

*Car Boys*, 2019

Oil on plywood

Collection of Heather and Theodore Karatz

In *Car Boys*, policemen interrupt a clandestine, possibly romantic, moment between the two figures at the center of the painting, who may have gone on a drive to seek privacy and freedom away from their families. The policemen's uniforms place the painting somewhere in South Asia, where it is quite common for law enforcement to patrol popular date and party spots and frighten people into giving over bribe money to avoid punishment. Here, the goonish gestures of the policemen add a satirical tone to an otherwise anxious scene.

*The Star*, 2019

Oil on plywood

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; purchase with funds from Graham Steele and Ulysses de Santi 2020.120

This circular painting—or tondo—depicts a hair-and-makeup scene in the moments before a performer emerges into his spotlight. The stylists apply foundation and hairspray to the face and hair of the protagonist, whose reflection suggests simultaneous empowerment and self-doubt. The painting reveals the constructed nature of a public persona: the labor of many—often queer—makeup artists lies behind the look of any single star who, if we are to believe advertisements or social media posts, simply woke up looking flawless. Additionally, Toor’s cartoony figuration serves as a humorous comment on aspirational beauty and the need for self-love.

Listen to Toor talk about beauty standards in this work.



*Parts and Things*, 2019

Oil on plywood

Collection of Keith Fox and Tom Keyes

In *Parts and Things*, heads, body parts, and clothing are heaped on the floor of a closet. Toor leaves ambiguous whether the parts belong to disassembled mannequins or actual people, creating a surreal and unsettling effect. A pink boa—a garment associated with performance—and gold chains appear tangled among the collapsed forms. For Toor, the painting proposes that the self is composed of many deconstructed versions, implying that one's identity can be put on based on need or desire, a notion that—as the limp limbs suggest—is alternately emboldening and exhausting.

*Two Men with Vans, Tie and Bottle, 2019*

Oil on canvas

Private collection

This painting is part of an ongoing series in which Toor depicts Brown men being scrutinized while traveling abroad. The sparseness of the setting evokes both the utilitarian places where such inspections by immigration and customs officials take place and an anonymous space between national borders. The artist considers each of these works to be an imagined self-portrait, painted from the perspective of an official deciding who should be allowed to pass and who should be held back and investigated. By foregrounding the travelers' possessions, Toor suggests that the gaze of security equates each individual with a group of banal items. The work captures a moment of precarious transition, depicting people caught in between, with little power and surrounded by bureaucracy that is invisible yet present.