

PAUL THIEBAUD GALLERY

Stephen Coyle: *At the Movies*

March 21 – May 9, 2026

Opening reception: Saturday, March 21st 3–5 pm

Artist talk at 3:30 pm

Paul Thiebaud Gallery is pleased to announce the opening of *Stephen Coyle: At the Movies*, on Saturday, March 21, 2026, from 3 to 5 pm, with an artist talk at 3:30 pm. On view will be twelve new alkyd paintings depicting classic movies on the big screen, impassive movie goers and concession stand treats. This show is the debut of the Stephen Coyle's movie theater paintings as a body of work. The exhibition is on view through May 9, 2026.

About forty years ago, while living in downtown Los Angeles near vintage theaters, the idea of painting movie theater interiors was first conceived. While the concept percolated over time, in 2023 Coyle visited the Film Forum in New York City for the documentary film, *Joan Baez: I am a Noise*, where previews and ads were projected of various classic movies. In looking at these clips, Coyle let the imagery simmer until his studio came alive with identifiable and memorable film scenes from *Rebel Without a Cause*, *Suddenly Last Summer*, *In the Mood for Love*, *Harold and Maude*, *The Swimming Pool (La Piscine)* and *Singing in the Rain*.

The movie going experience, though, would be incomplete without its patrons. In theaters, the audience is equally regarded to be as vital as the projected film, and for Coyle, he sought to capture that relationship as a shared experience in stark contrast to an individualized streaming session on a miniaturized device. In a Modernist context, Coyle harkens to George Bellows' boxing paintings where the viewer is placed in a low vantage point making the perspective of the patron feel as though they are physically part of the shared action. Similarly, a moving picture may have a viewer pivoting, moving from side to side or looking down, cheering or laughing while being connected to the observed action.

Intrinsic to the theater experience, concession snacks receive their own star treatment in this show. Influenced by the utilization of high-angle shots and dramatic lighting in

cinematic photography and projection, Coyle applies the same technique to sweet and savory treats resulting their own spotlight and elevating the still-life to a new stylized form. In the artist's words, "I love the concession stand, but I wanted to present it in a way that moved beyond a typical still life to represent stardom, celebrity, and Hollywood."

Born in Waltham, MA, Stephen Coyle received an associate degree from Graham Junior College, Boston, in film, theater and radio production. While he later took an art class at Otis Art Institute/Parsons School of Design in Los Angeles, and worked alongside the painters Anton Sabas and Gayla Tarmu, Coyle considers himself a largely self-taught artist. His paintings have been exhibited extensively throughout the United States and can be found in numerous private collections. *At the Movies* is Stephen Coyle's fifth solo exhibition at Paul Thiebaud Gallery.