

# Galerie Eli Kerr

*Since 1957*

Alan Belcher

7 June - 24 July, 2025

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Experimental and time-based in nature, much of the works in Alan Belcher's new exhibition at the gallery incorporate real food. The works depart from Belcher's preferences and personal relationship with dishes, ingredients, rituals and places, and continue the exploration of food and consumption as a long established subject matter in his work. This autoreferential aspect of the exhibition is reflected in its title, 'Since 1957', that names his birth year.

In the context of food, 'Since 1957' reminds us of a *best before date*, or of a legacy brand's founding year. Known for a playful approach that departs from merging photography into tactile objectmaking, Belcher's unique line of pop-conceptualism often makes use of a work's title to constitute the art object. Beyond titles, the specificity of date, where Belcher not only lists the year but the actual day an artwork was made, becomes an integral part of this body of work. This precision of date adds a temporal dimension that speaks to the material and vital nature of art, and, more importantly, of its making. While works may strike as bizarre upon first encounter, the materials are in fact as familiar as they are fleeting. Situated along the substantial history of food as subject matter in western painting, Belcher's works land within the grand traditions of the medium. He says that there has always been an aspect of realism in his work, and in line with his direct style, these works however, are of a genre of painting that is bypassing the paint<sup>1</sup>.

While drawing from a reverence from Nouveau Realist and Arte Povera sensibilities, Belcher's works emerge within a context of art today, and in this respect, the exhibition serves as a counterpoint to our the atemporal tendency of contemporary art. Belcher describes the works as having an instant vintage<sup>2</sup> quality, a paradox that is sharply aware of new art and its relationship to time today. In discussing the works and their material instability, Belcher notes our unstable times, and says these works are about the moment, and stresses to remind us and that art is not about ownership<sup>3</sup>, lamenting the stuck parameters of cultural production today where the only viable way for art to be shown is if it can be owned and preserved. These works on the other hand, are vital, breathing, alchemical celebrations of what makes life good in the meantime.

**Alan Belcher** (b. 1957, Toronto) is a Toronto based self-taught visual artist whose conceptual practice is decidedly multi-layered and object orientated. He has been recognized in the past as an originator of a

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<sup>1</sup> From the artist's notes on the exhibition

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

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tactile fusion of photography and object-making. A transparency of vision and simplicity of fabrication with a concentrated regard for materials remain hallmarks of his serial productions. Belcher is known for a directness and a sharp simplicity when approaching difficult subject matter. A sense of humour and a reverence for a Pop sensibility, as well as a hands-on approach, invade much of his work.

Active on the New York art scene in the 1980s, he was co-founder and co-director of Gallery Nature Morte with Peter Nagy in New York's East Village (1982–88).

Works by Alan Belcher are held in various public collections including the National Gallery of Canada (Ottawa), Centre Georges Pompidou (Paris), Art Gallery of Ontario (Toronto), Le Consortium (Dijon), Musée des Beaux-Arts (Montreal), Deste Foundation (Athens), Fotomuseum Winterthur (Zurich), Walker Art Center (Minneapolis), Chase Manhattan Bank, Credit Suisse Collection, Dropbox Headquarters (San Francisco), MoCA San Diego, Morris & Helen Belkin Art Gallery at UBC (Vancouver), and Musée Nicéphore Niépce (Chalon-sur-Saône, France); as well as numerous prominent private collections.

Born in Toronto (1957), he has lived in Vancouver (1976-77), New York City (1977-86), and Köln (1991-96) —and has lived and worked in Toronto during all other periods of time.