

# BERGGRUEN

GALLERY

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## TOM MCKINLEY

September 1 – October 1, 2022

Berggruen Gallery is proud to present *Tom McKinley*, an exhibition of recent paintings by Bay Area artist, Tom McKinley. This show marks McKinley's eighth solo exhibition with the gallery and will be on view September 1 through October 1, 2022. The gallery will host a reception for the artist on Thursday, September 8, 2022, from 5:00 to 7:00pm.

Tom McKinley's new body of work binds evocative architectural paintings with peering commentary on civic engagement, surveillance, and cultural archetypes. McKinley's hyper realistic paintings explore the relationships between objects, architecture, and the natural world. Through his imagined settings, McKinley studies the link between light and color and how interior spaces interact with landscape. The artist often begins his work with an architectural design. In *Emmitt House*, McKinley highlights a modern home with a Joan Mitchell painting prominently displayed inside. The hues of the atmospheric setting, from the skyline to the stylish furniture, compliment the house and the artwork gracing its walls. The artist's new paintings explore a similar subject matter, yet prompt conversations about contemporary life. He politicizes his architectural paintings with themes related to infringement on private life in the twenty-first century.

In addition to the artist's characteristic paintings of mid-century modern homes and elegantly designed pools, in this exhibition McKinley explores new themes. McKinley allowed for his new body of work to build subliminally. Each painting presents an individualized habitat, yet visual themes and motifs—red barns, bees, and drones—hover throughout. *Duet* highlights a red barn, eerily with neither visible door nor accessible windows, illuminated under an evening sky. In the foreground sits an elegant home, where a glimpse of a Mark Rothko Color Field painting is seen through its green shutter-clad windows. The red barn reappears throughout the exhibition, including within *Red House Abroad* and *Tic Tac*.

In *American Rock Garden*, McKinley includes an iconic sculpture by contemporary artist KAWS in the distance with an approaching bee in the foreground. The bee creates a small visual disruption amidst the harmonic gardenscape and offers a moment of exciting unease. Throughout the exhibition, McKinley explores how bees and drones denote a surveilled state of life. Both operate discretely, murmur in sound, and appear unannounced. *Bee Heaven* reiterates this theme, showing a sculptural farmland under the approaching watch of a swarm of honeybees. McKinley's new paintings of individual drones, each uniquely designed and equipped, also allude to a monitored state of being. In sheer quantity and repetition, though some are more subtle than others, McKinley's drones signal a growing lack of privacy and control.

Throughout McKinley's newest body of work, themes of national allegiance recur. *Delivery North America* presents a symmetrical house enclosed by a manicured lawn and a white picket fence. McKinley embeds visual cues of American ideals, such as prosperity and the right to private property, yet positions them beside a windless American flag indicating a loss of national morale. In juxtaposition, *Delivery South America*, a Chilean flag flutters in the wind above an open-air house, suggesting a more leisured environment. Yet mystery also permeates, with the

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overturned chair and coiled rope left astray. Similar to his drones, McKinley's use of national flags embeds subtle political commentary in his otherwise timeless representations of daily life.

Surprises surface amidst McKinley's architectural environments. The evening desert scene, *The Light*, presents a few small mushrooms hidden amongst a variety of succulents. McKinley shares that the work exudes mysticism, perhaps suggesting a form of divination for the advice-seeking. *Tic Tac* holds a similar ambiguity, where an nondescript blimp floats in midair. McKinley's secluded abodes spark questions, and the artist incorporates suspicious tones to his meticulous paintings that heighten the surreal nature of his work.

Tom McKinley was born in Bay City, Michigan and was educated in both the United States and Europe. Beginning at the Goddard Collage in Vermont, he continued his education overseas in England at the Falmouth School of Art in Falmouth, the Ravensbourne College of Art in London, and Brighton Polytechnic in Brighton. McKinley currently lives and works in the San Francisco Bay Area.

*Tom McKinley*, September 1- October 1, 2022. On view at 10 Hawthorne Street, San Francisco, CA 94105. Images and preview are available upon request. For all inquiries, please contact the gallery by phone (415) 781-4629 or by email [info@berggruen.com](mailto:info@berggruen.com).

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