



Thomas Dillon
Body Work

OPERA GALLERY

Thomas Dillon

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8 May — 21 June 2025

MADRID

OPERA GALLERY



FOREWORD

It is an honour for Opera Gallery to announce the international representation of Thomas Dillon and to do so with ‘Body Work,’ his first exhibition in Spain. We are very proud to welcome him, continuing our commitment to supporting new voices in contemporary art, always in dialogue with the great masters of our time and of the twentieth century.

On Dillon’s canvases, eloquent gestures, stories, and ideas unfold, drawing the viewer into a ceaseless discovery. The artist emerges as a conjurer who, in that definitive instant, captures the restless movement and psyche of all those portrayed.

These are characters whose incessant chatter we believe we can almost hear, conversing among themselves. In this bold and frenzied *mêlée*, the simultaneous bursts of paint—its materiality in splashes that claim prominence over the rest, sometimes through contrast with colour and other times through texture—carry us away, as if we were witnessing the convergence of ideas fired off by each figure.

Unexpectedly, the first thing that seizes our attention when contemplating each work is the eyes: lively beacons that invite us to gaze into them, prompting us to piece together the rest of the narrative they are embroiled in. This draws us into discovering references to figures like the farmers of Grant Wood (1891-1942) in *Graduation* (2024)—where we sense that Dillon captures the nuances of expression but breaks away from the rigidity and constraint of the iconic American painting’s scene.

In Dillon’s lively uproars, we also perceive references to many other artists, whether through the vibrant dripping that inevitably recalls Jackson Pollock’s (1912-1956) action painting, the gestural brushstrokes of Willem de Kooning (1904-1997), or even the carnival of satirical masks of James Ensor (1860-1949) in *Judication* (2024).

‘Body Work’ is an invitation to immerse ourselves body and soul in Thomas Dillon’s pictorial language, where the freshness of unconscious automatism and meditation go hand in hand.

Gilles Dyan
Founder & Chairman
Opera Gallery Group

Belén Herrera Ottino
Director
Opera Gallery Madrid



PREFACIO

Es un honor para Opera Gallery anunciar la representación internacional de Thomas Dillon y hacerlo con 'Body Work', su primera exposición en España. Estamos muy orgullosos de darle la bienvenida, continuando nuestro compromiso por el apoyo a las nuevas voces del arte actual, siempre en diálogo con grandes maestros de nuestro tiempo y del siglo XX.

En los lienzos de Dillon se suceden gestos elocuentes, historias e ideas, que atrapan al espectador en un incesante descubrimiento. El artista emerge como un prestidigitador que captura en ese instante definitivo el movimiento agitado y la psique de todos los retratados.

Personajes todos ellos a los que creemos escuchar en una verborrea incesante entre unos y otros. En esta intrépida y alocada melé, la simultaneidad de estallidos de pintura, su materialidad en salpicaduras que reclaman su protagonismo sobre el resto –a veces por el contraste con el color y otras por su textura–, nos hace dejarnos llevar en lo que pareciera la concurrencia de ideas disparadas de cada personaje.

De manera inesperada, lo primero que captura nuestra atención al contemplar cada obra son los ojos: luceros vívaces que nos invitan a mirarlos fijamente, elucubrando así el resto de la trama en la que andan zascandileando y que nos adentran a descubrir referencias a personajes como los granjeros de Grant Wood (1891-1942) en Graduation (2024) –donde tenemos la impresión de que Dillon capta los matices de la expresión, pero rompiendo el hieratismo y lo encorsetado de la escena del icónico cuadro norteamericano.

En estos alborotos vivarachos de Dillon percibimos también referencias a muchos otros artistas, ya sea con el vivaz dripping que irremediablemente nos lleva a recordar el action painting de Jackson Pollock (1912-1956), la gestualidad de las pinceladas de Willem de Kooning (1904-1997), o hasta el carnaval de máscaras satíricas de James Ensor (1860-1949) en Judication (2024).

'Body Work' es una invitación a adentrarnos en cuerpo y alma en el lenguaje pictórico de Thomas Dillon, donde la frescura del automatismo inconsciente y la meditación van de la mano.

Gilles Dyan
Fundador y Presidente
Opera Gallery Group

Belén Herrera Ottino
Directora
Opera Gallery Madrid



“

The immediacy of the blank canvas
necessitates its fulfillment—the artist
as creator assumes the primordial
objective of bringing forth something
from nothing.

*La inmediatez del lienzo en blanco exige
su ejecución: el artista como creador asume
el objetivo primordial de dar origen a algo
desde la nada.*

”

Man & Dog
2024

Acrylic on canvas
Acrílico sobre lienzo
Signed and dated on the reverse
172,7 x 137,2 cm | 68 x 54 in





Retrocausality
2025

Acrylic and dye on canvas
Acrílico y tinte sobre lienzo
Signed and dated on the reverse
228,6 x 203,2 cm | 90 x 80 in



The Lounge Room Trio
2025

Acrylic on canvas

Acrílico sobre lienzo

Signed and dated on the reverse

203,2 x 228,6 cm | 80 x 90 in

The Falconer
2024

Acrylic on canvas
Acrílico sobre lienzo

Signed and dated on the reverse
152,4 x 121,9 cm | 60 x 48 in







Eve, the Snake and the Garden
2024

Acrylic on canvas

Acrílico sobre lienzo

Signed and dated on the reverse

152,4 x 121,9 cm | 60 x 48 in



“

Upon charging the body with meditation protocols, I approach the blank canvas knowing that the finished work is contained in its virgin state. It is only a matter of bringing out the work through creative evolution.

Tras preparar mi cuerpo con rituales de meditación me acerco al lienzo en blanco sabiendo que la obra terminada ya está contenida en su estado virgen. Solo se trata de hacerla emerger a través de la evolución creativa.

”



Blue Dream
2024

Acrylic, dye and ink on canvas
Acrílico, tinte y tinta sobre lienzo
Signed and dated on the reverse
203,2 x 203,2 cm | 80 x 80 in



Archetypes invitro
2025

Acrylic and ink on canvas
Acrílico y tinta sobre lienzo
Signed and dated on the reverse
186,7 x 181,6 cm | 73.5 x 71.5 in



The Psychic's Egregore
2025

Acrylic, dye and ink on canvas
Acrílico, tinte y tinta sobre lienzo
Signed and dated on the reverse
188 x 228,6 cm | 74 x 90 in

The Fool among the Blind
2024

Acrylic, dye and ink on canvas
Acrílico, tinte y tinta sobre lienzo
Signed and dated on the reverse
203,2 x 203,2 cm | 80 x 80 in







“

For me, painting and the creative process
is a spiritual and philosophical inquiry
mediated through the body.

*Para mí, la pintura y el proceso creativo son
una investigación espiritual y filosófica
canalizada a través del cuerpo.*

”

The Chad
2024

Acrylic on canvas

Acrílico sobre lienzo

Signed and dated on the reverse

152,4 x 121,9 cm | 60 x 48 in





Joy Ride
2025

Acrylic and ink on canvas
Acrílico y tinta sobre lienzo
Signed and dated on the reverse
177,8 x 152,4 cm | 70 x 60 in

Country Girl, I think you're pretty
2025

Acrylic on canvas

Acrílico sobre lienzo

Signed and dated on the reverse

228,6 x 188 cm | 90 x 74 in





Further into Guilt
2024

Acrylic on canvas

Acrílico sobre lienzo

Signed and dated on the reverse

177,8 x 152,4 cm | 70 x 60 in





The Astral body en pose
2024

Acrylic, dye and ink on canvas
Acrílico, tinte y tinta sobre lienzo
Signed and dated on the reverse
177,8 x 152,4 cm | 70 x 60 in



“

You effectively turn the act of painting
into an impulse that satisfies and
validates itself through completion.

*En esencia, conviertes el acto de pintar
en un impulso que se satisface y se valida
a sí mismo a través de la acción.*

”



Judication
2024

Acrylic, dye and ink on canvas
Acrílico, tinte y tinta sobre lienzo
Signed and dated on the reverse
152,4 x 177,8 cm | 60 x 70 in



A Serious Folly
2024

Acrylic and ink on canvas
Acrílico y tinta sobre lienzo
Signed and dated on the reverse
152,4 x 213,4 cm | 60 x 84 in



There's a Long, Long Trail
2024

Acrylic on canvas
Acrílico sobre lienzo
Signed and dated on the reverse
152,4 x 213,4 cm | 60 x 84 in



Fright Night
2025

Acrylic and ink on canvas
Acrílico y tinta sobre lienzo
Signed and dated on the reverse
152,4 x 177,8 cm | 60 x 70 in

Synthetics on the Grid
2024

Acrylic, dye and ink on canvas
Acrílico, tinte y tinta sobre lienzo
Signed and dated on the reverse
203,2 x 177,8 cm | 80 x 70 in





“

The work of the artist must act outside of time. Painting should not be learned or academic but must come from the artist of the future as a retrocausal event in the perceived present moment.

La obra del artista debe trascender el tiempo. La pintura no debe aprenderse ni ser académica, sino emerger del artista del futuro como un evento retrocausal manifestado en el presente.

”

Graduation
2024

Acrylic on canvas
Acrílico sobre lienzo
Signed and dated on the reverse
203,2 x 177,8 cm | 80 x 70 in





Running from the night
2024

Acrylic, dye and ink on canvas
Acrílico, tinte y tinta sobre lienzo
Signed and dated on the reverse
203,2 x 228,6 cm | 80 x 90 in

Shifting duplicity
2025

Acrylic and ink on canvas
Acrílico y tinta sobre lienzo
Signed and dated on the reverse
177,8 x 152,4 cm | 70 x 60 in





Portrait of a memory
2024

Acrylic on canvas
Acrílico sobre lienzo
Signed and dated on the reverse
177,8 x 152,4 cm | 70 x 60 in

Ego & Id
2024

Acrylic on canvas

Acrílico sobre lienzo

Signed and dated on the reverse

152,4 x 121,9 cm | 60 x 48 in







Thomas Dillon in his studio, 2024 © Thomas Dillon

BIOGRAPHY

Thomas Dillon is a painter whose loosely figurative work explores the act of painting without conscious intention, reaching towards deeper meanings by breaking with traditional notions of authorship. Though faces and bodies can be seen in his paintings, his work is firmly planted within the abstract tradition of automatism. Born in Staten Island, New York in 1986, he taught himself to paint following earlier creative pursuits in music and writing. He currently lives and works in Philadelphia.

Dillon employs a unique painting process that begins with a ritual meditation involving incense, mantras, breathwork, and automatic movement before he enters the studio. The artist actively seeks to eradicate any sense of authorship from his work, positioning an intuitive creative impulse, rather than a conscious sense of intention, as the creative engine of his practice. For Dillon, this kind of passivity, which he describes as “denying the self,” leads to a primordial kind of painterly communication. He describes a two-way relationship between him and the image unfolding on the canvas; a creative push-and-pull where the tools of its creation — including his hands, squeegees, syringes, toothpicks and chopsticks — work in unison.

In this respect, Dillon joins a long and global lineage of artists interested in creating art without conscious thought, often grouped under the term ‘automatism’. From Kazuo Shiraga (1924-2008), who engaged his whole body in physically intensive painting processes, to Karel Appel (1921-2006), who famously encouraged painters to disengage their refined critical faculties and “start again like a child,” this movement encompasses some of the most important painters of the last century. For Dillon, automatism is a path towards a true and distilled expression of humanity. It is a way to reach beneath his everyday ways of thinking and acting, towards a more instinctive and universal mode of understanding concepts such as image and movement.

Many of Dillon’s paintings centre around pairs of eyes that emerge from chaotic storms of abstraction, revealing loosely-rendered characters around them. These are not human subjects, nor are they animals; they are the impossible-to-categorise products of the artist’s automatic painting process. He is interested in how the inclusion of eyes lend a kind of legibility to an image, bringing his abstractions a sense of relatability and the possibility of a two-way dialogue between painting and viewer.

Dillon’s work has been shown around the world, including venues in the United States and Europe.



Thomas Dillon in his studio, 2024 © Ted Degner

BIOGRAFÍA

Thomas Dillon es un pintor cuya obra abstracta presenta una leve figuración donde explora el acto de pintar sin una intención consciente, buscando significados más profundos al romper con las nociones tradicionales de autoría. Aunque en sus pinturas pueden apreciarse rostros y cuerpos, su trabajo se inscribe firmemente dentro de la tradición abstracta del automatismo. Nacido en Staten Island, Nueva York, en 1986, Dillon aprendió a pintar de manera autodidacta tras haberse dedicado previamente a la música y la escritura. Actualmente, vive y trabaja en Filadelfia.

Dillon emplea un proceso de pintura único que comienza con un ritual de meditación en el que utiliza incienso, mantras, ejercicios de respiración y movimientos automáticos antes de entrar en el estudio. El artista busca activamente erradicar cualquier rastro de autoría en su obra, priorizando el impulso creativo intuitivo, en lugar de una intención consciente, como motor de su práctica. Para Dillon, este tipo de pasividad, que describe como “negar el yo”, conduce a una forma primigenia de comunicación pictórica. Habla de una relación bidireccional entre él y la imagen que se desarrolla en el lienzo; un proceso creativo de ida y vuelta en el que las herramientas de creación —incluidas sus manos, espátulas, jeringas, y distintos tipos de palillos— trabajan armónicamente.

En este sentido, Dillon se inscribe en una tradición artística global que ha explorado la creación sin intervención racional, dentro de lo que se conoce como ‘automatismo’. Desde Kazuo Shiraga (1924–2008), quien involucraba todo su cuerpo en procesos de pintura físicamente intensos, hasta Karel Appel (1921–2006), que instaba a los pintores a despojarse de sus facultades críticas refinadas y “empezar de nuevo como un niño”, este movimiento abarca a algunos de los pintores más importantes del siglo pasado. Para Dillon, el automatismo es un camino hacia una expresión auténtica y depurada de la humanidad. Es una forma de ir más allá de su manera de pensar y actuar en el día a día, accediendo a una comprensión más instintiva y universal de conceptos como la imagen y el movimiento.

Muchas de las pinturas de Dillon versan en torno a ojos que emergen de tormentas caóticas de abstracción, revelando personajes representados vagamente a su alrededor. No son figuras humanas ni animales; son formas imposibles de categorizar que surgen de su proceso de pintura automática. Le interesa cómo la presencia de ojos otorga cierto grado de legibilidad a una imagen, dotando a sus abstracciones de un sentido de cercanía y de la posibilidad de establecer un diálogo bidireccional entre la pintura y el espectador.

La obra de Dillon ha sido expuesta en diversas partes del mundo, incluyendo espacios en Estados Unidos y Europa.



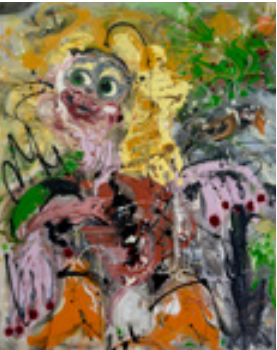
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Man & Dog
2024



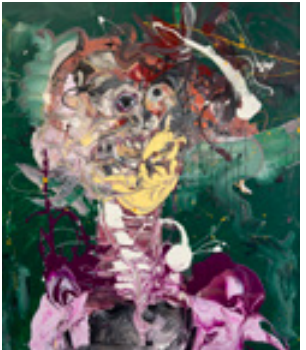
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Retrocausality
2025



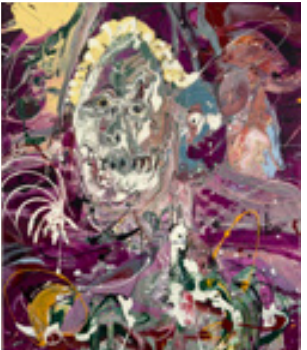
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The Lounge Room Trio
2025



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The Falconer
2024



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Further into Guilt
2024



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The Astral body en pose
2024



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Judication
2024



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A Serious Folly
2024



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*Eve, the Snake
and the Garden*
2024



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Blue Dream
2024



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Archetypes invitro
2025



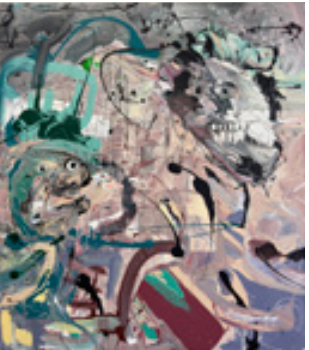
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The Psychic's Egregore
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2024



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Fright Night
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2024



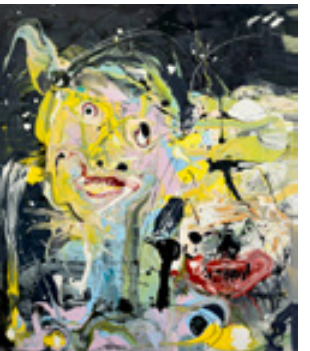
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Graduation
2024



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*The Fool among
the Blind*
2024



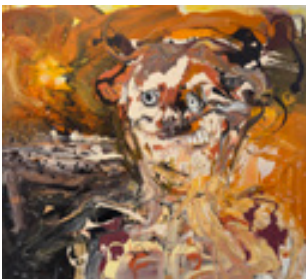
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The Chad
2024



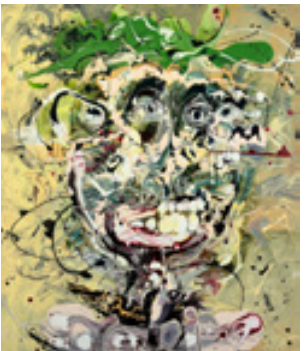
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Joy Ride
2025



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*Country Girl,
I think you're pretty*
2025



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Running from the night
2024



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Shifting duplicity
2025



66
Portrait of a memory
2024



68
Ego & Id
2024

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