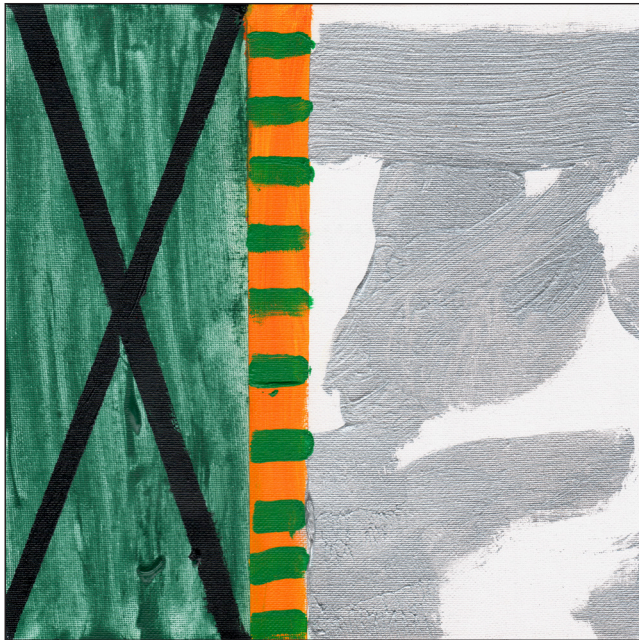


BOY WITH A HAT: ED ASKEW PAINTINGS 2014–2024



Untitled ("20/23")
2023
acrylic on canvas
10 x 10 inches

JULY 31 – AUGUST 21, 2026

Opening Reception:

Friday, July 31st, 8–11 PM

Music from

**Eve Searls, Dustin Laurenzi
& Jerry David DeCicca**

Refreshments provided by
Middle brow

Soccer Club Club is pleased to present "Boy with a Hat: Ed Askew, Painting 2014–2024", a solo-exhibition by New York-based artist Ed Askew. The opening reception shares the release date of *The Final Painting* on Drag City, the posthumous album by Askew produced by Jerry David DeCicca.

"Boy with a Hat" at Soccer Club Club is the fourth exhibition of paintings from this ten-year period, the final working years of Ed Askew. The show is curated by Jay Pluck, Askew's long-time friend and collaborator. The title of this exhibition is taken from the song of the same name, a favorite and oft-performed track from Askew's first of three releases on Drag City. The painting selected by Askew himself for the album cover is featured in this exhibition; it is likely the last painting completed by the artist.

Throughout his lifelong painting career, Askew's work was in discrete groups, less bodies of work than a finite search for the heart of a conceptual or compositional idea. After substantial exploration, he would move on abruptly from one idea to another but not without a connective ligament. One consistent element of his work from the past ten or more years is scale, due somewhat to the limitations of his residences—Askew lived in rented rooms that gradually became smaller as he moved from Washington Heights to Queens and to Brooklyn. In addition to collage and watercolor on paper, he painted almost exclusively on 10x10 or 12x12 inch, thin-profile, store-bought canvases.

Another commonality of the paintings from this time is the partitioning of the canvas. Sections of the square were often taped off or painted out, creating a seemingly independent section in which Askew would place some of his favorite motifs—shapes of boats, houses, and stars referencing children's drawings of such things (Askew often worked as an after-school art teacher). A second or third independent section would become ground for heavy marking and later a sort of abstracted calligraphy which he began to privilege. Earlier marks perceptible in the surface of the painting are evidence of his frequent reassessing of these partitions.

Each painting is exciting and, because Askew is known as a psych folk legend, it is easy to see them each as their own song. Not unlike one of his primary songwriting inspirations, Hoagy Carmichael, he uses a known vocabulary in surprising ways, leaning on motifs in unique fashion.

From 2014–2024, Askew painted with the canvas flat on his desk. Generally having two or three canvases in progress simultaneously, he would hang them on thumbtacks on the wall in his room and consider them throughout the day and night. His consideration was not protracted—on average he completed three paintings per month. At a two-week artist residency in Maine in 2021, he completed at least fifteen paintings.

Ed Askew was a painter and musician of extreme simultaneity and he worked every day. Installation images of his two shows at Starr Suites (Brooklyn, 2021 & 2024) and Xavier Hufkens (2023) are available at the gallery.

Special thanks to Lydia Mokdessi and Starr Suites.

ED ASKEW (1940–2025) is primarily known for his music but painted all his life. Prior to the 1968 release of his first album, the psych folk masterpiece *Ask the Unicorn* (ESP-Disk), he attended Silvermine Arts Center in Connecticut and Yale School of Art (class of 1966), both on scholarship. His scholarship to Yale was granted by Jack Tworok; his friends and classmates there included Jennifer Bartlett, Michael Craig-Martin, Jonathan Borovsky and Jan Hashey; and his main advisor was Al Held.

After Yale, Askew lived and worked primarily in New Haven, always painting and drawing from his living space, always making drawings and paintings for friends and for barter. He frequently went into New York City to show his work, exhibiting twice at Josef Gallery in Soho and on one occasion bringing canvases to show John Cage at his loft.

My work as a painter has always been tied to Modernism. I read everything I could find related to art, from Cézanne through the 1950s. The issue of innovation never interested me personally... What interests me is all the stuff that goes into abstract and abstract-figurative art. Not the styles, but the stuff that, in various combinations, make the styles: mixing and matching painting methods and ideas. — Ed Askew

He moved to NYC in 1987, first to an apartment in Washington Heights where he lived and worked on music, paintings, drawings, and collage for 27 years. Askew continued this work after being evicted and moving to Ridgewood, Bedford-Stuyvesant, and finally Hell's Kitchen. During this time, he exhibited his popular "City Life" and "Night City" paintings in New Haven (Chapel Arts Center, Arts Space) and published two artist books, *Red Lamp Poems* and *Scattered Shards*. In the final years of his life, Askew had two solo exhibitions of new paintings at Starr Suites in Brooklyn and participated in a group show curated by Joe Bradley at Xavier Hufkens in Brussels. Askew painted constantly even after losing the ability to self-record music and play piano.

Askew released nine albums since his debut in 1968 and self-released many more online. The first ever issue of the 1984 album, *Imperfection* (Drag City, 2011), shepherded by Steve Krakow, brought Askew on tour with Bill Callahan and the Black Swans. Jerry DeCicca produced *For the World* (Tin Angel, 2013), which ignited new interest in his music and led to his first performances overseas. *The Final Painting* (Drag City, 2026) is a posthumous album built around his home recordings from 2022. Its album cover is likely the last painting he completed, which he selected for the release.