

Billy Childish***like a god i love all things*****January 30 – February 15, 2025****Lehmann Maupin, London**

Lehmann Maupin presents *like a god i love all things*, an exhibition of new paintings by British painter Billy Childish. Based in Kent, Childish's artistic practice is wide ranging and prolific. In addition to painting, the artist moves seamlessly between poetry and prose, punk rock, blues and folk music, photography, and printmaking. Over the course of his decades-long career, he has written and published 5 novels, more than 40 volumes of confessional poetry, and recorded well over 170 LPs. Childish's paintings are often characterized by their vivid immediacy, painted directly on warm linen canvas using a rich, earthy palette of oil paint. The artist's subjects are drawn from both his immediate environment—the North Kent landscape and members of his family—as well as further afield, including scenes of northern California and historical photographs, often appearing other-worldly or what Childish has described as dreamscapes. *like a god i love all things* marks the first exhibition in 2025 at Lehmann Maupin's temporary space, located at No.9 Cork Street in London's Mayfair neighborhood.

During the opening reception on January 30th, Childish will stage a poetry reading in the gallery at 7 PM. Concurrent to the exhibition, Viper's Tongue Press will publish a poetry sampler featuring a selection of Childish's poems from the early 1980s to the present, with Tangerine Press producing a signed, limited edition of the book, all hand bound with an original woodcut tipped in.

In Childish's latest body of work, the winter landscape is his central theme, both wild and serene. The paintings on view comprise a series of quietly beautiful scenes featuring low hanging winter suns, cool mists, and sombre trees. Childish's compositions are dark, but not gloomy, reflective of the season and glowing with their own internal luminosity. Although mostly devoid of figures, in some canvases wolves make their way out of the woods or deer cross snow-covered fields. In these works, viewers are reminded that life continually moves through its own natural rhythms, even in the seemingly still depths of winter.

At once tangible and surreal, Childish's landscapes forge a connection between this world and the beyond, between the spiritual and the material. In *wolf walking* (2024), the artist depicts a small wolf trotting across the snow, as if about to leave the frame on the lefthand side of the composition. The wolf is flanked by a giant tree in the foreground, which appears wind-whipped and devoid of leaves. The tree is masterfully rendered, the movement of the wind captured elegantly in pinks and whites in stark contrast with the brown of the woods behind. Against this tree, Childish casts his wolf as a minor protagonist, dwarfed by the surrounding landscape and playing a small part in a much larger macrocosm.

Other works, such as *trees and northern sun* (2024) or *mist and snow* (2025), are devoid of figures altogether, and in these compositions Childish allows the landscape to take centre stage. The only human figure in the exhibition appears in a portrait of the artist himself. Painted in blues, greens, and oranges, the portrait presides over the exhibition space, and the image of Childish in a winter cap and jacket suggests the artist is staring out at a wintry world. As a whole, the works in *like a god i love all things* remind us of the quiet solace that can be found in darker months, deep in the woods or amidst a frozen field. In these spiritual landscapes, Childish asserts that the transcendent is often most accessible in moments of direct connection with natural beauty, residing always in the world around us.





Billy Childish (b. 1959, Chatham, Kent, United Kingdom; lives and works in Whitstable, Kent) is known for his introspective, autobiographical, and deeply emotional paintings, writing, and music. After leaving secondary school at age 16, Childish worked at the Naval Dockyard in Chatham as an apprentice stonemason. Initially denied an interview to the local art school, he produced hundreds of drawings that gained him entry to London's Saint Martin's School of Art. Childish's defiance of authority led to his eventual expulsion from art school in 1981. Since then, Childish has gained something of a cult status worldwide, writing and publishing several novels and more than 40 volumes of confessional poetry, recording more than 170 LPs, and painting several hundred works. Through all of these disciplines, Childish addresses social, political, and personal issues such as war, protest, his turbulent childhood, and his struggles with addiction. While his confessional poetry and music explore these issues with startling honesty, Childish's paintings are more subtle. His subjects are often drawn from his environment or are people he knows or admires: birch forests, self-portraits, a lone figure in a pastoral English landscape, and his wife as a reclining female nude. Childish works quickly and intuitively, making spare marks on raw canvas that leave much of it visible. He identifies with artists who worked outside a group or movement, intrigued by their outsider roles in society, such as Vincent van Gogh, Kurt Schwitters, and Edvard Munch. Labeling himself a "radical

traditionalist," Childish has a reverence for traditional oil painting yet has resolutely resisted any connection with a particular group or artistic movement.

Childish attended Medway College of Design, Kent in 1977 and Saint Martin's School of Art, London in 1978. Solo exhibitions of his work have been organized at He Art Museum, Guangdong, China (2024); Carl Freedman Gallery, Margate, UK (2023); Lehmann Maupin, New York, NY (2022), London (2022), and Seoul (2020); Neugerriemschneider, Berlin, Germany (2018); Villa Schöningen, Berlin, Germany (2017); Goss-Michael Foundation, Dallas, TX (2017); Rochester Art Gallery, Kent, United Kingdom (2016); Opelvillen Rüsselsheim, Frankfurt, Germany (2016); White Columns, New York (2010); and the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London (2010).

Select group exhibitions featuring his work include *Billy Childish, Franz Gertsch, Alex Katz*, Galleria Monica de Cardenas, St. Moritz, Switzerland (2018); *Future Seasons Past*, Lehmann Maupin, New York, NY (2015); *The Islanders*, Galerie Mikael Anderson, Copenhagen, Denmark (2015); *BILLY CHILDISH, HARRY ADAMS and EDGEWORTH JOHNSTONE: Our Friend Larionov*, Pushkin House, London (2014); *Paintings Sweet Paintings*, Neuer Aachener Kunstverein, Aache, Germany (2014); and *British Art Show 5*, City Art Centre, Edinburgh (2000).

**Lehmann Maupin**

Rachel Lehmann and David Maupin co-founded Lehmann Maupin in 1996 in New York. Since inception, Lehmann Maupin has served as a leading contemporary art gallery with locations in the U.S., Europe, and Asia. For over 25 years, Lehmann Maupin has been instrumental in introducing international artists in new geographies and building long-lasting curatorial relationships. Known for championing diverse voices, the gallery's program proudly features artists whose work challenges notions of identity and shapes international culture. Today, the gallery has permanent locations in New York, Seoul, and London, as well as team members based in Hong Kong, Shanghai, Singapore, and Palm Beach. In recent years, with growing opportunities in new markets, the gallery has opened seasonal spaces in Aspen, Palm Beach, Taipei, Beijing, and Milan.

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