

BLUM

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Sebastian Silva
Ivanhoe

BLUM Los Angeles
May 18–June 29, 2024
Opening Reception: Saturday, May 18, 6–8pm

Los Angeles, CA, April 16, 2024—BLUM is pleased to announce the representation of Los Angeles-based artist Sebastian Silva on the occasion of his first solo exhibition with the gallery, opening in Los Angeles on May 18.

Silva's mode of painting is quick-witted and rhythmic, referencing the illustrative style and subject matter of children's cartoons, then filtering this dialect through the lens of abstraction. With striking forms that pop outward against dark outlines, Silva's intricate symbols propel themselves from the canvas as if yearning to join the space of the viewer. Rendered in rippling tones, the artist's vibrant greens, scarlets, and aquamarines call out to onlookers—encouraging an observant spectator's gaze to dance across the composition, all at once ingesting the work's aura.

Uncoupling character from narrative, Silva employs sketched figures, from sources such as Disney movies, suspended in the act of dissolving or coming apart as they float across each canvas's burst of tonality. The iconography that has long been socially imbued into these simple lines—a circle becomes Goofy's nose, a concentric circle his eye—retains its nostalgic power. Despite their decontextualization and deconstruction, these hints of culturally pervasive drawn forms saturate Silva's work with a playful sentimentality and give the viewer an entry point to reading the greater scope of the artist's signature, jovial visual language.

The whimsical nature of Silva's animation-inspired universe shines through when viewing both the holistic work and its discrete details. Each painting hums with kinetic energy—filled to the brim with colorful forms and the dynamic tension of its compositional density. Upon closer inspection, Silva's components and swatches meticulously contrast or complement the immediate surroundings to achieve the energetic effect of the whole. Often shaded with a dramatic black outline, the elements of the artist's works allude to the canons of abstraction and illustration. Silva's practice falls neatly between the two, as if a further unfettered Jean Dubuffet.

A couple, more reticent, characters in Silva's paintings are his color palette and the distinct conditions of his studio. For each work, the artist has carefully chosen a grouping of hues that best evoke the spirit of the composition—from active and lively to calm and introspective. With some of his forms comprised entirely of block colors, the artist evokes subjective, psychological associations in the viewer as well as referencing moments in art history such as the pinks of Philip Guston. The large scale of Silva's canvases—uniquely enabled by his expansive, outdoor studio—prompt immersive examination. Careful scans of each work's surface will reveal mementos from the moment of its creation such as bits of natural material or delicate impressions left by the sunlight.

With each canvas, Silva reiterates and reestablishes the parameters of his painterly vernacular. With sparkling colors and nods to the lighthearted style of childhood comic series, the artist invites onlookers into a dazzling and exuberant world of his own creation. Built from points of reference that

BLUM

are both universal and unique to the artist, Silva's work makes itself equally accessible and endlessly complex.

Sebastian Silva (b. 1979, Santiago de Chile, Chile) lives and works in Los Angeles, CA. His work is represented in the collections of the Buffalo AKG Art Museum, Buffalo, NY and the Helmut Marko Hotels Collection, Austria, among others. He is a highly celebrated filmmaker, receiving awards such as the Best American Director, Champs-Élysées Film Festival (2023); the Teddy Award, Berlin International Film Festival, Best Feature Film (2014); the Sundance Festival Directing Award, World Cinema, Dramatic (2013); Altazor Awards, Best Director (2010); the Sundance Festival, Sundance Grand Jury Prize (2009); and the Pedro Sienna Awards, Best Film (2008).

About BLUM

BLUM represents more than sixty artists and estates from eighteen countries worldwide, nurturing a diverse roster of artists at all stages of their practices with a range of global perspectives. Originally opened as Blum & Poe in Santa Monica in 1994, the gallery has been a pioneer in its early commitment to Los Angeles as an international arts capital.

The gallery has been acclaimed for its groundbreaking work in championing international artists of postwar and contemporary movements, such as CoBrA, Dansaekhwa, Mono-ha, and Superflat, and for organizing museum-caliber solo presentations and historical survey exhibitions across its spaces in Los Angeles, Tokyo, and New York. Often partnering with celebrated curators and scholars such as Cecilia Alemani, Alison M. Gingeras, Sofia Gotti, Joan Kee, and Mika Yoshitake, the gallery has produced large-scale exhibitions focusing on the Japanese Mono-ha school (2012); the Korean Dansaekhwa monochrome painters (2014); the European postwar movement CoBrA (2015); Japanese art of the 1980s and 1990s (2019); a rereading of Brazilian Modernism (2019); a revisionist take on the 1959 MoMA exhibition, *New Images of Man* (2020); and a survey of portraiture through a democratic and humanist lens (2023); among others.

BLUM's wide-reaching program includes exhibitions, lectures, performance series, screenings, video series, and an annual art book fair at its base in Los Angeles. BLUM Books, the gallery's publishing division, democratically circulates its program through original scholarship and accessible media ranging from academic monographs, audio series, magazines, to artists' books.

Across the three global locations, BLUM prioritizes environmental and community stewardship in all operations. In 2015, it was certified as an Arts:Earth Partnership (AEP) green art gallery in Los Angeles and consequently became one of the first green certified galleries in the United States. The gallery is also a member of the Gallery Climate Coalition, which works to facilitate a more sustainable commercial art world and reduce the industry's collective carbon footprint. BLUM is committed to fostering inclusive and equitable communities both in its physical and online spaces and believes that everybody should have equal access to creating and engaging with contemporary art.

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