

## BORTOLAMI

55 Walker

Mika Horibuchi

*Watercolors*

25 February – 26 March 2022

*At the age of 82, my grandmother Sayoko Yokoyama sought to learn how to paint. A few years ago I mailed a set of watercolors to her home in Japan. She sent back to me printed photographs from a point-and-shoot camera which documented her newly made watercolor paintings of landscapes, still lifes, and flowers. Some have been painted from life, some mimic images sourced directly from calendars and postcards. Some are copies of other paintings.*

*In recent works, I have recreated these images by simulating the light-filled gestures of transparency found in watercolor through the flat opacity of oil paint. What appear to be translations of my grandmother's watercolors into oils are actually paintings of the physical photographs of the watercolors. A time stamp at the corner of each image reveals each work as a reproduction from photographs.*

-Mika Horibuchi

Bortolami Gallery is pleased to present *Watercolors*, Mika Horibuchi's first New York solo exhibition. The paintings contain no actual watercolor media, but a combination of oil painting techniques used to recreate images from photos of her grandmother's watercolor paintings.

As a nod to traditional photo mounting techniques, Horibuchi has applied and sanded many layers of gesso to create a subtle relief in the form of a rectangle with four triangular corners. This ultra-smooth painting surface is "framed" by the raw, stretched linen of her support, as if each image is suspended on the page of a family photo album.

This alludes to what Horibuchi calls a "spiral of mimesis," using oils to replicate both the flatness of a photograph and the dispersed pigmentation of watercolor paints. Her color pools in a single, uniform layer atop the gessoed surface, translating her grandmother's brushstrokes in scales which vary from small, postcard sized paintings to massive works several times larger than their source materials.

A vitrine in the exhibition contains various artifacts such as photo albums, mailing envelopes, and drawings, a faux-museological presentation of the exchange between Horibuchi and her grandmother. Objects which factually relate to her family are interspersed with asynchronous and unrelated studies by Horibuchi. The presentation juxtaposes the more intimate and familial themes within the exhibition with a more analytical examination of authorship and the means by which images evolve.

**Mika Horibuchi** (b. 1991 in San Francisco, California) received her BFA from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2013. She currently lives and works in Chicago. She has recently had solo exhibitions at The Richard H. Driehaus Museum in Chicago (2020-2021) and the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago (2018). Horibuchi has also exhibited at Patron Gallery, Chicago; Anat Ebgı, Los Angeles; LVL 3, Chicago; Loudhailer Gallery, Los Angeles and Soccer Club, Chicago. Horibuchi is the co-founder and co-director of an artist-run gallery space, 4<sup>th</sup> Ward Project Space, located in Chicago's Hyde Park neighborhood. She is represented by Patron Gallery, Chicago.