

# NICELLE BEAUCHENE GALLERY

## **Richard Bosman**

*Painters Painting*

Curated by Matthew Higgs

24 June - July 29, 2022.

Opening Reception Friday, June 24, 6-8pm

Nicelle Beauchene Gallery is pleased to present *Painters Painting*, Richard Bosman's second solo exhibition with the gallery. The exhibition has been curated by Matthew Higgs, the director of White Columns, New York's oldest non-profit alternative art space. The exhibition takes its title from Emile de Antonio's celebrated 1972 documentary *Painters Painting: The New York Art Scene 1940-1970*, and features works made over the past 13 years that focus on the subject of art and art history.

Richard Bosman is a consummate "artist's artist," a "painter's painter." His work of the past 40-plus years has an almost cult-like following: whose membership would include Peter Doig, Gavin Brown, and Higgs himself, who made an homage to Bosman's work whilst at art school in the U.K. Best known for his iconic 'hard boiled' paintings of the 1980s—paintings inspired by the great American detective novels of the 1930s and 1940s—Bosman has consistently returned to the subjects of art and art history throughout his career. *Overwhelmed* (1986), a painting from his 'Studio Series' of that year, shows a male artist in his studio, brush in hand, being savaged by a wild animal. *Adrift* (1986) shows an artist face-down, surrounded by his paints, brushes, palette and canvas, adrift on an ice floe and clinging on for dear life. In these self-consciously melodramatic works of the 1980s Bosman disrupts the image of the heroic male painter of the Neo-Expressionist era. (Bosman's work is often erroneously aligned with the return to expressive painting of that decade, when in reality his work had more in common with the ideas of the artists associated with the contemporaneous 'Pictures' generation.)

*Painters Painting* explores Bosman's persistent interest in the mythos of the artist-painter and the self-reflexive entanglements of "art about art." The exhibition includes Bosman's depiction of an abstract painter at work atop a ladder; his re-imaginings of art historical classics in the painted installation *Museum Wall* (2015); paintings of the bourgeois interiors of artists' homes (Ensor and Magritte); paintings of the backs of other artists' paintings; paintings of artists' studios; and his surrogate 'portraits' of artists depicted as if they were doors. In Bosman's reckoning the artist's studio becomes something akin to a crime scene: where the activity of making art, or indeed simply being an artist, might well be a matter of life or death. (Literally so in his imagining of Mark Rothko's studio.) Like the existential protagonists of his earlier 'noir' paintings, who operated in the shadows and beyond the constraints of polite society, the celebrated artists whose lives Bosman's paintings commemorate—inc. Barnett Newman, Francis Bacon, and Philip Guston, among others—are at once outsiders and iconoclasts.

Writing recently about Bosman's work, the artist and writer Brad Phillips suggests: "Richard Bosman paints many subjects, many scenes and many moods, but those that seem absent from his body of work are peace of mind, serenity, safety, and relaxation. In this way ... I've come to view his work as all related to the life of the artist. The life of the artist is a turbulent one, beset with danger and instability. The human battle to conquer, or survive, the elements is not dissimilar to the artist's battle to conquer, or survive, an encounter with a blank canvas."

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**Richard Bosman** (Australian, born 1944 in Madras, India) lives and works in Esopus, New York. studied at the Byam Shaw School of Art, London (1966-1969), and at the Studio School, New York (1969-1971), when both Alex Katz and Philip Guston were teaching there. His work was included in the landmark *Times Square Show*, New York, 1980. His collaborative book with poet Ted Greenwald *Exit The Face* was published by the Museum of Modern Art, New York in 1982. *Grasping At Emptiness*, a book made in collaboration with the poet John Giorno, was published in 1985 by the Kulchur Foundation, New York.

His work has been shown at The British Museum, London; John Berggruen Gallery, New York; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Brooke Alexander Gallery, New York; Freddy, Harris, NY; Peter Freeman, Inc, New York; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Brooklyn Museum; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Museo Tamayo, Mexico City; and the 41st Venice Biennale, among others. Bosman is a recipient of a 1994 Guggenheim Fellowship.

Bosman's work is held in the public collections of the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo; Baltimore Museum of Art; Eli Broad Family Foundation, LA; Brooklyn Museum; Indianapolis Museum of Art; Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY; Milwaukee Art Museum; Museo Tamayo, Mexico City; Carnegie Institute, Pittsburg; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Museum of Modern Art, NY; Philadelphia Museum of Art; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; among others.