

Nazim Ünal Yılmaz: *Brushman*

30 Orchard St, Gallery 1 ▪ June 23 - July 23, 2023



Harkawik is pleased to announce *Brushman*, the debut New York solo exhibition of Trabzon-born, Vienna-based painter Nazim Ünal Yılmaz. *Brushman* is an episodic circuit; a series of modest-scale canvases installed in a ring around the gallery, in which lifelong fixations of the artist recur, recede, transform and dominate pictures that might otherwise be described as pleasurable, light. Central to Yılmaz's investigations is the notion of the artist as an unwilling bride; the meeting and undoing of the political ideologies of nations; sublimation, or the transformation of libidinal energy into socially acceptable activities; phallogentrism and the hubris of men; life's cycles, time-markers, moments of

schadenfreude and sisyphian activities; the many stories that we tell ourselves, chiefly those codified in cartoons, symbols and slogans. Yilmaz is a wry humorist and a careful student and teacher of art history. His relationship to the canon might be summed up in the oft-quoted remark by Giles Deleuze that his strategy is “a kind of ass-fuck, an immaculate conception [in which I am] approaching an author from behind and giving him a child that would indeed be his but would nonetheless be monstrous.” Yilmaz offers the monstrous child of Picabia, of Picasso, of Matisse. He is the exhibition's “Brushman,” a tortured antihero who consumes and deflates modernist fallacies in equal measure. In *Baby Me*, his body shrunk to the scale of his brush, the painter adorns himself with a hero's mask, which trails off casually in a swoosh of paint. *Turtel Kickers* is a take on Osman Hamdi Bey's 1906 painting “The Tortoise Trainer;” here, soldiers kick the gentle creatures indifferently. In *First Couple* and *You So Strong, Tom?*, American cartoon characters are stuck in what might be a Jean Nouvel building or a Supermax prison, their expressions frozen in blissful diffidence. Some of the exhibition's most poignant works are its simplest, most direct; in *Old Furniture*, a figure sits in a yogic pose, nude except for socks and loafers, sandwiched between two antique armchairs that are forcing his shoes into his eyes. Yilmaz's exhibition is a testament to the exquisite pleasures of painting, the horrors of jingoism, and the tormented but vital existence of the artist.