

## Little Treasures

James (Jimmy) Connelly is the art world's Rumpelstiltskin, spinning treasures with the twirl of a paintbrush from mere pigment and canvas. Typically, small and precious in scale—though when he does venture bigger, he loses none of the intimacy or oddity of his compositions—depicting unexpected pairings of otherworldly figures and animals. Many of Connelly's recent efforts bring to mind, compositionally, the German Romantic painter Caspar David Friedrich (1774–1840) in the formal aspect of the orientation of the inhabitants of a given work, generally longingly looking away from the viewer (or somewhere else altogether), as seen from behind. Like Friedrich, he's inviting us to share the elegiac perspective of his seemingly lost or lonely characters. The psychologically charged atmosphere also calls to mind the master of melancholy, Edvard Munch (1863–1944), though I would hardly characterize the subject matter of Connelly's paintings as downcast or despondent; rather, there are regularly dollops of surrealism and humor in the fantastical, discordant, juxtapositions of subject matter. Regardless of their size, it's a misconception to equate scale to value—on every occasion the quality of Jimmy's art far outweighs size or other facile categorizations.

Kenny Schachter, March 26, 2026