

Xavier Schipani
They Laughed With Pleasure

February 29 - April 11, 2020
Opening Reception: Saturday, February 29, 7-9pm



"*They Laughed With Pleasure* is inspired by the diaries of a gay trans male writer named Lou Sullivan called *We Both Laughed in Pleasure*. I will never forget the first time I read his work, I felt seen, validated and alive. He recognized an absence of trans role models and sought to be seen and understood through his writing. As Queer artists and writers, it is important to document the past and present, and envision future experiences in our own way with our own words. The spirit of the work that I create will hopefully hold space for others to feel inspired to create art that highlights their life and acts as an outlet to connect with themselves and others. This show is about the expression of joy, something that is often not associated with masculinity. The scale of the work creates an environment for the viewer to experience it in a childlike way, as most of the figures are larger than life-size. There is an innocence that is often lost for trans people, as a lot of our lives are spent hiding or correcting ourselves to fit in. This sometimes manifests itself as grief, where childhood lost is mourned. I have often felt I missed so much, living in fear that I would never live a visible life. The work is inspired by these feelings but looks to highlight the joy and opportunity that I have now. My work shows bodies that look like mine enjoying the simple pleasures of life and moving freely in a world where nothing is holding them back. I'm creating imagery to show my younger self, the youth of today, and all to come that we exist."

-Xavier Schipani

Schipani's first solo exhibition with Lowell Ryan Projects includes four new large-scale murals, acrylic paintings on canvas, and layered works on sheets of plexiglass. In one mural, simplified, silhouetted figures in a range of skin tones with shortly cropped hair, painted in acrylic directly on the wall, lift an individual in a gesture of community and support. In another, running figures symbolize the privilege of inhabiting a body freely in public spaces. A work on canvas hung on the wall with grommets, depicts figures reaching and bending, dancing as a means to shake anxiety and fears. The imagery throughout *They Laughed With Pleasure* depicts physical joy and reclaims vulnerability, pleasure, and affection.

Xavier Schipani lives and works in Austin, TX. His work addresses gender and desire and often takes the form of large-scale murals. Schipani had a solo exhibition at Lora Reynolds Gallery in Austin in 2018 and has participated in exhibitions at MASS Gallery, Austin; Museum of Human Achievement, Austin; Open Space, Baltimore; SOMArts, San Francisco; and Vox Populi, Philadelphia. In 2017, he collaborated with *Transparent* creator Jill Soloway on several sculptural bathroom installations for Refinery29's *29Rooms*. *The Austin Chronicle* named Schipani the city's Best Muralist in 2016 after he produced murals for several locations in Austin. His work has been discussed in publications such as *Artnet*, *Cool Hunting*, *i-D*, *Out Magazine*, and *The New York Times*, to name a few.

Image: Xavier Schipani, *They Laughed With Pleasure*, 2020