



## Celeste Morton

*Tiny Lives*  
APRIL 14 - MAY 12 2024

written by **Sofia Macht**

*Tiny Lives*, *Tiny Loves*. What's tiny about them? The canvases are familiarly sized – roughly the dimensions of a notebook, a calendar, a framed photograph, a museum gift-shop postcard; the figures within them could fit in the palm of your hand. Installed parlor-style, they produce a tenderness similar to being in a small room at The Barnes Foundation, except if all the women were replaced with hunting dogs, bunnies, cats etc. The scale of these works exceeds their size, because of how the environment around the animals holds them. These spaces, whether active voids, landscapes, dense interiors, or something in between, are large and lively, full of mood and weather. In *Three Deer* and *Borzoi* the animals are centered within sympathetic planes of color built up in excess of the figures they surround. These are energetic fields whose brushstrokes convey either the aftermath or the potential of the animal's movement. In *Little Lamb* and *Cat in Wall*, the same principle applies, except here the space is articulated and the animals are fitted in amidst mimetic objects: the torqued pipe that hovers above little lamb, modeled in the same warm white as lamb's coat, a ribbon adorning its steel body in the same pink as lamb's inner ears.

Importantly these are found animals, collected from printed matter, historical paintings and Google searches. The finding is reflected in the directness of Morton's titles: *Three Deer*, *Borzoi*, *Little Lamb*, *Cat in Wall*, *Three Hounds*, *Hunting Dog*, *Bunny*; pure, solid nouns typed into a search bar anticipating something catching.



Being caught, by a tilting head, a tail's levity, the improbable angle of a pair of paws is what drives Morton's painting, which is a sort of radiation of punctum. Working wet on wet, drawing with the paint, Morton replicates the experience of painting from life, re-forming the figure until it is animate with whatever pierced her in the original image. The residue around the edges of Morton's canvases reveals the composition you see as a humid stain of the many paintings that came before. This slows down the pace of the paintings, and speaks to the artists' recontextualization of a real animal to an imaginary one – the animal inside your mind.

This animal inside your mind is maybe that creature who sounded heavier than a mouse, lighter than a raccoon, who camped in the wall behind your bed last spring, its scurrying feet syncing with the electric current of your REM cycle. Maybe it is the dog next door whose barking protest when his owner leaves for work, expresses your own fragile morning atmosphere. Maybe it is the lover in you who just wants to look a little closer, a little longer.

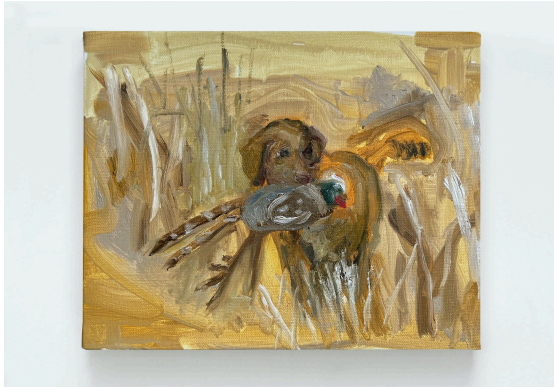
**CELESTE MORTON** (b. 1990) lives in Brooklyn, NY and is a teaching artist throughout NYC. She received her BA in film theory from the University of Vermont and her MFA in painting from the University of Delaware (2018). Her work has been shown in Philadelphia at Automat Gallery, Galleri Urbane and Martha's Contemporary in Texas, and throughout Chicago, Brooklyn, and NYC. She co-curated the show *Animal People* at Tappeto Volante Projects in Gowanus Brooklyn. In 2024, she participated in CowHouse Studios Artist Residency in Wexford County Ireland.

### **TINY DANCER GALLERY**

Tiny Dancer Gallery is an intimate speakeasy gallery nestled within a dance boutique in Gowanus, Brooklyn. It seeks to support underrepresented artists around South Brooklyn and create a place for them to share their secrets, their scraps, their thoughts. Tiny Dancer Gallery is more than just a creative venture; it is a testament to the power of small spaces to ignite big ideas.

### **BROOKLYN DANCE LESSONS**

Brooklyn Dance Lessons is known for its signature dance boutiques situated in the vibrant heart of Gowanus. Offering both private lessons and group classes tailored to social and wedding dances, the studio adopts a modern approach within a cozy setting to design a distinctive learning experience. Here, students are encouraged to embrace the joy of dancing, making every step an enjoyable part of their journey.



Hunting Dog  
Oil on canvas  
8" x 10"  
2023  
\$950



Three Hounds  
Oil on canvas  
9" x 12"  
2023  
\$1200



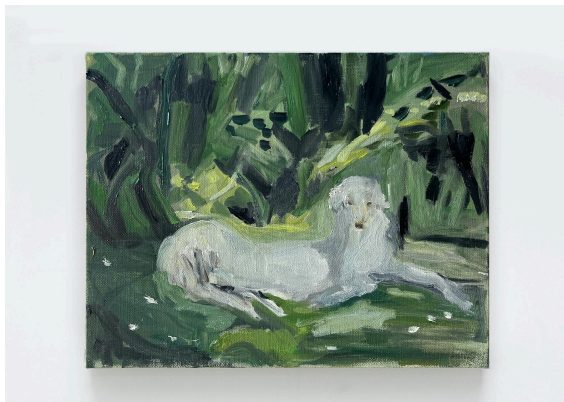
Little Lamb  
Oil on canvas  
9" x 12"  
2024  
NFS



Friends  
Oil on canvas  
8" x 10"  
2023  
\$950



Kittens on the Dock  
Oil on canvas  
8" x 10"  
2021  
\$950



Behind the Picnic  
Oil on canvas  
11" x 14"  
2023  
\$1400





Three Deer  
Oil on canvas  
11" x 14"  
2023  
\$1400



Cat in Wall  
Oil on canvas  
9" x 12"  
2021  
\$1200



Afghan Hound  
Oil on canvas  
11" x 14"  
2023  
\$1400



Bunny  
Oil on canvas  
9" x 12"  
2022  
\$1200



Alpaca and Goose  
Oil on canvas  
8" x 10"  
2024  
\$950



Borzoi  
Oil on canvas  
11" x 14"  
2023  
\$1400



Black Horse  
Oil on canvas  
9" x 12"  
2021  
\$1200