

## David Buck, *Recollect*

June 27–August 8, 2025



*Badminton*, 2025, oil and graphite on panel

### *A Creative Life*

Curatorial Essay by Shirley Verrico

David Buck has built an impressive career as an illustrator, designer, art director, and ultimately as creative director at the Buffalo-based advertising agency Crowley Webb. It's a career that honed his eye for composition and visual storytelling. Over the past 20 years, Buck has cultivated a deeply personal and instantly recognizable body of work that reflects his artistic maturity and willingness to engage with vulnerability, memory, and emotion.

Buck's biography is interwoven with that of Buffalo Arts Studio. He first became involved with

the organization as a board member, then as a student, and finally as a Studio Artist beginning in 2006. Over the years, he has participated in numerous group exhibitions in the space, but *Recollect* marks his first solo presentation within its galleries. That milestone is made even more significant by the fact that the works on view were painted just down the hall from where they are now being displayed. The exhibition is not only a retrospective of Buck's career, but also a reflection of his long-standing commitment to this creative community.

*I really just wanted to learn how to paint.*

That's how it all started for David Buck. He found Buffalo Arts Studio at a time in his career when he was tasked increasingly with managerial work, leaving his creative itch unscratched. At Buffalo Arts Studio, he found a place where he could see himself as an artist. Buck enrolled in painting classes and never looked back.

*I'm thrilled to have this exhibition happen right here where all the work was created.*

Now, 20 years later, David Buck paints in his bright studio alongside the busy Buffalo Arts Studio galleries. *Recollect* brings together a wide-ranging collection of Buck's work, including two newly created large-scale paintings made especially for this exhibition. Many pieces have never been shown publicly, having long resided in private collections, family homes, or the artist's personal studio archive. This comprehensive presentation is a fitting tribute to Buck's creative legacy and exploration of the visual and emotional terrain he has charted with unwavering honesty.

*Recollect refers to the process of gathering past works as well as the core of my work all along—reinterpreting photographic images through the distortion of memory and the immediacy of the brush.*

Indeed, Buck's paintings operate in the fluid space between remembrance and reinvention. Drawing primarily from old family photographs, his work is grounded in autobiography but rendered as familiar narratives through the expressive alchemy of oil paint. Faces and figures emerge as if surfacing from the past, sometimes partially obscured or abstracted, yet always emotionally resonant. The use of varied brushstrokes, from delicate glazes to energetic gestures, brings a palpable sense of immediacy and emotional weight to each composition. Buck often limits his palette to heighten the sense of time—the cool blues of winter or warm gold of summer —transporting the viewer to their own memories of changing seasons. These are not literal transcriptions of memory but rather vivid reinterpretations, where the fading edges of recollection become fertile ground for painterly exploration.



*Hood of the Chevy*, 2011, oil and graphite on canvas board

*My Dad was a Chevy man until he became a Plymouth man. His friend from church owned the Plymouth dealership on Main Street – the only place in town.*

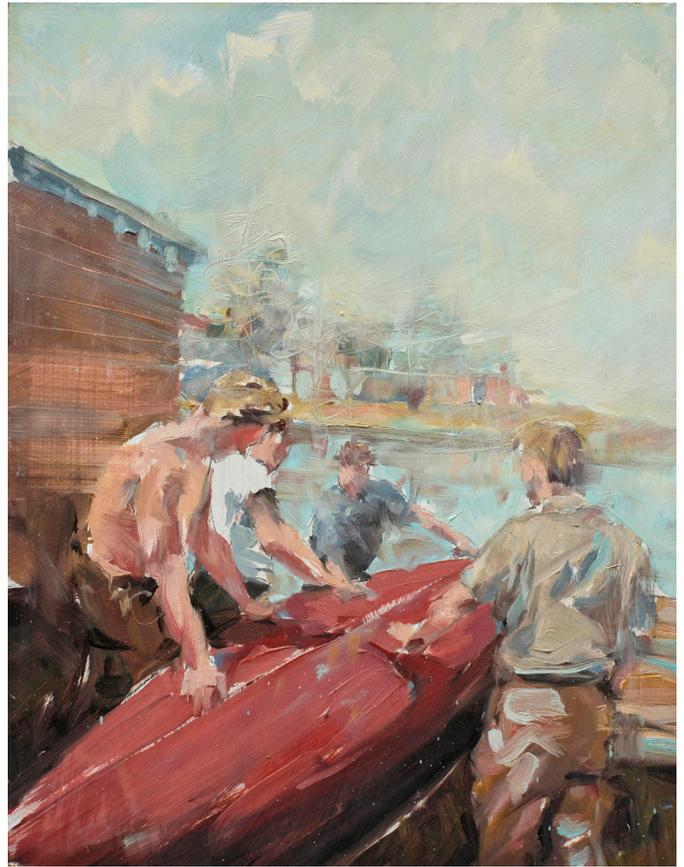


*Cheryl Jean on the Haystack*, 2008, oil and graphite on panel

*This is my sister Cher in her new sun dress, looking like a sweet country girl. Which she is. My daughter had suggested that my best stuff was loose and drippy. and this was next on the easel.*

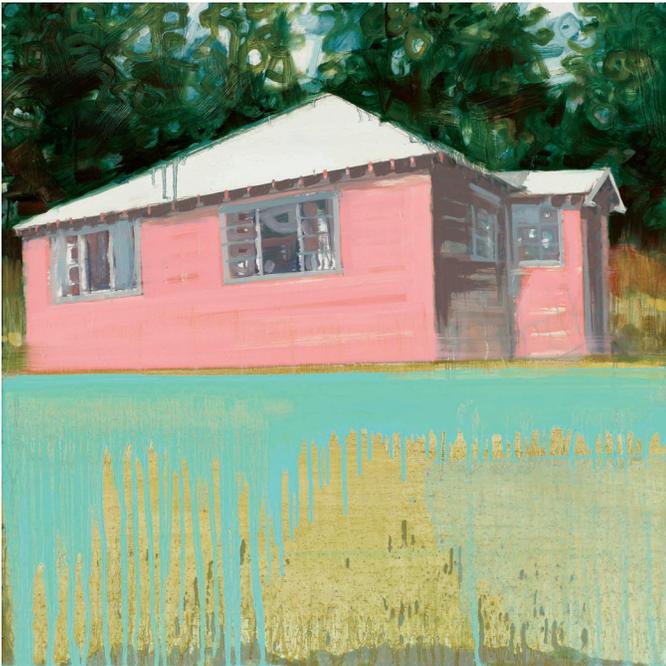
This sensibility is especially potent in his most recent works, where scale and gesture amplify the themes that have long driven his practice. The two new large-scale paintings included in *Recollect* push his process further into the realm of the monumental while maintaining the intimacy that has defined his career. These panels speak to a deepening engagement with the formal possibilities of painting and the emotional resonance of personal history.

In curating *Recollect*, special care was taken to trace the thematic and stylistic throughlines that have persisted throughout Buck's oeuvre. Family is a central motif, not just as subject matter, but as emotional catalyst. His compositions often feature moments of quiet togetherness, fleeting glances, or solitary reflection. These are scenes that might otherwise fade into the background of daily life, but Buck elevates them into something enduring. The interplay between presence and absence, between what is seen and what is felt, creates a potent emotional register in his work.



*The Canoe*, 2008, oil and graphite on panel

*Are they inspecting it for its seaworthiness? For a sale? Or perhaps they're just finishing some work together. My father is shirtless at left, in the prime of life. This is in Albion, New York, with the Erie Canal in the background.*



*Pink Cottage*, 2013, oil and graphite on panel

*This cottage is on Lake Kashagawigamog, Ontario, Canada. Seriously. In the summer of '69, we stayed here a week, and it just so happened to be when Apollo 11 landed on the moon.*

The act of recollection is not simply about recovering what was, but about reshaping it in light of what is. In Buck's hands, painting becomes a tool for this reshaping—for holding memory up to the light, distilling its essence, and offering it to audiences in a way they can see their own experiences. This dynamic is especially poignant in a time when the flood of digital images often erodes our connection to the tangible and the personal. Buck's paintings resist that ephemerality. They are grounded, deliberate, and emotionally generous. His paintings ask viewers not just to look, but to feel; not just to remember, but to recollect—with care, with nuance, and with heart.



*A-Frame, New Brunswick, 2016, oil and graphite on panel*

*I remember staying in this groovy place on a family trip to the Maritime Provinces. Yes, that is a Pontiac, my grandmother, and a set of golf clubs you see.*

Throughout the exhibition, viewers will encounter a remarkable range of scale, color, and approach. Some paintings draw the eye with their bold graphic forms and saturated hues; others are more muted, their edges softened like the fading of a photograph left too long in the sun. Yet all are unified by Buck's unmistakable sensibility: an emotional sincerity coupled with painterly energy.

As this exhibition affirms, David Buck's contribution to the cultural life of Western New York is profound. *Recollect* is more than a retrospective; it is a celebration of a creative life in full bloom, one that continues to evolve, explore, and enrich the community from which it was born.

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