the same cheap Persian area rug, the same lines from Leopardi's "L'infinito" that dared to imagine the eternity of the universe beyond what he could see. It's not quite Vija Celmins — Lorenzo's walls are his own creation, not nature's — but in both there's a dedicated, near-obsessive struggle to understand the entirety of a world. It's a good trick: realist paintings of abstract paintings. But Lorenzo is totally earnest. Why not simply cut out the wall? He admonishes me. No, that would be lazy: "You need to put in some sort of work to have a piece of art that makes sense. For it to really become something that matters."

If there's anyone with a true shot to resurrect the loamy, febrile invention of downtown (pick your favorite: 1974, 1985, 2007), it might be Lorenzo. His pictures — sensual, anxious, dirty — catalog a demimonde of friends, other artists, and associates. They languish on beds and couches, smoking and shirtless, lost in deep thought or absent of any, simply existing. They're not portraits, except that they're all self-portraits. Pictures like "Leo laying by the door" channel Vuillard's sleight of hand: a room that's at once tight on real estate and infinite in emotional space, prosaic and spiritual, lonely and intimate.

Lorenzo's pictures are full of self-doubt and fear and tenderness and bravado. His marks are stuttering, nervous, insistent. They contain a totally appropriate urgency for someone who understands youth is temporary, and who worries that as young as he is he's already somehow behind. His pictures attempt to make up for lost time. Sometimes pictures can do that. Lorenzo makes his marks twice: once to make them and again to memorialize their making, like a kind of cartography. The loose traces of a life mapped, a testament to it. "They're dirty paintings," Lorenzo tells me. By which he means they're about life, which is always messy.

—Max Lakin