

Isaac Lythgoe

Everyone's a Bad Guy

February 5—March 21, 2025

Kutlesa New York

Kutlesa is pleased to announce *Everyone's a Bad Guy*, a solo exhibition by Isaac Lythgoe. This exhibition marks the artist's first solo exhibition in New York.

Isaac Lythgoe's practice is an act of world-building. Reimagining narrative traditions and modes of storytelling, he creates interconnected works that probe power structures, contemporary ethics, and shifting social norms. Within this constructed universe, arcs of romance and mortality intersect, inviting viewers to consider how collective memory is formed—and what future societies might resemble. This temporal drift between past and future is mirrored in Lythgoe's aesthetic language, where tensions between the natural and the synthetic unfold through form, material, and gesture.

In *Everyone's a Bad Guy*, Lythgoe positions the wedding—the quintessential real-life fairytale—as a metaphor for performance, aspiration, and social mobility. His recent works challenge us to interrogate the trustworthiness of institutions in an era increasingly defined as post-truth. Within this framework, the wedding emerges as both a site of authenticity and an analogue for broader mechanisms of power: the corporate merger, the strategic alliance, the hostile takeover.

Across seven paintings, Lythgoe directs our attention to the familiar accoutrements of a wedding: suits, dresses, immaculate confections. Yet the characters populating these scenes betray their surroundings. They are not merely guests but staff and workers, ensnared in the excess of the event. The imagery is subtly infused with violence, competition, and voyeurism, revealing a celebration underwritten by tension.

Anchoring the exhibition is its titular work, a central sculpture that serves as a guide through this orchestrated chaos. The three-headed anamorphic figure evokes both Cerberus—the mythic guardian of the underworld—and the Disneyfied Big Bad Wolf: menacing, alluring, and fatally overconfident. Simultaneously bent over an office desk and reclining seductively against it, the figure's hollowed torso and forward-thrust face recall the wolf blowing down houses of wood and straw. Positioned above the visceral human interactions that animate the paintings, the sculpture assumes the role of master of ceremonies: antagonist-in-chief, wedding official, and the impenetrable face of corporate power.

About the Artist

Isaac Lythgoe (b.1989, Guernsey) is a multidisciplinary artist based in Paris. Lythgoe's work employs ideas from narrative and storytelling traditions to explore how prospective technologies may influence our future societal structures. His research focuses on notions of conflated power structures, current affairs, science fiction and theory, and these ideas translate into complex, allegorical works. Lythgoe's practice is world-building, and as such, his works interrelate and self-reference in order to emphasise these core themes. Characters are borrowed or reinvented, intertwined with modern myths and each other, reflecting the intangibility of self in contemporary society and seeks out ways in which we can relate to the vastness of modern industry; its motivations, corruptions and future potentials. Lythgoe holds a BA in Painting from Wimbledon College of Art (2014) and an MA in Painting from the Royal College of Art (2014).

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Opening Reception: Thursday, February 5, 6–8pm
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