

## **Willie Stewart**

### *Hello Walls*

June 10 - July 14, 2023

Morán Morán is pleased to announce Willie Stewart's exhibition, titled *Hello Walls*, which presents a new series of multimedia works that thematically delve into our relationship with certain aspects of everyday life, highlighting the significance of memory and temporality. The artist employs various techniques such as stacking, layering, and collage, both physically and psychically, to create multidimensional works that mirror the composite of human existence.

This recent body of work is a personal evolution inspired by his surroundings, including those that are non-exclusive, such as Google Images, The Criterion Channel, as well as illustrated pages of second-hand books. The act of cataloging everyday objects, or amassing a collective archive, manifests visually through his treatment of materials, resulting in their sculptural quality and use of three-dimensional devices. Even in seemingly flatter images, Stewart provides a glimpse into his process by disrupting his own illusion, as in the piece *The Doorway Scene* where he leaves the back of the door unfinished – this intentional act invites the viewer to consider the work's construction.

Throughout the exhibition, traditional symbols and mechanisms from art history intertwine with personal iconography, assembling additional layers of meaning. Birds, butterflies, and flowers symbolize the cycle of life and the ephemeral nature of existence. Additionally, the presence of the memento mori trope in works like *Skull*, offers a reminder of our mortality. Jointly, Stewart's chosen images and objects placed out of sequence or out of context move to open up new and unfamiliar relationships that can feel realized and abstract at the same time.

The works are divided into three distinct groupings within the space: Tavern, Studio, and Residence, which together form a journey through the artist's life. Each category represents a different emotional realm, progressing from the abstract and internal to the concrete and mundane. The Tavern section allows for surrealism and exaggeration, reminiscent of the tales and embellishments that unfold within a bar or tavern. The Studio section of the exhibition delves into the artist's workspace, capturing the idealized life of an artist, alongside the realities of the creative process. In the Residence section, personal ephemera pertaining to the items and experiences we collect on shelves and in cabinets, in shoeboxes under beds, become metaphorical coping mechanisms, established to articulate our unique existence within time and space.

Although Stewart has moved away from overt musical references, music remains an integral part of his work. The fully functional stereo within the recreated *606 Universal Shelving System (Mount Fuji and Flowers with Stereo)* plays throughout the exhibition, establishing an immersive auditory experience. Viewers can interact with the artwork using Bluetooth functionality, enabling them to play music and further engage with the exhibition. Other mechanical and electrical components

also feature in Stewart's works. *606 Universal Shelving System (Abstract Cuckoo Clock with Books)* sounds and opens every hour, offering viewers a choice between regular, soft, or silent settings; *606 Universal Shelving System (Interior Portrait with Lamp)* and *Painter's Table* incorporate light as an essential element, further enhancing the visual and sensory experience.

*The images that are given to me in my everyday life, advertisements, scrolling pictures, inbetween episodes, are not adequate images. The artists' job, outside of asking questions, is to create the adequate images we desire, in any sincere way possible. It's the stacking and mashing of found images from my everyday life that allows me to create my adequate images, as well as understand the elastic possibilities of their meanings within these contextual shifts. – Willie Stewart*