

DEREK ELLER GALLERY



Through the Window, Through the Door, 2024, oil on cotton on linen, 80 x 64 inches

NORTH ROOM: KEVIN LOWENTHAL

Mannequins in Audience
October 25 – December 21, 2024

**Opening Reception:
Friday, October 25, 6–8 pm**

Derek Eller Gallery is pleased to present a solo exhibition of new paintings by Kevin Lowenthal entitled *Mannequins in Audience* in the North Room. With a background in weaving and textile, Lowenthal encrusts his surfaces with a textured mixture of cotton and layered oil paint, creating a rich, fibrous ground on which to build worlds, investigate forms, and uncover signifiers.

Confined to liminal, compact interiors, Lowenthal's architectural dreamscapes are often

inhabited by lingering, faceless figures. Provoking a sense of theatricality, curtains frame each scene, setting the stage for domestic interiors bound together in one enigmatic space. In *2 Blonde Mannequins In Conversation*, the pattern of the figures' hair matches that of the curtains. Rather than acting as hard, definitive boundaries, the curtains appropriate the fluidity of hair. This malleable relationship of forms ignites a cyclical reinforcement of performance and body, of object and texture. The settings in which these shapes and objects exist possess a vastness akin to a free-roam video game where viewers can choose to stay within the limits of a prefabricated narrative or enter portals that go beyond.

In fact, the initial source of Lowenthal's imagery derives from the survival-horror video game *Silent Hill*. In some of the rooms in *Silent Hill*, wall paint peels away to expose bare concrete. This fracturing inspires the rip, or the glitch, in the painting *Patched Overworld*. Reminiscent of the energy fields and the jagged dramas of Clyfford Still, Lowenthal leaves parts of the canvas

untouched in order to expose the pale, raw cotton surface. As if to provide a window into the canvas, Lowenthal pulls back the curtain to expose the thingness of the painting itself.

As in a theatrical presentation, Lowenthal controls how much information he exposes. In *Through the Window, Through the Door*, architectural forms are taken out of context and reduced to only their signifiers: a rectangle becomes a door because of the presence of a doorknob; a grid becomes a window only because of its transparency. Modeled after plastic heads, the human-like figure, or *mannequin*, calls attention to the synthetic nature of doors, windows, and furnishings. These familiar objects and their vacant resemblance to the real world create an overall atmosphere which is both mysterious and unsettling.

Kevin Lowenthal (b. 1994, Philadelphia, PA) lives and works in New York, NY. Lowenthal received a BFA from Maryland Institute College of Art. Lowenthal recently had a solo exhibition at 243 Luz in Margate, UK. Recent group exhibitions include Brigitte Mulholland, Paris, France; Anton Kern Gallery, New York, NY; and Dakota/Ruby, New York, NY. This will be his first solo exhibition in New York City.

Derek Eller Gallery is located at 38 Walker Street between Broadway and Church Street. Hours are Tuesday – Saturday, 11am to 6pm, and by appointment. For further information please contact the gallery at 212.206.6411 or visit www.derekeller.com.