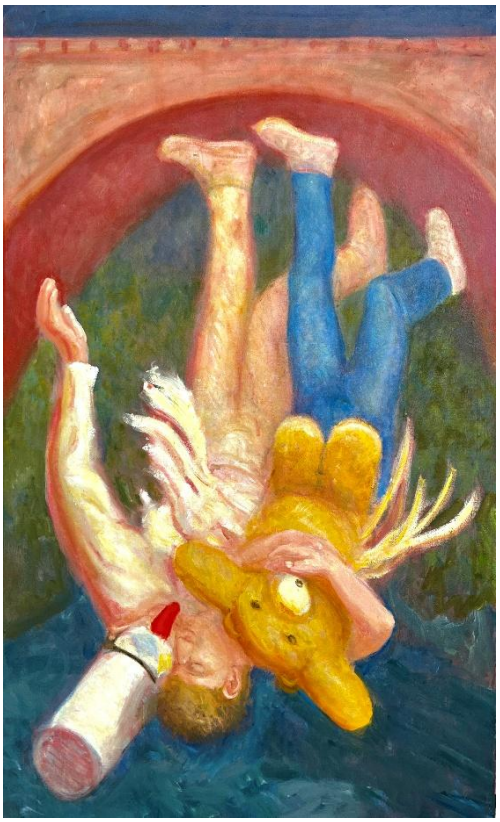
For Immediate Release



Falling Dark, oil on canvas, 66 x 46 inches



Falling Dark, oil on canvas, 66 x 40 inches

630 Flushing Avenue, 1st Floor, Brooklyn, NY 11206 I September 8, 2026 – November 1, 2026
Opening reception: September 11, 6 – 8:30 PM
The IW Gallery is open Saturday and Sundays, 1 – 5 pm for the exhibition, *Falling Armenians*, and weekdays by appointment.

Falling Armenians

The IW Gallery is pleased to present *Falling Armenians Paintings*, a major installation of nearly 50 paintings by artist Patrick Webb, on view September 8 through November 1, 2026. Developed over the past three years, the series takes as its point of departure the tragic story of Arsen and Tigran, two young Armenian men whose deaths in Yerevan in October 2022 were followed by a disturbing outpouring of homophobic commentary online.

Webb began the series in early 2023 after encountering an Instagram post by the couple. The photographs showed the two young men together, including images of them kissing, applying face masks, and displaying what appeared to be wedding bands. Their October 20, 2022, deaths were followed by both expressions of grief and an alarming wave of homophobic responses on social media, including comments celebrating their deaths and encouraging other gay people to die by suicide. The events and their aftermath became a profound and sustained subject for Webb.

Rather than attempting to simply illustrate the events, Webb approaches it through the language and history of painting. The installation moves among rectangles, squares, and tondos, with works depicting the figures in the act of falling, at the moment of impact, and in imagined states of repose.

The *Falling Armenians* Paintings draw upon a long history of the falling figure in Western art, from Renaissance painting through the twentieth century. In these works, the body becomes at once a specific human presence and a recurring pictorial motif—an image of vulnerability, violence, surrender, and loss. Other paintings imagine the landing. Here, the youthful forms of the two men are fragmented and shattered, confronting the physical consequences of the fall. In contrast, a number of works offer an imagined alternative: Arsen and Tigran appear together at rest, removed from the circumstances of their deaths. These paintings introduce a space of longing and possibility into an otherwise devastating narrative.

At the center of the exhibition is a group of large-scale diptychs and triptychs titled *Falling Armenians Ignored*. These works expand the story beyond the two individuals and place it within a larger social landscape. Their title draws attention to the act of witnessing—and to the possibility of looking away. The works are informed by W. H. Auden's *Musée des Beaux Arts*, a poem concerned with the coexistence of extraordinary suffering and the ordinary routines of everyday life.

In Webb's paintings, the fall therefore becomes more than a physical event. It becomes a way of thinking about what happens when private love encounters public hostility, and about what happens afterward—when life ends and the world continues.

A Personal History Within the *Fallen* Painting Series

The subject is also deeply personal for Webb. In his artist statement, he connects the story of Arsen and Tigran to his own experiences of homophobia, both internal and external, and to episodes of suicidal ideation during adolescence and during the height of the HIV epidemic.

A stuffed bear appears repeatedly within the series, connecting Webb's personal history to the story of the two young men. The object recalls both a bear visible in photographs associated with Arsen and Tigran and Webb's own childhood bear. In one composition, the figures link their ringed hands, echoing images of the couple and transforming the gesture into a painted evocation of intimacy and imagined union.

For Webb, the paintings are therefore not solely about death. They are equally concerned with love and desire, rejection and belonging, memory and survival. The story of Arsen and Tigran becomes a lens through which the artist considers his own history as well as the broader experience of queer life.

"The story of Tigran and Arsen is one of intense love. The paintings also explore the experience of rejection by the other. The *Ignored* paintings place the entire narrative in a world that has no empathy, as found in Auden's *Musée des Beaux Arts*."

— Patrick Webb, 2026

Looking, Falling, Remembering

Falling Armenians Paintings is ultimately an exhibition about the act of looking. Webb repeatedly returns to the same event from different perspectives: the fall, the impact, the possibility of rest, and the world surrounding the two figures.

The paintings ask viewers to consider not only what happened to Arsen and Tigran, but also what it means to witness suffering. Who sees? Who turns away? What does it mean for a society to continue with ordinary life while another person's world has come to an end?

Through a sustained engagement with the history of painting, personal memory, and the particular story of two young men, Webb transforms a tragic event into an expansive meditation on love, vulnerability, social indifference, and the human need to imagine another ending.