

Anton Kern Gallery

Mike Silva: *Portraits and Interiors*

May 6 – June 18

Opening Reception: May 6 from 6 – 8pm

For Immediate Release

Anton Kern Gallery is pleased to present British painter Mike Silva's first solo exhibition in New York. The exhibition features eleven new oil paintings depicting domestic interiors and portraits of men. Each painting is based on a photograph selected from the artist's personal archive. By bringing these images, and the memories and feelings they conjure, into the present and translating them into the language of paint, Silva eternalizes moments from his past and creates new meaning.

The men depicted in Silva's portraits are members of his inner circle. He provides their first names as the artwork titles, inaugurating the viewer into his milieu. There is a fraternal comfort and vulnerability between the artist (as the creator of the image) and the subject, which is expressed through their posture and proximity. The act of looking is emphasized in these compositions: first the artist framing the subject with his camera, then carefully rendering their bodies in paint, while the subject looks away into the distance. Silva's wet on wet technique lends a dewy gloss to the paintings' surfaces. Using oil on linen, the texture of each painting is perfectly smooth, perhaps representing the kindness of memory when one looks back in time.

Silva's interiors are intrinsically intimate spaces; be it a roommate's bedroom, a shared bathroom, or the study in his mother's house. The casual unkemptness laid bare in each scene suggests that the viewer is a friend, a lover, or family. While devoid of a human figure, evidence of human touch is present through crumpled bed sheets, or objects such as toiletries, a Sri Lankan mask, an open can of beer, an iron set on a counter. Without a human subject, light becomes the main protagonist, which the artist captures in his application of white paint. Silva's scenes are bathed in natural light let in through a window, or in *Jason (Hyde Park)*, from the sun in open air. *Kitchen Interior* memorializes the temporality of long cast shadows of flowering plants animating an otherwise bare wall.

Positioning himself behind the lens or with a brush in hand, Silva makes the decision to represent his experience through personally significant people, places, and emotionally charged objects. Laboriously faithful to subtlety of light and color, he communicates an excess of feeling; whether happiness, melancholy, or longing. Each of the works on view is a lasting document of an exact moment of living; a quiet perfection that will never again be.

For additional images and information, please contact: press@antonkerngallery.com.

Mike Silva was born in Sandviken, Sweden, in 1970. He spent his early childhood in Canada, before relocating to the UK in 1978. Silva received an Honors BA in Fine Art from Middlesex University in 1989 and his MA from the Royal College of Art in 1994. He has been exhibiting his work in solo and group exhibitions throughout the UK and Europe ever since. Recent solo exhibitions include *London Portraits, Interiors and Still Lives*, The Approach, London (2020); *New Paintings*, The Annexe, London (2019); *Everything Looks Better in the Sun*, Farbvision, Berlin (2018); and *Place to Be*, David Risley Gallery, Copenhagen (2017). His work has recently joined the permanent collection of the Tate Modern, UK.



Mike Silva, *Jason (Hyde Park)*, 2022
Oil on linen
51 x 71 inches (129.5 x 180.3 cm)