

# Charles Moffett

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Maggie Ellis

*Rosebud*

April 26 - June 15, 2019

Opening reception April 26, 6-9pm

Charles Moffett is pleased to present *Rosebud*, featuring artist Maggie Ellis. The exhibition is the artist's inaugural solo show in New York, presenting a series of new figurative paintings.

Rose-colored glasses cover a town in wishful suburban dreams. Even in name, the residents of Loganville, Georgia attempt to keep up appearances beyond their means; Maggie Ellis' paintings evoke a town embedded in the American dream of a crisp, untouched room reserved for perfection and a visitor who never comes. Somewhere above a drug-riddled basement party, that room is a beacon of hope to compartmentalized suburbanite ideals.

Fearlessly humanizing marginalized and misunderstood tribal groups has been the defining characteristic— not only of Maggie Ellis' paintings— but of her life. Growing up in Georgia, Ellis always felt that something was lacking in the syrupy slow drip of Southern days spent longing to be older, waiting to get married, winnowing off church, drugs, parties, and painful boredom. Although childhood was a constant battle to leave the poverty and hive mentality of Loganville, she now returns— not quite prodigal— to give voices, names, and faces to her hometown figures. *Rosebud* features a deeply intimate examination of tribalistic life in the United States. A biker church, a barren basement lounge, a jovial and repressed Christian man. These paintings are all explorations of a “culture of hiding” the truth: true feelings, actions, addictions and desires.

Ellis would not be making these paintings in Georgia. Her practice is predicated on a rebellious outsider status. Georgia was too slow, biased, and limiting. For Ellis, New York is its foil. Beautiful pockets of humanity bloom in both states; but Maggie Ellis is more interested in making work around social blind spots. As much as this exhibition presents a homecoming and a private peek into insular conservative groups, it is also a contemplation of her New York viewers.

Empathy is Ellis' primary philosophy. This does not emerge from an overdose of optimism, but from her deep-seated belief in the value and uniqueness of each individuals' lived experience. Her paintings draw on old family photos, drawings of childhood neighbors and friends, and murky memories of emotions and experiences. These provide a deeply personal insight into insular groups that, from the outside, it might be easy to dismissively read as a monolithic totality. Instead, Ellis' work gives her audience the opportunity to consider the network of connections between individuals and groups. She investigates quiet moments of pain and humor, presenting othered subjects in everyday instances, perhaps hoping these works will help her audience to rethink the connection between North and South in the United States.

Maggie Ellis creates aesthetic oral histories. Her paintings freeze experience into a narrative that asks viewers to look and look again; challenging her audience to question their assumptions about life in rural Georgia. Look again; with empathy.