

Nir Hod: *I Don't Want to Forget You*

GAVLAK Palm Beach

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GAVLAK Palm Beach presents *I Don't Want to Forget You*, an exhibition of new works by Israeli-born, New York-based artist Nir Hod—marking his third solo show with the gallery. This new body of work, which constitutes an evolution in Hod's already expansive practice, employs a monochrome technique to interrogate and complicate the referentiality of images.

Hod is best known for constantly challenging the medium of painting itself. After studying at Bezalel Academy in Jerusalem and Cooper Union in New York, Hod began his artistic career in figuration, where he provoked his viewers by painting androgynous self-portraits and cigarette-smoking children. Around 2018, he shifted his focus onto abstraction, drawing on a technical process developed by the US Navy to create his signature chrome paintings. The shimmering and mirrored effect of this technique, oscillating between abstraction and reflection, incorporates the viewer as participant, creator, and spirit projected onto the picture surface. The new body of work debuting at Palm Beach offers both: the challenging imagery that is at once familiar and unsettling, with the implication of the audience into its world.

In *I Don't Want to Forget You*, Hod carefully examines personal and collective memory as it relates to identity, sexuality, religion, and culture at large. Each composition draws upon various source images—whether borrowed or imagined—splicing them together to create a single, cohesive picture. Hod views this referential process as enacting a “twist,” reformulating preexisting iconography to bear new meanings. In works like *The Back Room* (2022), Hod offers new ways to read the symbol of a white dove by representing its flight underground, suggesting something morbid and crypt-like about conventional notions of peace and liberty. His work, in this way, seeks to produce novel resonances within our iconographic lexicon, both of harmony and dissonance—giving the established symbols of a running woman, candle, and dove, etc., a bold expansion.

Hod paints *alla prima* in monochrome to evoke the material softness of faded, old photographs and newspaper images—emphasizing the way by which pictures, much like language, function as epistemological apparatuses to disseminate information and shape our lives. In seeking to evolve this visual vernacular, Hod's paintings constitute a kind of diary, wherein he imbues a personal, emotional register into our otherwise conventional, iconographic language. More than a personal diary, though, Hod's new body of work motivates us to reassess the way we absorb images, pointing to all that is at risk of being forgotten by the wayside of our symbolic conventions. As he says, the paintings are both “who I am” and “life around me.”

Together, the works on view ask us to consider our place in their iconographic world, to locate our personal investments in their language. In this way by which he attends to the spectator's positionality and subjectivity, Hod harkens back to the reflective surface of his Chrome paintings to advance a

diverse practice centered around the scene of encounter between picture and person. As such, his works are familiar yet surprising, personal yet common, and cognitive yet deeply emotional.

About the Artist

Nir Hod is an Israeli artist based in New York. Drawing from his memories, as well as harrowing historical events, Hod instills a delicate tension that challenges the viewer's expectations within his paintings through the use of material. Hod is known for his chrome canvases, which use a unique method he developed after visiting a fabrication workshop. His paintings undergo an intense process that was originally developed by the US Navy in 1939. Through a meticulous, and at times ruthless approach, the canvases are manipulated through the use of ammonia, acids, and air pressure over washes of oil underpainting. Hod focuses on the resulting reflective sheens, which achieve a remarkable transformation, momentarily shifting an abstract composition into a figurative painting, casting the viewer's image onto the work itself.

Hod studied at Jerusalem's Bezalel Academy and New York's Cooper Union School of Art. He has exhibited internationally throughout the United States, Europe, Israel, and Japan, including GAVLAK, Palm Beach, FL; Makasiini Contemporary Gallery, Finland; Michael Fuchs Gallery, Berlin, Germany; Paul Kasmin Gallery, New York; Alon Segev Gallery, Israel; Davide Gallo Gallery, Berlin; Jack Shainman Gallery, New York; Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Tel Aviv; Rosenfeld Gallery, Tel Aviv; Liebman Magnan Gallery, New York; Lime Light Club, New York; Miami-Dade Community College, Wolfson Galleries, Miami; The Museum of Israeli Art, Ramat Gan, Israel; Mary Fauzi Gallery, Tel Aviv; Noga Gallery of Contemporary Art, Tel Aviv. Hod's work is included in the permanent collection at Tel Aviv Museum in Israel and Jewish Museum in New York. He is represented by GAVLAK in Los Angeles, CA, and Palm Beach, FL.