

NORR COHAN



Left: Ilana Savdie, *El Rey Golero*, 2026. Oil, acrylic, and beeswax on canvas stretched on panel. 86 x 80 in (218.4 x 203.2 cm)
Right: Chaïm Soutine, *Brace of Pheasants*, ca. 1926. Oil on canvas. 25 1/2 x 20 in (64.8 x 50.8 cm)

SAVDIE / SOUTINE

48 WALKER ST | SEPT 10 – OCT 24, 2026

NORR COHAN presents Savdie / Soutine, an unprecedented exhibition pairing paintings by Chaïm Soutine (1893–1943) with new paintings by Ilana Savdie (b. 1986). Separated by a century, both painters make the instability of their subjects the substance of their work.

One of the singular painters of the École de Paris, Soutine has come to be regarded as a pivotal figure in the passage from early modernism to the gestural painting of the postwar years. Working through the anxieties of the interwar period, he channeled them into an impasto whose physicality asserted the material autonomy of painting even as it held to the residues of figuration. With thick, agitated brushwork and distorted form, he pursued psychological intensity over descriptive accuracy, an energy and movement made immediate and carried by an instinctive feeling for color and light.

Savdie is considered among the most inventive painters of her generation, navigating the legacies of abstraction, postmodernism, and the digital turn, joining gestural marks to gradients, translucencies, and surfaces inflected by the language of the screen. In doing so, she unsettles oppositions that have long structured the medium—between abstraction and figuration, surface and depth, body and image. The bodies Savdie paints are never simply seen but arranged, opened, dressed, suspended, displayed, or performed, held permanently in the act of becoming something else.

For Soutine, a single pictorial force overrides the distinctions of genre, subjecting portrait, carcass, and landscape alike to the same turbulence. For Savdie, figure and ground grow so unstable that the body and the space it occupies can no longer be distinguished. Both artists employ saturated color, ruptured contour, and deliberate distortion to draw the image away from likeness and toward sensation. Seen together for the first time, their work reveals a precarious and transgressive nature of embodiment that conventional representation cannot contain.

"I count myself among the endless list of artists who look to Soutine for a reminder of what I need from both the making and the confronting of a painting," noted Ilana Savdie. "His work is an experience of something internal and psychological — an emotional depth entrusted to the handling of paint itself. In Soutine, I found an early education in pictorial distortion as emotional intensity. Most importantly, I found an early permission to indulge in what is radically sensitive, unsettling, and seductive — qualities that I continue to metabolize through my own work."

Ilana Savdie (b. 1986, Miami, FL; raised between Miami and Colombia) is a Brooklyn-based artist whose large-scale paintings explore themes of performance, excess, survival, and transgression. Through fragmented and contorted forms, intoxicating color and uncanny textures, Savdie's paintings reflect on psychological and societal responses to collective crisis, probing the tension between individual agency and systemic power. Solo exhibitions include *Radical Contractions* at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York and *Glottal Stop* at White Cube, New York. Savdie was a recipient of the 2025 Creative Capital Award and has since been commissioned to create a public artwork for JFK Terminal 1, opening this year. Her work is held in public collections including the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Centre Pompidou, Fort Worth Museum, Hammer Museum, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Philadelphia Museum of Art, and the Whitney Museum of American Art, among others.

Chaïm Soutine (b. 1893, Smilavičy, Belarus – d. 1943, Paris, France) was a Belarusian-born painter best known for his intensely expressive paintings of figures, landscapes, and still lifes. Born as the tenth child in an impoverished family, he moved to Paris in 1913, where he spent most of his career working within a community of émigré artists in Montparnasse, alongside figures such as Marc Chagall, Amedeo Modigliani, and Jacques Lipchitz. Modigliani introduced him to the art dealer Leopold Zborowski, who facilitated Soutine's Céret period, which marked a turning point in his creative output, as well as brokering an introduction of Soutine's work to Albert Barnes. Soutine's work was rarely exhibited during his lifetime, a circumstance exacerbated by his tendency to relentlessly rework and destroy earlier canvases. Soutine died in 1943 from complications following surgery for an untreated stomach ulcer, which he developed while hiding in the French countryside during the German occupation. Although he remained on the margins of major avant-garde movements during his lifetime, Soutine's work later came to be recognized as a key precursor to postwar Expressionism and continues to influence painters interested in materiality, distortion, and emotional force in painting.

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