

R E Y N O L D S G A L L E R Y

For Immediate Release

CONOR BACKMAN

Circular Garden

April 8 – May 20, 2016

Opening Friday, April 8, 7 – 9 pm

Reynolds gallery is pleased to present *Circular Garden*, a show of new work by New York-based artist Conor Backman. This is Backman's first solo show with the gallery, and will consist of paintings, wall-based sculptures, and mixed media works. The exhibition opens with a reception for the artist Friday, April 8 and continues through May 20, 2016.

Backman continues his interest in exploring a territory in painting between figuration and abstraction, ideas around the materiality of color, and the medium's relationship to time. Many of the objects in the exhibition present a type of recursive feedback loop. The centerpiece of the show, *Painting Palettes (Painter's Table)*, is the largest work the artist has made to date. The piece consists of eight canvases each containing a monochromatic image of oil paint newly out of its tube as it appears when set up on a palette. An actual palette, used to render the image, is mixed on the same surface of each canvas.

In the smallest work on view, Backman has cast and painted a potato cut to produce a stamp of a snowflake. The structure of the snowflake, which in nature is unique, in this case can be reproduced numerous times. Like *Painting Palettes*, the piece re-presents a tool used in the process of creating an image as the final work on display.

A third set of works consists of oil on canvas diptychs that reproduce and enlarge details from impressionist paintings at varying scale. Brush strokes that were initially built up rapidly have been reproduced in flat paint over the course of several weeks, along with the cracks and fissures that have accumulated in the original works over centuries. Paired with these works are paintings depicting yellow traffic signals.

In a final group of works, the traffic light is referenced through its format, in pieces that suspend modified paint cans containing simulations of wet paint inside of monochrome canvases. The yellow light is one of the more common examples of pure abstract color functioning as a signifier of meaning, indicating slowness while existing quickly. For Backman it is a symbol that addresses multiple disparate ideas his work has engaged with over the last several years.

In a recent Artsy editorial detailing the artist, Casey Lesser notes: "[Backman's] works evidence the romantic, meticulously rendered natural world of his 19th-century forebears, but also engage in contemporary concerns about color and materiality. While participating in historic conversations around painting and sculpture—experimenting with perception, space, iconography, and the readymade—he adds to his works a healthy dose of the present, which surfaces in the forms of cast-resin orange peels, cross-sections of paint cans, or panes of glass that mimic screens."

Conor Backman graduated from VCU in 2011 with BFA's in Painting+Printmaking and Sculpture+Extended media. His work has been included in exhibitions at David Zwirner, New York; The Capodimonte Museum, Naples Italy; Galerie Gebr Lehmann, Berlin; Super Dakota, Brussels; Smart Objects, Los Angeles; Saamlung, Hong Kong; and Higher Pictures, New York. In 2015 Backman had solo exhibitions at James Fuentes, New York, and Retrospective, Hudson, NY. His first solo show in Los Angeles is currently on view at Smart Objects. In 2017 he will have his first US museum solo exhibition at the University of Albany Museum SUNY.