

## GARY IRVING

*Envy*, 2017

Mixed media on canvas within  
a handmade wood and resin  
frame, 36.5 x 22 x 5 in



COURTESY THE ARTIST

## MAX DIKSZTEJN

# Anonymous

### She sits at her desk, writing

I am alone. My companions include a rock and a spider. Do not mistake the depth of companionship of a rock. It is an ordinary rock. Mine happens to have a likeness to the face in Munch's *The Scream*, perhaps to Munch. But this likeness is a lesser form of the rock's being, of its thingness, and so its essential companionship. The spider builds its web. I watch it move and spin and wait. Mostly it waits. I feel fondness for the spider, but also fear, a failure to understand. Is it poisonous? It seems to dismantle limbs. It is not a friend. We do not have a relationship. It is a companion in existence.

I knew a man of the world, a man with power in a company, three children, a wife. He goes to church on Sunday. My fantasy amounts to this: My body, a kind of movement that might be taken as dancing, perhaps clothed, perhaps naked, it doesn't matter, my body—swimming in space, past great, dark planets, wriggling in the dark, comparing this to that. The wonder, the sheer awe. My fantasy makes me shiver all over, in joy.

I hold the rock. It fills my hand, fingers at its edges, pink, alive, against beige, brown, sand-like texture. Sometimes ants come. I watch, minutes of hours. I watch, but I must make them go. They destroy my peace. One has to let them thrive, to let them believe they are thriving, in what is called a hotel. And then they are gone.

This man, our paths crossed, and this gave me a chance to watch him. I said very little myself, of myself. We interacted, came together, in the world's way, at what is called work, what is called an office, a company. He was what is called—my boss. No matter. He owned me, not all of me. I let myself be owned, happy enough for a time to be owned and told what to do, directed here and there, in the way of the world—before I left Company and Man, left the world, *did I leave the world?* He and Company engendered fear in me, and that helped me concentrate, work hard. Otherwise, I might not have done a thing or done very little. It is hard to say. Fear of what? I don't know. One fears quite naturally. I wonder if he knew, he must have, he used my fear, expected it. And yet, he feared me too.

I suspect he sensed the I in me, in her. Perhaps he feared I would leave, must leave, to live this life, my life, although perhaps he did not imagine a corner, a rock and