



# THE NEW YORKER

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## CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK SOCIETY'S CHILDREN

Billy Sullivan's breezy, snapshot-ish paintings of beautiful and personable, privileged, harmlessly decadent intimates, now on view at the Nicole Klagsbrun



gallery, have gone hotter in color, cooler in erotic chemistry, and altogether more substantial in style. Imagine a cross between the urbane formality of Alex Katz and the romantic magnetism of Elizabeth Peyton, with a dash of Nan Goldin's rough-and-tumble participation mystique. (Someone should do a show called "New York Charmed Circles," documenting

poetries of sociability from Florine Stettheimer through Andy Warhol to the present day. It would reveal the mysterious gravity of Sullivan's almost offhanded art as the force of an unacknowledged tradition.) In the new work, subjects with names like Alessio and Missy have evident ways of causing others to fall in love with them even, or especially, when they are blandly absorbed. Alessio and Christian converse, Bobby and Sam cuddle, and sumptuously nude Sirpa serves herself Kellogg's Corn Flakes beside a rumpled bed in a sunny hotel room. Colors run to chartreuse, pink, daffodil yellow, and no-holds-barred purple.

—Peter Schjeldahl

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