

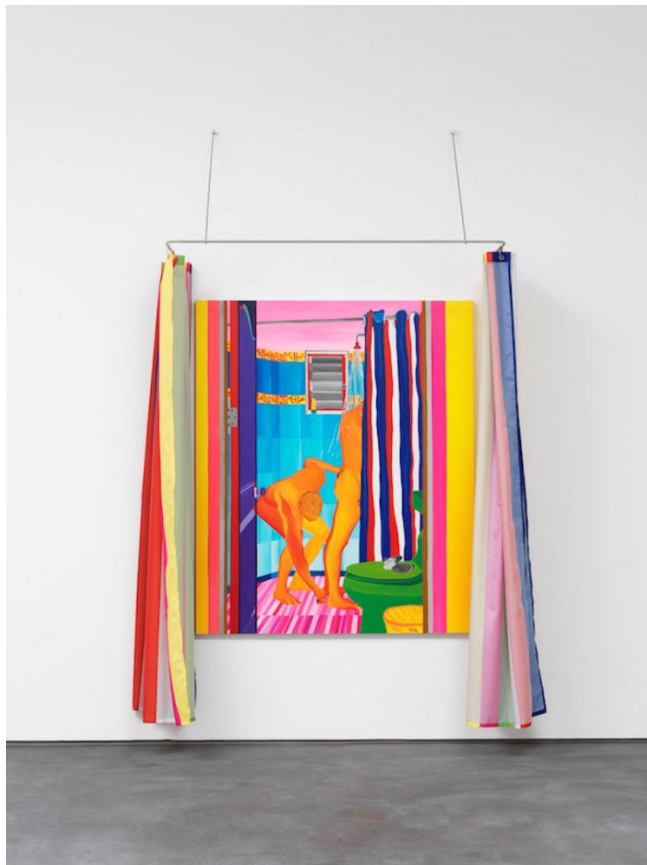
BERLINARTLINK

Peeking: Navot Miller's 'Paradise' at Dittrich & Schlechtriem

by Lars Holdgate // July 18, 2025

The stairs leading down into the basement are enveloped in color. It's not yet 7PM; there's nothing to see. Shiny sheets obscure the works. A lonely shower curtain with colorful stripes stands guard on the back room's central wall. It is itself an attraction.

People crowd into a shrinking basement and eagerly await the big reveal. The space feels somewhat empty. Slim windows at the top of the roughly six-meter-high ceilings open up onto the road. This is the only source of light, other than the anemic fluorescent lights above.



Navot Miller: 'Paradise,' 2025, installation view at DITTRICH & SCHLECHTRIEM
Courtesy of the artist and the gallery, photo by Jens Ziehe

Navot Miller pulls away the sheets, one after another after another. Fabric falls and the room is doused in bright colors that soak up any scraps of light. We enter into 'Paradise.' Vibrancy is the syntax of the exhibition, which comprises a body of 11 new works picturing scenes in both domestic and natural environments.

Color bleeds into even more color as the curtain is opened to reveal 'The Shower (Kevin & Elliot in Zipolite),' an almost life-sized painting of two orange bodies washing each other. Initially, the clashing patterns and stark colors dominate. It takes a few seconds to feel situated. The curtain turns 'The Shower' into an installation. Miller plays with perspective by framing not only the painting with the curtain but also using the doorframe depicted in the painting to frame the scene. We are peeking. Like the people showering, many subjects are shown from behind or from the side. Luscious pink and orange bodies pull us in but we can't get a clear look at their faces; they are obscured or partially concealed. Only on occasion do we catch a glimpse of half a profile. It brings about a unique intimacy as we are engaged in an act of innocent voyeurism.



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Hung in a somewhat tight passage between the two rooms, 'Snowscape (Tommy and Steven outside a club on Ten Eyck Street)' plays with this idea of peeking, as well. With so many people wanting to get past me, I mustn't stop and stare at the person urinating on a lamppost and anyway, it wouldn't be right—but it's a romantic depiction of a romantic act.

The motif of the look is a central component both within the visual imagery itself as well as in the questions the artist asks of the viewer. 'Eli in Berry St.' shows a person standing in a bathroom drinking a cup of something while looking out of the window that reaches from floor to ceiling. Perpendicular stands a proud red house with windows that appear as eyes dressed in reflective sunglasses. As we see Eli in a domestic space, overlooking the street with a sense of satisfaction, we not only ask ourselves what it actually is he is looking at but also what is going on behind the other windows across the road. Each one must be the set for a scene like this. These are playful, full bodied, enduring glimpses.



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Five of the works on show stick out because of their size. It is not that the others feel large, it is that they seem small. Shifting my attention from the bold colors that melt on my brain like ice cream on

hot peaches, these smaller works are accompanied by an unexpected suspicion of further complexity.

In the big room, two feel particularly small as they hang rim to rim. 'Two chefs on a cigarette break in Marseille' and '3 boys in Balandra' show contrasting scenes. The former's title is relatively self-explanatory, as two people look out over a bay. The latter shows three boys wandering along a beach. We might be tempted into thinking that the chefs are looking over at the boys, while the geographies contained in the titles might speak to the fact that they are worlds apart: different selves? Different times? Different paradises? What are they looking at? What are they looking for?

Repeatedly, the subjects and the scenes trespass their frames, rendering the frame productive. In 'Schlafstunde (Mauricio & Navot in CDMX),' two gentle bodies lie in bed. While bold colors protrude, dashes of impressionism appear. In the left hand corner, a tree. At the foot of the bed, a seemingly unending duvet that may as well have been used to cover the paintings before the reveal. I walk around once more and the feature pops up in other paintings, too. Sandy beaches, rolling hills and duvets almost become one and the same thing, floating from painting to painting.



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I spent more time thinking about this idea of boundaries and their transgression. It wasn't just the shower curtain that extended the painting into our space and time, enveloping the painting and enveloping us. The canvases (or linens) seem thick and protrude by a couple of inches. Their sides are occasionally painted, either continuing the primary image or using block color to block access to what lies beyond. When looking at 'The Chill (Mat, Elliot & Kevin in Zipolite),' I, for a moment, felt unsure where the painting ends and the wall starts as the dazzling pattern forgot to stop.

It feels strange because I had gotten the impression that the subjects weren't that interested in me. I can't see their faces. They are all looking away, looking at something in the distance, looking at something that I cannot see, but I am intrigued by. I want to know, but I can't.



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Miller's work feels intentional. Calculated depictions make each painting seem like it houses a book. The titles mirror this, as they declare the individuals and places with a matter-of-factness reminiscent of a slideshow caption. Snapshots of friendships, snapshots of a paradise. We observe something's start or end—which maybe comes to mean one and the same thing: the liminal space between doing something, just before starting to do something else again.

Bodies that bulge from the surface and the rooms that spill into the gallery envelop you in a world that you thought you were outside of, peeking into, as the subjects are preoccupied by whatever it is they are looking out at. Historically, the reveal might have been commonplace, but at least for me,

it's prompted something new. The evening began by not being able to see, but wanting to. It ended in a similar way, only we had seen more and we had seen less, at the same time.

Exhibition Info

Dittrich & Schlechtriem

Navot Miller: 'Paradise'

Exhibition: July 4-Aug. 30, 2025