

Michael Bala

*Neon Violin*

September 19 – November 1, 2026

A white violin, outlined by the soft glow of neon; decorative molding kissed by the cylindrical ridges of a hot-rod oil filter; black shag carpet pin-stripes a well-worn floor, concealing pennies spread ritualistically underneath; salvaged milk-glass bulbs shaped into clocks, and clocks that trace time backwards.

In Michael Bala's solo exhibition, *Neon Violin*, temporality takes a circular path through familiar objects and ritual fantasy. Bala's work interrogates disappearing acts present within interior spaces. His arrangements provoke a strong sense of familiarity in parallel with a loss, an unbridged gap between the intimately familiar and the unknown. Bala constructs his sculptures from a collection of salvaged fragments of tools, components, and fixtures, born of industrial production and artisan craft, now defunct and displaced from their origin. Each of these objects once served a particular purpose that Bala has inverted, reinvented, or left otherwise undetermined through a kind of material magic and mischief.

His gestures amount to a form of immurement—the practice of concealing objects within the structure of a house. This immurement recalls Charon's Obol, the coin placed within the mouth to bribe the ferryman who relays the dead across the river dividing the world of the living and the world of the dead. Coins placed into the walls of our home, like those placed into the open mouth of the dead, open into a ceaseless temporality of life and death.

The objects that Bala uses in his work tend to traverse through a period of limbo as they are ascribed new physical and metaphoric potential. The interior of the mind overlaps with the domestic interior. Materials are reincarnated with newfound signification, and are projected once again back into the world.

—Matthew Lawson Garrett