

**ENA SWANSEA: *untitled nightlife***  
**January 21 – February 15, 2014**  
**Artist Reception: Friday, January 24, 2014, 6-8pm**

**New York, NY** – Friedman Benda is pleased to present *untitled nightlife*, a first exhibition at the gallery for American painter Ena Swansea. Consisting of a new series of paintings of New York nightlife, the large-scale works derive from images glimpsed and recorded at The Box, Area, and other clubs and over a period of years.

A reception for the artist will be held on Friday, January 24, 2014 from 6-8pm at Friedman Benda, 515 West 26<sup>th</sup> Street.

Swansea's signature technique, like the club experience itself, makes indistinguishable the line between protagonist and voyeur, while the works also slip between abstraction and representation. Known for applying graphite powder as a base for her colored compositions, she creates vaguely celluloid effects. As with the moving image, Swansea suggests fleeting fantasies and the inability to grasp the passage of time. Within her loose vibrant brushstrokes, singular portraits or groups of revelers blend into the dark glossy canvases like x-rays of life. Her use of light creates isolationism, distance and impermanence around the subjects. Conversely, it is the artist's use of painting as her medium with which she succeeds in temporality; moments are captured, still reeling with activity yet codified within her frames.

For the exhibition, Swansea further breaks down the barrier between real and imagined – she has designed a sculptural sofa, entitled *night and day reversible sofa*. Conceived as a curving steel environment, it's designed for day with serene white fur and for night, with fabric created by the artist. The sofa has a martini shelf that can be used for a cup of coffee in the morning, and a large hidden bookshelf that winds across the back making it an ideal environment for a party, meditation, or quiet study.

The presence of Swansea's sofa in the show adds a layer of surrealism and disbelief, as it posits new possibilities, and unfettered recreational scenarios.

**About Ena Swansea**

Swansea lives and works in New York. Raised in North Carolina and a film major at the University of South Florida, Swansea has gone on to exhibit her work internationally. She was included in *The Triumph of Painting* at the Saatchi Gallery London in 2006, and *Greater New York* at PS1 MoMA in 2005. In 2008, her first museum survey was held at the Musee d'Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean, Luxembourg. Swansea has had over a dozen solo exhibits since 2000; in 2013 there have been two solo shows of new work, in Seoul, South Korea, and Philadelphia. The Deichtorhallen Hamburg/Sammlung Falckenberg organized a large two-person survey of Swansea and Robert Lucander in 2011/2012, featuring forty of Swansea's paintings from European collections. The artist's work is in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art; Cornell University's Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art; Boca Raton Museum of Art; Galerie Neue Meister/Albertinum Dresden; and Deichtorhallen, Sammlung Falckenberg, Hamburg. She is the recipient of a Hassam, Speicher, Betts and Symons Purchase Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

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