BABST GALLERY

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Justin Ortiz: *Will I Live Again*
May 2 – June 27, 2026

Babst Gallery is pleased to present *Will I Live Again*, a solo exhibition of new paintings by Justin Ortiz. In his works, Ortiz returns again and again to the same figure, among fractured cities and ancient faces.

Historical through-lines run deeply within Ortiz's work: Dürer's gestures filtered through Sigmar Polke, Greek sculptural forms refracted through Jordaens and Rubens. This history-honed imagery still carries a visual charge—even if stripped of its context, ungendered, and pushed toward abstraction. For Ortiz, art history is neither burden nor authority, but raw material.

His paintings are built slowly. Ortiz begins in greyscale over an amber ground, then layers thin oil glazes until the underpainting shines through. Little can be changed once the composition is locked into place, a constraint that Ortiz deliberately courts. Foreground and background push and pull as the figure persists between them.

Justin Ortiz (b. 1998, Sleepy Hollow, NY) lives and works in Los Angeles, CA. He began painting as a teen while under a classical apprenticeship, and earned his Bachelors of Fine Arts at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. His work has been shown in various venues in New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles. Most recently his work was included in *Sizzler,* curated by Grant Edward Tyler in Los Angeles.