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Inspirational Murals

The artist Rudolf Stingel has always admired those whimsical murals in Bemelmans Bar at the Carlyle Hotel. “They’re like frescoes, even though they’re on canvas — absolutely charming,” he said in an interview. (He also admitted that he is “really fond of martinis.”)

Mr. Stingel was inspired to create four of his own versions of those murals that had been painted by Ludwig Bemelmans, who was best known for his Madeline children’s books. The paintings are now installed at Larry Gagosian’s small gallery on Park Avenue at 75th Street.

“We went to the bar and photographed all the walls,” Mr. Stingel said. “I just copied them. It’s photorealistic painting.” At the same time, he added, “My works are my own creations.”

“The paintings are inspired by — and in many ways are a tribute to Bemelmans — and to a special place in this city that shows his art,” Mr. Stingel said. “The transformation in scale, painting them in black-and-white, as well as embedding the lighting of the bar into the paintings are transformations that make the works communicate differently, that make the works mine.”

Mr. Stingel has collected Bemelmans’ work for some time — he said his young daughter is particularly fond of it. But while he was attracted to Bemelmans’ depictions of animals and the seasons, he mainly wanted to summon the clubby atmosphere of the Carlyle.

“My thing was more about capturing the bar, the vibe of the bar,” Mr. Stingel said. “Like when you have a drink and you gaze at the wall.”