

Ted Mineo: Waiting Room

30 Orchard St, Gallery 2 ▪ Feb 25 - Mar 30, 2023



Harkawik is pleased to present *Waiting Room*, an exhibition of 11 new paintings by artist Ted Mineo. Comprised of small and mid-size works, the exhibition features his signature amalgamation of mundane objects with organic matter, in which the seemingly familiar transforms into the uncanny. *Waiting Room* brings the artist's longstanding interest in the aesthetics of technological innovation and progress to bear on a set of personal circumstances that brought him into close and prolonged contact with the medical industry. Here we see Mineo tackle the medical instrument, dissecting its aesthetic and sociological properties while referencing the body in ways simultaneously unsettling and intimate.

Ted Mineo treats his paintings the way one hopes a surgeon would handle a patient's body—with orderly precision. Here the pageantry of medical care is on full display. Sharp surgical tools adorn industrial instrument stands. Scalpels

and retractors reflect artificial light, painted so vividly we hear them clink on metal. Everything ready for a performance, a procedure. The sculptural and aesthetic properties of these tools, and the messages they are designed to communicate, are very much at-issue.

Waiting Room marks a bold departure from Mineo's previous work, as he forays into the restrictions of the traditional, rectangular picture for the first time in his career. For the artist, the rectangle represents a grappling with limitations, as if trapped within the white, fluorescent walls of a hospital room. The waiting room is not simply a physical space, but also an emotional one; a place where modern anxieties grow like tumors, where concerns about the American healthcare system metastasize, where one contemplates the capricious nature of disease and our halting and incomplete understanding of the body.

In Mineo's work the influence of science-fiction is clear, but we also see a relationship between the surreal and the ordinary that conjures the work of artists like Konrad Klaphek and Domenico Gnoli, whose treatment of devices and household objects invested them with their full teleological import. In his smaller paintings, natural light leaks onto the canvas revealing glints of Northern Renaissance tradition, as if the Ghent Altarpiece has been reborn in the ruins of a far-off hospital on an alien planet centuries into the future. These paintings mimic sculptural reliefs or Kunstkammers, cabinets of curiosities waiting for a hand adorned in surgical nitrile gloves to reach into the canvas and place an object into the hollow interior.

Waiting Room is the threshold between worlds; are we in the moments before or after a medical procedure? Where are the doctors and patients, if they exist at all? What are we waiting for? Here the body is constantly implied yet physically absent, replaced instead by primordial, lifelike forms that serve as a reminder of our shared human condition, our reluctant confinement within corporeal vessels. But somewhere deep within the hurling radiation of the operating room Mineo's work reveals another diagnosis: both the body and the soul's sublime capacity to heal.

—Lauren Gagnon