

# DIMIN

**Stephen Thorpe**

***Dream House***

September 6 – October 19, 2024

Opening Reception: Friday, September 6<sup>th</sup>, 6-8pm

*Small and hidden is the door that leads inward, and the entrance is barred by countless prejudices, mistaken assumptions, and fears. – Carl Jung*

DIMIN is pleased to present *Dream House*, an exhibition of new paintings by New York-based, British painter Stephen Thorpe. In *Dream House*, Thorpe continues his exploration of the psyche, where his painted rooms are likened to varying levels of psychological interiority. Drawing on psychoanalysis, sociology and symbolism, Thorpe's ornate interior scenes are at once representational and abstract, physically and emotionally compartmentalized, representing the interplay between psychological interiority and exteriority, the conscious and unconscious.

The nine new paintings showcased at DIMIN center on psychoanalyst Carl Jung's concept of the "dream house." In his autobiography, *Memories, Dreams and Reflections*, Jung records his seminal dream in which each level and room of a house corresponds to a different level of his own mind, human history and the collective unconscious. For Jung, the home offers both a map of one's own inner psyche and of humanity's collective evolution, with different layers of the house representing various states of consciousness.

Thorpe distills this idea down to the corner of a room, as an intimate place of self-reflection with its own psychology. This theme is further explored through imagery drawn from mythology, ancient symbols and cultural archetypes. For instance, in *Inward Journey into the Luminous Darkness of the Unconscious* (2024), a time-worn European armoire and Orientalist rug sit in stark contrast to a vibrant and dreamlike surrealist landscape in a depiction of what Jung referred to as "synchronicity", wherein the objective (the physical reality of the scene and our lived experience) come together with the narrative (the story the painting is depicting – and the stories we tell ourselves). *Solar Light Leads to Anxiety, Danger, Loneliness and Redemption* (2024) similarly portrays a landscape scene juxtaposed with a decaying wall overlaid with 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century European and Asian motifs, embodying the distortion of memory and the cultural pollination between East and West. The landscape, meanwhile – depicted clearly as an artwork on a wall – references the moonlit call to action of the archetypal hero's journey.

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The conceptual development of Thorpe's paintings is accompanied by a distinct visual vocabulary, infused with similar contradictions and juxtapositions. The dichotomies of inside/outside or order/chaos are apparent across the surfaces of Thorpe's canvases and the multiple techniques he applies. Thick, impasto walls – full of expressive, gestural marks – are positioned next to painstakingly detailed rugs, tapestries and chinoiserie or tightly rendered, kaleidoscopic landscapes. There is also tension in materiality: heavy-set gesso is sanded repeatedly to give glass-like, smooth surfaces for the paintings' figurative elements, which are set against exposed 12-ounce, bull-denim twill weave, where dry-brush techniques on raw canvas, deliberately rubbed back, yield a textural effect of history, beauty and decay.

## About the Artist

*Dream House* follows a solo exhibition by Thorpe at Denny Dimin Gallery in 2022, celebrated by *The New Yorker*. Thorpe's work has been exhibited recently in New York at Aicon Gallery and in Atlanta with Wolfgang Gallery. Internationally, his work is held in prominent private and museum collections and has been featured in solo and group exhibitions around the world at venues including Saatchi Gallery, London; the National Museum, Gdansk, Poland; Copeland Gallery, London; Summerhall, Edinburgh; the Royal Scottish Academy, Edinburgh; and Aberdeen Art Gallery, Aberdeen, amongst others.

Born in Margate, England but raised in Aberdeen, Scotland, Stephen Thorpe (b. 1981) studied painting at the Royal College of Art in London and was most recently a Professor of Painting at Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD) in Atlanta before relocating to New York. He was formerly assistant curator at Summerhall, a cultural center in Edinburgh, Scotland, where he curated exhibitions with leading artists including Fiona Banner, Ryan Gander, Gregor Schneider, Carolee Schneemann, and more. He has been the recipient of numerous prizes, including the Basil H. Alkazzi Foundation Scholarship; Saatchi's Showdown Prize, judged by Kristine Roepstorff and Matthias Weisher; prize winner of the 3rd Ward Open Call; and the Royal Scottish Academy's The Skinny Award.

In addition to DIMIN, Thorpe is represented by Ora-Ora in Hong Kong, where the artist will have a solo show to coincide with Art Basel Hong Kong in March 2025. His work will be included in a forthcoming exhibition at Cynefin, a new gallery and residency program in Athens, Greece founded by Welsh visual artist Neal Rock.

**DIMIN** is located in Tribeca at 406 Broadway, Fl. 2, New York, NY. DIMIN is open Tuesday to Saturday, 10am to 6pm. Please contact [gallery@dimin.nyc](mailto:gallery@dimin.nyc) for all inquiries.

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