

KETELEER GALLERY is very pleased to present 'Oswald My Boy', Jon Pilkington's (°1990, Liverpool, UK, Lives and works in Copenhagen, Denmark) second solo exhibition with the gallery. The exhibition consists of an entirely new series of oil paintings.

With this new series, Pilkington expands on themes he's been exploring for a few years now: antique porcelain figurines, pottery and motifs. He experiments with loose impressions, art historical references and his own fantasy, blending together traces of an elusive past to portray a personal (re-)collection of bygone times.

The title of the show is both a direct reference to the artist's own dog, Oswald, who joins him to the studio every day and to The Beatles' song 'Martha My Dear', which is about Paul McCartney's sheep dog, but also to the many dogs portrayed in the paintings. The titles of the works on the other hand, directly refer to the activity in the paintings. They're all three-word titles which were made up beforehand, as themes to inspire the content, to create scenes in response to them.

As Pilkington rummages through different eras, all cohesion falls apart and is built back up – and held together – by the nearly obsessive exploration and repetition of old, nearly fossilized motifs and accessories like antique railings, clocks, vases, stained glass windows, fleurs-de-lys, pots and kettles, carriage wheels, bread ovens, the loyal (hunting) dog, ... mimicking their abundant presence in historical paintings. He weaves together a dream-like collage of impressions of Belgian (art) history, realist depictions of workers and the everyday, mosaics, ... like an antiques shop packed to the brim with relics of a past that can only be imagined, never really grasped.

Time carries on... and both cherished and discarded souvenirs and styles keep accumulating, turning into anachronistic props in an increasingly fragmented world. Like a child playing pretend with dolls, Pilkington wittily juggles with an array of these handed-down leftovers of western culture and aesthetics, never to mock but to revalue them by giving them a second life, in a new visual story... a sort of whimsically intuitive homage.

Where his previous paintings allowed for more space to rest the eye and featured clashing pastels, his newest works have become much more laboured, both in texture and composition, and feature deeper, earthier shades, heavily built up together. As always though, lush, generous impasto collides with barely-there brush strokes (the same way memories can be both tenacious and fleeting, but never consistent). Playing with opacity and translucency to build up intricate and densely layered compositions, Pilkington beautifully translates the irony of how readily available and ubiquitous but equally impenetrable and abstract these kind of mementos of history are becoming to us.

Unfinished shapes, symbols and reflections, both planned out and improvised dislocated scenes, portraits alternately blending in and popping out of the eclectic background, ... The longer you look, the more details, connections and potential stories you will discover – a puzzling but very alluring playground for the curious eye.

Lauren Wiggers, 2022.

KETELEER GALLERY

Pilkington received his Master's degree with distinction in Fine Art at the Chelsea College of Art & Design. A selection of solo shows: Gallerie Mikael Anderson, Kopenhagen (2021), V1 Gallery, Kopenhagen (2019), Market Art Fair, Stockholm (2017), Achenbach & Hagemeyer, Düsseldorf (2017), COMA, Sydney, Australia (2017), Cinnamon, Rotterdam, The Netherlands (2017), Neochrome Gallery, Torino, Italy (2016), 247365, NY, USA (2016), V1 Gallery, Copenhagen, Denmark (2016), Peter Von Kant, London, UK (2015), Notting Hill Arts Club, London, UK (2015).

The exhibition will be on view 14 May – 3 July, 2022.