

# Stephen Lack



## Recommended by Sur Rodney (Sur)

Here I sit at the age of 65 doing the work I do and find myself currently committed to writing about Stephen Lack, someone I've had a well-known friendship with currently marking 5 decades. My first engagement with Steven Lack began in my teens. He was among a group of talented artists I'd admired. A decade later I would become a catalyst for helping to launch his celebrated career as part of our Gracie Mansion gallery venture in the 80s. Now decades later he continues producing art works with consistent unrelenting skill and accuracy—artworks that speak to the experience we find ourselves living with every day. Stephen Lack exemplifies everything an artist can be and as I would admire one to be! His admirers are numerous, or he would never have survived navigating the changing landscape that he continues to source.

*Sur Rodney (Sur), Fall 2020*

## Bio

Stephen Lack is an artist and filmmaker living in NYC and Upstate NY, exhibiting internationally. He is one of the seminal painters of the NY East Village Scene, part of the original stable of the Gracie Mansion Gallery. Stephen works in all mediums to mostly narrative conclusions. His work is in many major collections worldwide, public and private: The Chase Manhattan Bank collection; The New Britain Museum of American Art; The Rubell Family Collection; The Ralph Lauren Collection; The Museum of Art, Antwerp Belgium; The New York Public Library Print Collection; The Brooklyn Museum; Senvest Corporation; TD Bank; among many others. His works have appeared in the New Yorker Magazine, Glamour, GQ, and the NYTimes. His films, "Montreal Main" and "The Rubber Gun" debuted at the Whitney Museum and MOMA NY New Director series, respectively. His work in David Cronenberg's *Scanners* and *Dead Ringers* imbeds him as a cultural icon, as well as his award winning work with Jon Jost on *All the Vermeers in NY*

for PBS *American Playhouse*. Bravo TV's *Arts and Minds* profiled him. Recently St Thomas University N.B. published a book of his pen and ink drawings, *There is a War*. Lack continues to work and has current shows on view now in Chengdu China at the Park Gallery and a solo show in Montreal Canada at Gallery Laroche/Joncas. In 2020, the Winnipeg Art Gallery acquired two large and significant paintings for their collection.

## **Artist Statement**

The paintings selected by the Catherine Fosnot Gallery for this show, represent an evolutionary moment in my work. Each painting is now the product of much consideration and layering on my part. When I began showing paintings in the 80's, the works I exhibited were frequently the result of an outpouring of gut reactions to the moment: large scale and fast executions in quick drying acrylic. I was working to outstrip and outpace the restrictions that taste, and decoration, might impose. They articulated the rage and enthusiasms of the 80's, as the media telegraphed, to the sensitive, the elements that eventually brought us to the situation of madness and dislocation that we are all sharing now. The content and my preoccupations are still as before, but what has changed is the time it takes me to refine the image now that my hand is informed by experience and technique.

As is a constant, these works reflect my ever-absorbing interest and continual love of the external world, translated through the pre digestion of media representation, but not stopping there. There is a 'triangulation' happening here: the intersection of my memory, the present, and my emotional state at the moment of perception—all mediated by the hand in the process of the making of the painting. The work is informed by the hierarchy of formalism and dynamism implicit in the narrative depiction of the external world throughout art history. The color relationships and compositions within the rectangles are informed by elements from the works of many greats in the lexicon of pictorial art; from Titian and Guston to Morandi, Milton Avery, Dali, Diebenkorn, Guy Monpetit, Hopper, Disney, Vargas, and Warhol, among many, many, others. The omnivorous aspect of these adoptions reflects the amazing times of visual plenty from which I come. These paintings calmly reflect the tensions of our imposed roles. "Timmy is a Girl" shows us a bit of the isolation imposed by gender when it is being absorbed into a growing body. The inner fierceness of the child will give the implied story of a happier ending than the painting suggests at first glance. "The Lookout" is derived from a moment in the East Village in NYC in the 1990's. It lets you know that times have not changed much from the roaring Twenties and the era of prohibition.



*Stephen Lack, Timmy Wears a Dress, 9"x12" (left) and The Lookout, 24"x30" (right), Oil on Canvas*