

# ABBOZZO GALLERY TORONTO

## SURFACING

Alek Bélanger • Charlotte Blake • Bill Boyko • Jacob Freeman • Ali Pilli • Jake Santos

January 31 – February 22, 2025

sur·face  
/'sɜrfəs/

*verb*: provide with a particular upper or outer layer  
[intransitive] to suddenly appear or become obvious after having been hidden for a while

Abbozzo Gallery presents *Surfacing*, a group exhibition that pays attention to texture and finish and posits a series of artworks that convey a sense of desire, of danger, of *almost-there*, of looking through a glass darkly, and coming-to-light; of things almost seen and caught in state of transition. Playing on the double-meaning of surfacing – this show explores various artists employment of texture on their respective surfaces; in some cases, application of paint and brushstroke is thick, and self-evident, for others, no contact with the surface has even been made at all, and for a couple, the surface *is* the artwork. Also featured is the experimentation with blurred and obfuscated compositions and subject matter caught in in-between states, objects not quite fully breaching a plane, and suspended in mid-action – in some cases imbuing a constant unresolved tension between itself and its viewer.



*you've been on my mind*, 2024, acrylic ink on canvas, 18 x 24 inches

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**Alek Bélanger's** artistic practice explores personal themes of identity and queerness, his work *Fifty Shades* a layered narrative composed of intimate, sultry photographs and magazine images, loosely concealed by a thick and incomplete surface of acrylic paint and bond of chain.

**Charlotte Blake's** artwork *Way Out* is a literal exploration of surface in multiple dimensions, folding in amongst itself suspended between two adjacent walls. Her practice rooted in weaving, a long-underrepresented art form, with simultaneous loose and exacting detail.

**Bill Boyko's** artwork, *Surfacing*, although not eponymous to the show – it arrived to us after its thematic conception and its title is coincidental – is perhaps the most literal display of the conceptual impetus of the show. The idea of something just below a surface, literal or figuratively, perhaps distorted or slightly obscured, exists within the layers of its image. The compartmentalization one subject, composed of two panels, in varying degrees of focus.

**Jacob Freeman's** *Motorhead* and *Blink* posit a snake and dog flashes their fangs, impressing upon its viewer a sense of looming danger and an attack caught in stasis. In *Jean Shirt* we see abstracted and informal figures underneath the veil of an almost monochromatic composition, but slight paint omissions and outlines reveal a heroic, tragic scene.

**Ali Pilli's** simple yet striking compositions, sometimes referred to as “elevated tie-dye” have a distinct, almost matte finish where the symbiosis of colour, line, and texture meet. The outer layer / surface and tooth of the canvas, more than any other in this exhibition, play a visual role in the final aesthetic of the artwork.

**Jake Santos** employs his distinct airbrush technique, where no contact is made with the surface of the canvas or panel at all, where the work itself being interested more in the architecture of the image rather than recreating its source material in its exactitudes. The result of this are these out-of-focus compositions such as *carissa*, or *promises*, with our figures forever turned away, their faces tantalizingly hidden from their viewer. With the cinematic acrylic on canvas, *you've been on my mind*, the viewer chases a vehicle making its transit dangerously over a yellow meridian line into the oncoming lane.

## **Abbozzo Gallery**

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