

Kon Trubkovich

Land

July 6 - August 20, 2022

For His Wife

I am your boy
drowning in this country, who doesn't know

the word for *drowning*
and yells

I am diving for the last time!

– Ilya Kaminsky

Morán Morán is pleased to announce Kon Trubkovich's exhibition, titled *Land*, his fourth exhibition with the gallery and his first in Mexico City. This show presents six new paintings, all oil on canvas, which cohere a range of images and appropriations that together translate feelings of struggle and displacement. As suggested by the title, this exhibition confronts broad and personal experiences of identity, geography, nationality, and ancestral connections.

The largest painting in the exhibition, titled *Golden Ratio (Capsize)* (2022), is a reconstruction of a widely disseminated photograph taken during a 2014 Ukrainian parliament brawl, which subsequently resulted in a set of memes called "Accidental Renaissance." In 2019, Trubkovich began a series of paintings based on these images, citing a childhood memory of first seeing the *Blinding of Samson* (1636) as his inspiration. Trubkovich's fascination with this baroque piece, as a riveting and provocative image, was now connected to these contemporary versions of Russian separatists and Ukrainian parliamentarians coming to blows.

With four small-scale works, Trubkovich appropriates a selection of the late figurative paintings of Kasimir Malevich, again with his idiosyncratic paused video aesthetic. Trubkovich interpreted these works, painted in Kyiv 1928-30, as Malevich probing his own childhood memories of growing up in rural Ukraine, where his parents settled after the Partitions of Poland. Within this artist's personal history the notion of land plays out, as his true ethnicity and nationality were complicated by shifting political borders.

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In the painting titled *Evacuation (After Malevich)* (2022), a family is painted along the horizon of a barren landscape. Trubkovich finds a soulful quality inherent in these works – even with blank faces, he sees the figures as full of pathos. "I think that is how my paintings operate, they sort of switch Malevich's paintings into renderings of Ukrainians caught in the conflict, images that I can't look away from but also can't paint. This is my intention with these works. I see the figures as contemporary Ukrainians."

The final work in the exhibition, *Dilemma (After an unattributed work in the style of Malevich)* (2022), is an abstract painting based on a piece by an unknown artist working in a Suprematist style. The image Trubkovich chose to recreate could read like a map of some sort or an aerial view of a landscape containing crop areas and silos. Trubkovich's treatment of these appropriated images transmits between decades and highlights historical repetitions, rendering curious images that overlap subtexts and flatten time. The symbolic reference of video footage links to archives and perseverance of memory, with the underlying truth that the majority of our contemporary experience happens via technology – archives and footage – as images from a screen.