

ONETWENTYEIGHT



Maxwell Stevens "Beach Girl, Surfside" 2024
Oil on Linen 20 x 15.5 in, 51 x 39.5 cm

MAXWELL STEVENS "Surfside" New Paintings

September 1 – October 11, 2026

Preview Week: September 1 - 8

Opening Reception: Wednesday, September 9, 6 - 9 pm

Gallery Hours: Tuesday - Saturday 11 am - 6 pm, Sunday 1 - 5 pm, and by appointment

(NEW YORK, NY) – ONETWENTYEIGHT is pleased to present the new solo exhibition **MAXWELL STEVENS "Surfside" New Paintings**, a dynamic suite of oil paintings that brings emotional depth, nuanced photorealism, and improvisational abstraction to the charged summertime atmosphere along the North Atlantic coast of Long Island. A young woman turns suddenly to look over her shoulder as sapphire blue oil paint smears across the horizon, waves crashing onto the shore while thick aquamarine brushstrokes of oil paint slide violently across a female torso, surfers splattered with cobalt teal paint enter the ocean as if on a heroic quest. Glances exchange, children play, poised figures are all fastidiously painted in layers of energetic brushstrokes and naturalistic observation. These are just some of the scenes now on view in this provocative exhibition that pushes painting to its very limits. Beach scenes approached with severity and gravitas usually reserved for master portraits circumvent the leisurely atmosphere, as the pictures focus not only on the delights of the beach but the complex psychological interactions between friends, families, and strangers alike.

"For me, the ocean provides not only a place to relax among others but to be immersed in the energy and vitality of youth, nature, and interpersonal dynamics in the most intimate and carefree way, while reflecting on the transient nature of life. It is transcendent and existential."

Abstraction in this context becomes a door to the unknown, as watery, calligraphic brushstrokes float freely from canvas to canvas over beachgoers and swimmers, overpainting populated panoramas with emotionally charged configurations, all set beneath intensely vivid blue-green skies. Waves crash in the background of each sun-drenched beachscape as fleeting moments typically observed only from a distance are stopped in time and brought into immediate proximity to the viewer. Exquisitely rendered and brimming with sexual energy, the central large panel "Surfside" measures 8' across. A sophisticated arrangement of interpersonal relationships, artistic virtuosity, and raw, intimate portraiture, a group of youths relax together under colorful explosions of abstract gestures that fly across the upper portions of the painting. In other large paintings filling the front of the gallery, bright abstractions and interlacing compositions shift ceaselessly from image to image with painterly finesse. In "Summer Daydream" a daughter is lost in thought while reading a paperback novel, her mother and friend in a deep sleep under their bright umbrella, glassy, curvilinear movements of abstraction hover over their private oasis. In the tall vertical painting "Surfer Girl," an athletic modern goddess dominates the composition while her surfer friends head into the ocean. Freshly painted swaths of impasto applied with a giant brush scatter across her body fragmenting the scene in fluid arrangements of jewel-like blues and aquas. In "Weekenders, Memorial Day" a young couple dominates the foreground with their sexily positioned bodies on American flag beach blankets under scattered arrangements of broken brushstrokes. In the grittier canvas entitled "Blue Surfer" a lone figure exits the water under abrasive scrapes and aggressively executed brushwork, embedding him into the paint surface while mirroring his own introspective and melancholic mood.

Throughout the exhibition, freshly mixed impasto brushstrokes, vivid smears, and plops of paint intervene, covering electric turquoise skies and chipping away at the figures like time itself, living statues subjected to the rain of emotional catharsis. In a set of smaller panels entitled "Surfside at Dusk," "Lifeguard at Dusk," and "Pink Skies at Dusk," softly lit scenes present crowded shorelines with beachgoers staying late into the early evening, offering a reflective counterbalance to the brightly sunlit images. And in the rear gallery three soft-focus canvases melt each scene into effervescent abstractions, their mirror finish images wavering mirage-like between perceptual recognition and pure coloristic experience.

Maxwell Stevens lives and works in New York City. He received an MFA in Painting from the School of Art at Washington University in St. Louis, and a BFA in Painting from The Atlanta College of Art. His paintings and drawings have been exhibited extensively and internationally in contemporary venues from Tokyo to London to New York, alongside major artists such as Cy Twombly, Joseph Beuys, and Dorothea Rockburne. Recent exhibitions include Galerie Bruno Massa, Paris, Tbilisi (2026, 2025, 2024), Galleria Tilde, Palermo, Italy (2025, 2024), Berry Campbell Gallery, New York (2026), A Space Gallery, New York (2026), Artmetod, New York (2026), Art Fair Daegu, South Korea (2026), BAMA Art Fair, Busan, South Korea (2026), Blue Art Fair, Busan, South Korea (2026), In-Between Ibiza (2026), Pink Art Fair, Seoul, South Korea (2026, 2025), Daegu International Art Fair, South Korea (2025), Palazzo Pisani Revedin (2025), (un)fair Milan, Italy (2024), Marbella Design & Art, Spain (2024), Amos Eno Gallery, New York (2024), D Contemporary, London (2024), and VillageOneArt, New York (2023). His work has been featured in numerous publications including Art in America, Art Collector News, Cultbytes, Juliet Art Magazine, The Museum of Modern Art Contemporary Drawing and Print Associates Bulletin, Arte Fuse, Art News USA, Aatonau, Contemporary Art Explore, Fine Art Connoisseur, HENI News, Meer, NY Arts Magazine, The St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Two Coats of Paint, and Art Papers.

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