

**PRESS RELEASE**

# A Wilderness of Mirrors

March 7 – April 18, 2026



Conor Dowdle, A Wilderness of Mirrors, 2025

DON'T LOOK Projects is pleased to announce A Wilderness of Mirrors, an exhibition of new paintings by Conor Dowdle. Marking the artist's first solo presentation with the gallery, the exhibition features a body of work that navigates the porous boundary between direct observation and the atmospheric distortions of memory.

Drawing its title from a phrase evocative of strategic deception and refracted truths, the exhibition investigates how we inhabit the "real" in an era increasingly defined by digital simulation. Dowdle's practice serves as a formal counterpoint to this virtual drift, grounding itself in the tactile immediacy of en plein air study while acknowledging that the act of seeing is never a neutral recording. As John Berger noted in *Ways of Seeing*, "*We never look at just one thing; we are always looking at the relation between things and ourselves.*"

## The Process of Recollection

Each work in A Wilderness of Mirrors originates from primary contact—on-site pencil or pastel drawings made within the urban density of New York City or the expansive terrains of the Hudson River Valley. These initial documents are then brought into the studio, where they undergo a process of refinement and estrangement. By translating these sketches into intermediary oil studies and eventually canvases, Dowdle allows the specifics of the site to merge with the haziness of recollection.

The resulting compositions eschew 1:1 documentation in favor of what the artist describes as a "charged stillness." Influenced by the tonal sensitivity of Luc Tuymans and the structural clarity of David Hockney, Dowdle's surfaces are both lush and restrained. His subjects—familiar archetypal scenes of the American Northeast—are reactivated as psychological spaces, embedded with new meanings that reflect contemporary experiences of place.

## Mirrors and Perspectives

In these paintings, the landscape becomes a vessel for subjectivity. Dowdle explores the tension between the familiar and the enigmatic, asking the viewer to consider if the perspective shown is

that of the artist, the site, or their own projected history. The works act as mirrors, simultaneously holding the vision of a specific moment and the echoes of a forgotten time, carefully reconstructed through "new eyes."

By utilizing traditional mediums as both a constraint and a tool, Dowdle's work demands a slow, dedicated looking. In a world of fleeting immateriality, these paintings embody a presence of their own—meditations on what it means to be truly present in a place that is already beginning to fade.

**About the Artist**

Conor Dowdle is a painter based in New York City. His work explores the intersection of inherited visual typologies and personal perception. Through a rigorous process of observational drawing and studio recontextualization, he examines how culture, technology, and historical context shape our representation of the natural and urban environment.

On view March 7th - April 18th, 2026, at DON'T LOOK Projects, 461 N. Western Ave, Los Angeles, CA.

DON'T LOOK Projects is a contemporary art gallery in Los Angeles, CA. For inquiries, contact [galler@dontlookprojects.com](mailto:galler@dontlookprojects.com).