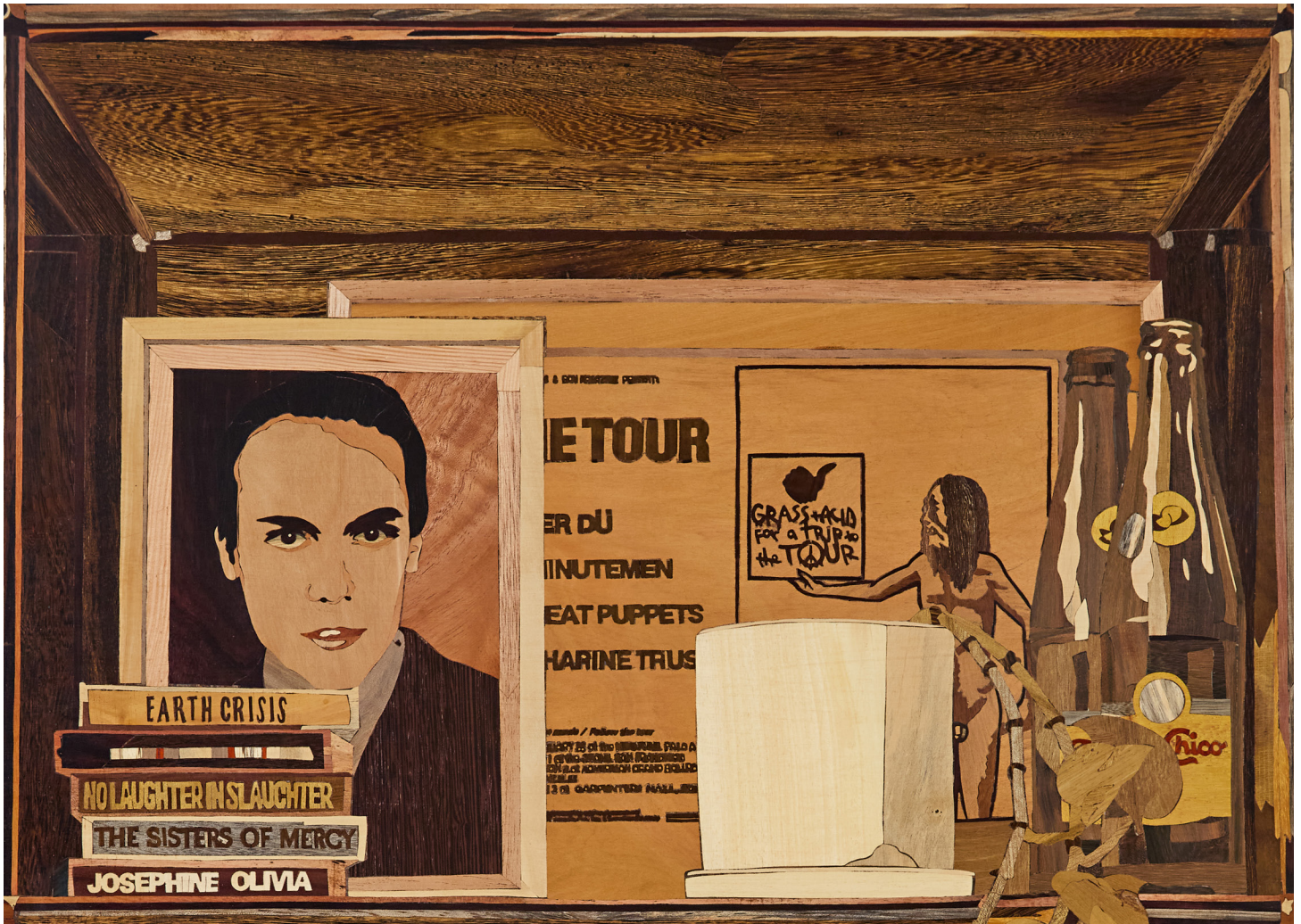


HALSEY MCKAY GALLERY

MICHAEL BÜHLER-ROSE - *HALO IN A HAYSTACK*

July 18 - August 10, 2026 | 79 Newtown Lane, East Hampton, NY

For further information email contact@halseymckay.com



Michael Bühler-Rose, Detail: *USM, Summer '26 (01)*, 2026, Wood Intarsia/Inlay:

Aale, Champa, Ebony, Paduk, Jackfruit, Light Champa, Dark Champa, Satran, Kadyakshe, Orange Fruit, Made, Dark Slate Matti and Rosewoods

Halsey McKay is pleased to present *Halo in a Haystack*, Michael Bühler-Rose's first solo exhibition with the gallery. The works in this exhibition take their cue from the Studiolo of the Ducal Palace in Gubbio (1478-82), now in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Conceived as a private room for study and meditation, the studiolo assembled books, instruments, armor, and curiosities through the illusionistic language of intarsia. Built for Duke Federico da Montefeltro, the room functions as a portrait of its owner through the objects he chose to surround himself with. *Halo in a Haystack* continues Bühler-Rose's use of wood inlay as a language for collections and collecting, where the self is assembled through relationships, memories, and objects of devotion.

When Bühler-Rose was seventeen, he sold his record collection to supplement the money he had saved from a summer job for his first trip to India. What began as a journey became years spent living between India and the United States as a Hare Krishna student monk, a life that required a degree of renunciation from worldly possessions. More than twenty-five years later, living a lay life, he has begun to reconsider the objects he once gave up and the role they continue to play in memory and identity.

At the center of that former collection was *Halo in a Haystack*, the debut LP by the New England hardcore band Converge. Never repressed, the album gradually disappeared in its original form, its songs surviving through later compilations while the record itself became increasingly scarce. What was once an obscure release has become a coveted collector's item, while the music itself continues to find new contexts and new audiences. Bühler-Rose's attempts to reacquire the album have been frustrated by its rarity and cost.

The missing record becomes a model for the exhibition itself. Objects rarely remain fixed in the circumstances for which they were made. The Gubbio studiolo left the Ducal Palace to be reconstructed within the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Records, books, artworks, devotional objects, and artifacts pass through different collections and different lives, accruing new meanings while carrying traces of their previous contexts. A work of art does not end with its original exhibition, but continues into the home of a collector where it enters into new relationships and new histories.

Trained as a photographer, Bühler-Rose begins with composed and collected images that serve as blueprints for wood intarsia trompe l'oeil compositions of both actual and aspirational collections. These photographs are then redrawn by Bühler-Rose and then translated by an intarsia workshop in Mysore, where artisans meticulously cut and assemble veneers chosen for their natural grain and color. No pigments or stains are used; the images emerge entirely through the inherent qualities of the wood itself.

The works in *Halo in a Haystack* propose that collecting is not the accumulation of objects, but the continual recontextualization of the things we choose to live with. Records, books, artworks, devotional objects, and artifacts gather new meanings as they move through different contexts and different lives. A collection is never complete: it is simply a moment in the ongoing life of the things we choose to surround ourselves with.

Michael Bühler-Rose was born in 1980 in Brunswick, NJ and received a BFA in 2005 from The School of Fine Arts in Boston, MA / Tufts University, Medford, MA, and earned his MFA in 2008 from the University of Florida, Gainesville, FL. He has had recent solo presentations at the Independent, NY with Stems Gallery, Brussels; Kendall Koppe Glasgow at Carlos/Ishikawa, London; New Discretions, NY; and Andrew Rafacz, Chicago. The artist lives and works in New York, NY and Mysore, India.