

COLOSSAL



"147 Rue Léon-Maurice Nordmann" (2025), oil on canvas, 51 x 79 inches. All images courtesy of the artist and SLAG&RX, shared with permission

Stephen Morrison's Trompe-L'œil 'Dog World' Paintings Are Fetching

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Art

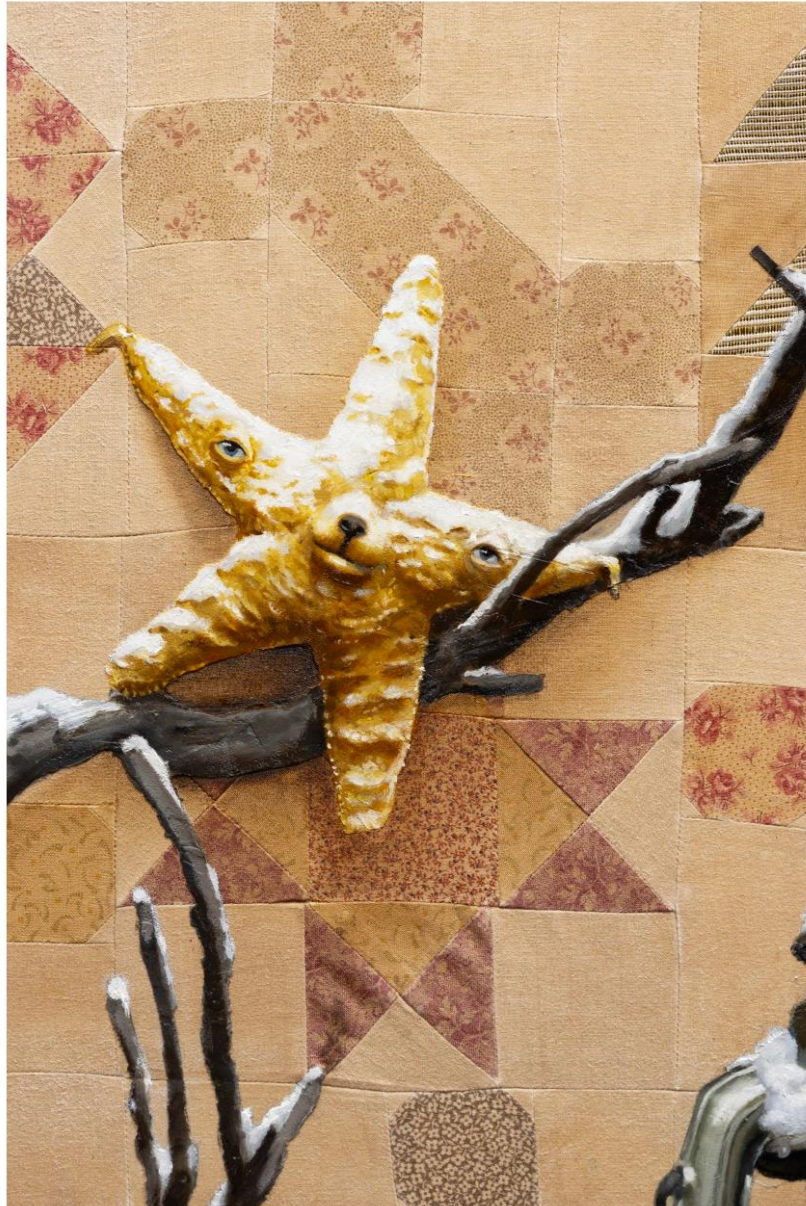
Kate Mothes

Any dog owner can appreciate the kind of unfettered, often visceral reactions canines have to everything from their favorite treats to a scurrying squirrel to another dog passing by the window. Their lack of inhibition and legendary fidelity bring comfort, routine, and goofiness to our daily lives despite their total unawareness of their effects on us. For [Stephen Morrison](#), curiosity and play find their way into [vibrant, quirky paintings](#) that “invite viewers to rediscover the magic and absurdity often obscured by the routine,” he says.



"111 Limerock Street" (2025), oil on quilted fabric on panel, 79 x 51 inches

Morrison's practice has lately revolved around trompe l'œil compositions of everyday objects and tableaux in which dogs' features appear unexpectedly. A snout stands in for the flap of a handbag or juts out from the side of a Pepsi can. His current solo exhibition, *Dog Show #5: Field Recordings* at SLAG&RX, centers on a series of objects referencing places he worked on the pieces—Paris, New York City, and Maine—that also play important roles in his life.



Detail of "111 Limerock Street"

Morrison's own memories and connections find their way into his collection of books, foods, photographs, and other items in an almost seek-and-find fashion. At first glance, the tableaux appear simply as collections of everyday things like vases, fruit, and cameras. But upon closer inspection, tiny visages appear along with references to dogs, from bones stitched into patchwork backgrounds to the sleepy face of a pooch in the center of a starfish and a bunch of green grapes with puppy faces. Always relaxed, even sleepy, the dogs' expressions evoke a calm sweetness, even nostalgia, paired with a sense of abundance.

In this series, the artist grapples with what belonging means, from revisiting his childhood home in Maine to thinking about his past decade in New York City to spending two months in Paris, where, “despite being married to a Frenchman, having many French friends, and having spent considerable time in the city, I had never felt at home,” he says. “The ornate beauty of the architecture and the sense I have of everything being solidly ‘in its place’ makes it hard to feel inspired there for me.” So, he set out to explore that sense of disjointedness and creative conflict.



“Untitled (Maine 2)” (2026), oil on quilted fabric on panel, 20 x 16 inches



"Untitled (Paris 2)" (2025), oil on canvas, 20 x 15 inches

France is referenced in Morrison's paintings by backgrounds of toile, or *toile de jousy*, a fabric design popular in the 18th century that features pastoral scenes, while Maine is represented by patchwork quilts he co-designed with his mother, who actually stitched them before they were incorporated into the works. "By bringing the objects and backgrounds into my dog world, I've rewritten my external material world through this lens, creating a new and more uniquely personal vision of these places," he says.

Morrison will be an artist-in-residence at [BUoY](#) in Tokyo this summer, where he's looking forward to incorporating Japanese textiles into a new series of paintings. He's also preparing for a pop-up solo exhibition at [Lazy Mike Gallery](#) in Seoul and a group exhibition at [Hashimoto Contemporary](#). *Dog Show #5: Field Recordings* continues through March 28 in New York. See more on the artist's [Instagram](#). ♦



"Untitled (NYC)" (2026), oil on panel, 20 x 16 inches