

RUBY CITY JOEY FAUERSO BEDROOM PAINTINGS



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JOEY FAUERSO BEDROOM PAINTINGS: WHEN SLEEP BECOMES ART

Joey Fauerso's exhibition titled *Bedroom Paintings* at Ruby City reveals a complex meditation on contemporary anxiety, artistic practice, and painting's expanding boundaries. Using the universal condition of insomnia as her foundation, Fauerso created a four-channel video work, *Bedroom Paintings* (2024), that serves as the exhibition's centerpiece and namesake. The subject proves particularly relevant—the inspiration took root during the COVID-19 pandemic, developed during election uncertainty, and is presented amid economic instabilities and deepening partisan tensions. The work speaks to global anxieties and the resultant sleeplessness that any of us may experience.

Recently acquired by the Linda Pace Foundation, Ruby City, Fauerso's video serves as a unique culmination of the many ideas and practices the artist has wrestled with throughout her career.

The resulting work is infused with humor, painting as a radical act, conceptual preoccupations, and performance elements. Through this approach, Fauerso has created a work that is deeply personal and universally resonant, intimate, and revelatory of her multifaceted art practice.



The Video and Exhibition

The video *Bedroom Paintings* opens with painted images by Fauerso, followed by the artist herself lying in bed staring directly into the camera. A soundtrack reminiscent of religious choral music, with lyrics emphasizing frustration, suggests the act of praying for sleep. The stark black-and-white bedroom setting, with walls similar to the one serving as a backdrop for the monitors and filmed in a private space, creates a surveillance-like atmosphere. The video cuts to multiple bedroom scenes where Fauerso's canvases serve as blankets, pillows, and sheets. They feature her original imagery and recreations of significant or personally relevant paintings, sculptures, portraits, and objects across periods. The video is structured around four sections: sleeping, thrashing, pill-taking and water-drinking, and dreaming. Performers simulate sleep or embody the experience of insomnia with vacant staring, restless movements, and even the desperate desire for relief as they gulp down remedies and water.



Installation view, left to right:

Bedroom Pillows

(Funeral for the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, Varanasi, India),
2024

Acrylic on canvas with pillow form
21 x 30 ¼ in.

The Crack-Up, 2024

Acrylic on canvas
59 x 72 in.

Complementing the video installation is an artist-designed bench resembling the beds featured in the video; it invites viewers to relax and experience the artist's work and unique bed linens, including a pillow used in filming. Also on view—and another recent acquisition by the Linda Pace Foundation, Ruby City—is *Bedroom Paintings (every pillow and blanket)* (2024). This suite of prints, or “index” as the artist calls them collectively, identifies all images that appear in the video. In the installation, a painted pillow rests on the floor next to the final work in the show, a large-scale painting titled *The Crack-Up* (2024), which reads as an anonymous piece of statuary as well as a self-portrait of the artist in a moment of sleepless anxiety.

Subverting Painterly Traditions

Although Fauerso works in many different formats and media, she was trained as a painter. Her unique process involves painting the entire canvas and, as the artist describes, “then scraping it off using various kitchen spatulas, clay tools and silkscreen squeegees. The process is very sculptural and immediate. I think of the paintings as two-dimensional carvings that are subtractive in nature.” Working on her studio floor, she captures its surface textures that add to the final painting's sculptural, stone-like appearance. *The Crack-Up* (2024) exemplifies this process, representing alternatively a self-portrait of the artist and a sculpted woman's head resting on its back; it serves as an example of painting's versatility in Fauerso's hands.

Her video, representative of “moving pictures,” crystallizes Fauerso's desire to challenge painting's conventions. Through her innovative use of video and performance, painting becomes not only three-dimensional but animate. The video captures figures tossing and turning, making the paintings wrinkle, fold, and layer atop each other. These movements create lively new forms and surprising juxtapositions—a dozing couple emerges from a large painted head while another sleeper rests beside a similarly positioned painted figure. Bed linens bunch and conform to sleepers' bodies, giving images three-dimensional form. Her stark black-and-white palette evident in all of her work creates constant shifts between picture plane flatness and spatial depth, making the human figures in the video occasionally disappear within the settings.



Equally significant in *Bedroom Paintings* is Fauerso's desire to disrupt the Western art history canon, which historically only included white male artists and is represented linearly and chronologically, implying developmental trajectory through succeeding artistic movements. The paintings in the video include canvases with her original imagery alongside images she references. Greek Cycladic statuary and paintings by well-known artists such as Édouard Manet and Auguste Rodin are mixed with photographs of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's funeral (pictured on the pillow resting on the floor), papier-mâché heads left in escaped Alcatraz prisoners' beds, items found in Abraham Lincoln's pockets upon his assassination, portraits of Queen Marie Antoinette, artist Joan Brown, and psychologist Carl Jung, as well as abstract images including the magnetic field proposed by René Descartes. These images present a more expansive and personalized notion of a canon, one that makes the case for socially significant objects and (art) historically relevant men and women.

Through this work Fauerso additionally hints at a desire to subvert the female nude tradition in art. Passive, idealized figures are transformed



Installation view:

Bedroom Paintings, 2024

Four-channel video, run time: 23 minutes, 44 seconds;
edition 1 of 5

into real, clothed bodies of all sexes and different ages moving in decidedly real, unidealized ways. The alternative canon she creates removes chronology and hierarchy, creating an open-ended, personalized version rooted in her interests and feminist principles, challenging us to question prescribed notions of “history,” “value,” and “representation.”

Performance

The performative element of Fauerso’s practice draws inspiration from her youth when she painted theater stage sets and watched elaborate celebratory displays part of the Transcendental Meditation community in which she was raised. From her reliance on live actors to her editing techniques and soundtrack, *Bedroom Paintings* epitomizes an appreciation for performance and her view of it as a metaphorical toolbox for creating works. Her painstaking editing process and soundtrack creation reflect slapstick humor and reference films featuring Bob Fosse’s choreographed dance sequences seamlessly paired with music. The superimposition of live actors on animated backgrounds executed in films like the 1964 movie *Mary Poppins* in many ways represents her approach: “my videos tend to feel like a stage set. They’re more like the way you would build a painting, layer by layer, rather than creating a three-dimensional space.”

Collaborative Dimensions

Fauerso views collaboration as stimulating and vital to her practice. Although she is the primary creative force in her works, *Bedroom Paintings* incorporates 18 family members (including her son, mother, and father) and friends. They received only basic instructions: dress in black and white, pretend to sleep and then not, and replicate sleep(less) movements. Artist and frequent performer in Fauerso’s videos, Laeree Lara improvised several filmed sequences. Videographer Michael Saulmon suggested on-the-spot camera angles to bring her vision forward. Finally, the artist’s brother Neil contributed song lyrics set to music composed by their father, Paul. Fauerso relishes these cooperative, unscripted experiences because of the “risk” they invite and the unexpected moments that ultimately feed her creative vision.



Installation view:

Bedroom Paintings, 2024

Four-channel video, run time: 23 minutes, 44 seconds;
edition 1 of 5



Literary Connections

Equally relevant to Fauerso's practice are the literary contributions of writers and thinkers. Most obvious here is the artist's reference to F. Scott Fitzgerald's (1896–1940) 1936 essay "The Crack-Up," about his psychological breakdown, which provided the title for her painting and partial video lyrics. Drawing parallels between Fitzgerald's description of mental fragmentation and contemporary sleepless anxiety, she positions her work within broader conversations about artists processing personal and societal pressures.

Fauerso also draws on French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty's (1908–1961) writings in which he argued for the innate, inseparable mind-body connection. Consciousness, he argued, is not solely rooted in the mind but instead is always an embodied consciousness because humans understand the world around them through the two operating together. If our bodies enable understanding, Fauerso seems to suggest, why not celebrate and build upon that connection? She developed a full-body painting method, executing paintings in enveloping scales and focusing on figurative subjects. *Bedroom Paintings* demonstrates this corporeal emphasis as she chose to express insomnia physically, through the performers' full-bodied actions and movements.

The Collector

Central to understanding *Bedroom Paintings* is Fauerso's lifelong fascination with building collections of objects she has assembled or crafted. The suite of prints titled *Bedroom Paintings (every pillow and blanket)* (2024) documents every artwork represented in the video and in this specific project. She describes her process as one that "often consists of making a collection of objects and images that address a loose theme, and then creating meaning through the compositions and relationships built between these objects." Here, she assembled paintings of her own imagery and those she recreated that are arranged, rearranged, and then altered by the actions of the performers and artist during filming and postproduction.

The Bedroom as Studio

Bedroom Paintings ultimately presents the bedroom as an alternative art space—part studio, part gallery, part sanctuary. The Ruby City exhibition creates a comprehensive environment for experiencing Fauerso’s unique approach to painting and her synthesis of performative, literary, and collaborative influences through a playful yet meaningful investigation of insomnia. With *Bedroom Paintings*, Fauerso achieves something rare: a work that is simultaneously deeply personal and broadly resonant, historically informed and yet thoroughly contemporary, seriously engaged with ideas and genuinely comedic about the absurdities of present-day existence. It stands as testament to her ability to find profound meaning in everyday experiences, transforming a sleepless night into a meditation on art, anxiety, and the ability to find comfort in creative expression.

– Elyse A. Gonzales
Director, Ruby City



Bedroom Paintings (every pillow and blanket), 2024
 Archival digital print; edition 1 of 5
 30 x 22 ½ in., sheet

WORKS IN THE EXHIBITION

Bedroom Paintings, 2024

Four-channel video, run time:
23 minutes, 44 seconds,
edition 1 of 5
Linda Pace Foundation
Collection, Ruby City,
San Antonio, Texas
2025.2.2

Video credits:

Direction/Production:

Joey Fauerso

Videographer:

Michael Saulmon

Video Editing:

Joey Fauerso

Sound Design and

Composition:

Joey Fauerso

Opening Lullaby

Music and Production:

Paul Fauerso

Opening Lullaby Lyrics:

Neil Fauerso and passages
from F. Scott Fitzgerald's
essay "The Crack-Up"

Production Assistance:

Laeree Lara

Performers:

Joey Fauerso, Laeree Lara,
Yvette Benavides, Reggie
De La Garza, Kerri Saulmon,
Kate Newby, Cameron Brown,
Melody Cuellar Boyd, Justin
Boyd, Paul Fauerso, Josephine
Fauerso, Paul Robinson, Diana
Kersey, Christina Palafox,
Kathleen Rubin, Justin
Davidson, Rose Reyes, Bryan
Rindfuss, Jennifer Young

Painting/Photography:

Scott Martin

Bedroom Paintings (every pillow and blanket), 2024

Suite of six archival digital
prints, edition 1 of 5
30 x 22 ½ in., each sheet
Linda Pace Foundation
Collection, Ruby City,
San Antonio, Texas
2025.2.3a-f
Produced with Hare & Hound
Press, San Antonio

Bedroom Pillows (Funeral for the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, Varanasi, India), 2024

Acrylic on canvas with
pillow form
21 x 30 ¼ in.
Courtesy of the artist and
David Shelton Gallery,
Houston

Bedroom Pillows (Horned Helmet), 2024

Acrylic on canvas
with pillow form
21 x 30 ¼ in.
Courtesy of the artist and
David Shelton Gallery,
Houston

The Crack-Up, 2024

Acrylic on canvas
59 x 72 in.
Courtesy of the artist and
David Shelton Gallery,
Houston

Installation Photography:

Jorge Villarreal

RUBY CITY CAMPUS

- 1 Sculpture Garden
- 2 Nancy Rubins, *5,000 lbs. of Sonny's Airplane Parts*,
Linda's Place, 550 lbs. of Tie-Wire
- 3 Marina Abramović, *Chair for Man and His Spirit*
- 4 Ken Little, *Boss*
- 5 Stephen Kaltenbach, ART WORKS
(in sidewalk by building entrance)
- 6 Teresita Fernández, *Starfield*
- 7 Teresita Fernández, *Wednesday's Child*
- 8 Teresita Fernández, *Tumble Hill*
- 9 Daniel Joseph Martinez sculpture
- 10 Daniel Joseph Martinez wall painting
- 11 Linda Pace, *Jewels in the Concrete* installation (throughout park)
- 12 Teresita Fernández, *Journal Benches* (throughout park)
- 13 Parking (also available on Camp Street)

RUBY CITY
THUR TO SUN 10AM—6PM
150 CAMP STREET
FREE & OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

