

Gerasimos Floratos: Big Town



The New York of 'Taxi Driver' – brutal, grim, violent, poor, desolate – is long gone, replaced years ago by yuppies, gentrification and safety. But there's something about Gerasimos Floratos's uneducated, rough paintings that evokes a gritty NY-urbanity that you can almost taste. The young artist grew up in Times Square, where his family still runs a deli, busting out dance moves on the streets for cash. He's self-taught and aggressive. He makes big rough canvases full of angry semi-human rabbit characters. They're cute-faced street urchins in bucket hats, pointing at the viewer and scowling. Floratos creates work that's half way between the graffiti-esque shapes of Jean-Michel Basquiat and the doodles you'd find in a hip hop-obsessed teenager's notebook. There's something ugly and unappealing about them – they're street rabbits for god's sake, how silly is that? – but their untrained aggression makes you keep looking. New York might have lost its grit, but Floratos still has a little left in him.

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