

# Anton Kern Gallery

## Mike Silva *Landscapes*

October 29 - December 20, 2025

Anton Kern Gallery is pleased to present London-based painter Mike Silva's second solo exhibition in New York. The presentation of 16 new paintings unfolds across the second and third floor galleries, beginning with interior settings and then transitioning outdoors.

The source material for Silva's paintings are casual snapshots from his archive, welcoming the viewer into the artist's personal realm. The momentary magic of light and shadow endures as Silva's protagonist, often in the absence of figures who seem about to enter, or may have recently exited, the frame.

This latest body of work is tuned to a new frequency. In a departure from the slow, methodical process involved in creating the portrait paintings from his 2022 exhibition, here Silva uses a wet-on-wet oil painting technique, executing each painting within a span of hours, preventing the paint from drying between layers. Coaxing himself away from the rigors of exacting representation, these new paintings contain a subtle vibration reflective of the urgency with which they were made, as the artist's method of expression through paint shifts, from the cerebral into the physical.

The interior paintings revisit settings from Silva's past, instances in which everyday objects and environments struck him as sublime, if only for the split second it takes a camera shutter to open and close. The signifiers of intimate domesticity trigger memories in the viewer through the senses, particularly the sense of touch: a roommate's toiletries on the edge of the tub, his father's Sri Lankan masks adorning the wall, the heat of sunlight on pots and pans. The haptics of Silva's surfaces (i.e.: peeling wallpaper, smudged windows) further underscore the analog origin of his images.

While similarly tied to memory, Silva's outdoor landscapes are less obviously based in biography and use a different vernacular. The shorthand of painting foliage allows the artist to invent marks in the moment that are a direct engagement with the physical properties of paint. These impromptu renderings of plants and light reveal a looser schema, in contrast to and in dialogue with his ultra-detailed portraiture, an expression more akin to the immediacy of a live punk show than an academy salon. The directness of *Hyde Park* and *Pathway 2* belies a heightened sense of emotion and engagement with the world of the present.

The categorical division between portrait, still life, and landscape is blurred throughout the exhibition. There is an equivalence between *Bathtub* and *Reflected Trees*. *Jake in Tulse Hill*, a large-scale interior painting which includes a central figure, is more a portrait of the room than of Jake, lingering on the way the peeling wallpaper creates angel wing shapes around him. This slippage is acutely confronted in *Studio Plant*, in which a precisely described potted cactus on a windowsill stretches its extremities towards the sunlight. Outside, through the glass, is a flattened abstraction of nature, geographically dislocated and drifting into a haze of memory.



Mike Silva, *Pathway*, 2025, Oil on linen, 50 x 34 inches  
(127 x 86.4 cm)