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The After Party

February 17 – March 16, 2024

Opening reception: Saturday February 17, 2-4pm

With works by Maxwell Bates, Peter Doig, Kim Dorland, Joe Fafard, Gathie Falk, Rodney Graham, Angela Grossmann, Adad Hannah, Fred Herzog, Jack Kenna, Ben Reeves, Neil Wedman and Etienne Zack.

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Welcome to *The After Party*, where artworks have been brought together to feature both the anticipation and the release of emotions—especially as we process the enormity of what has just passed. In particular, while we emerge from a global pandemic, there is a collective awkwardness in maneuvering through a new social condition. Inspired by the work of Maxwell Bates as it's starting point, *The After Party* serves to convey the tensions at play in human relationships as people adapt to an intense period of disruption. May the exhibited artworks, made in the post WW2 period until now, be springboards for a myriad of ways to consider our current, complicated, and often isolated states of being.

The exhibition begins with a Neil Wedman "Spotlight" painting, suggesting the anticipation of a performance or reflection after an event has concluded. Rodney Graham's piano stool also hovers in this timeless void, in anticipation of what might transpire. The four figurative paintings to the right suggest further states of unknowing, as if these characters are on an existential quest for meaning. From Kim Dorland's artist in search of a subject, to Ben Reeves' isolated figure vaping on the front steps, to Angela Grossmann's demure female reflecting in solitude, to Peter Doig's Christlike figure staring apprehensively back the viewer, these isolated figures prefer to be on the outside rather than socializing with others.

Commanding social attention, on the other hand, is exemplified by Joe Fafard's bronze sculpture of former prime minister John Diefenbaker, a skilled orator and spirited statesman who often stood on a chair to address the audience at events. He is joined by Neil Wedman's dancing cowboys who seem inspired after a day's work. And in his retelling of the Decameron short stories, Adad Hannah's protagonist of a languishing female is in fact trying to escape the black death, an earlier version of a colossal plague.

Other works consider the difficulties of organized enjoyment. Jack Kenna's tabletop of cords and plug-ins seem to indicate that it was a high-tech event, but the dangling cell phone might be symptomatic of a partying DJ who has vacated the room. The advertising sign for a bar in Fred Herzog's photograph has seen better days; even the neon is burnt out. And Etienne Zack's cigarette butts that have been

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extinguished all over an image of a painting, is the de facto bitter end...the sun is rising, it's time to go home.

The final section of the exhibition presents several party scenes. Maxwell Bates' compelling yet awkward characters are caught in uncomfortable psychological gestures as they play cards, drink tea, and stand at the bar. A classic Fred Herzog photograph shows two fellows, one holding a case of Lucky Lager, discussing something on the street with animated gestures. Gathie Falk and Jack Kenna's sculptures provide the "last call" for a party, as the drinks and remnants of an evening are being organized into hand sculpted containers.