

Press release

Alex Becerra

Pleasure Paintings

16 December 2022 – 28 January 2023

Opening 15 December, 6 – 8 pm

Karma International is pleased to announce Alex Becerra: *Pleasure Paintings*, his third solo exhibition with the gallery and first show that is entirely made up of portraits and still lifes.

Some may be familiar with Becerra's ever-expanding universe of performance, sculpture, music and, simply put, idiosyncratic paintings. In his new exhibition you will find none of that, but rather a focused presentation that brings together a selection of intimate moments from the past two years. The genre of portraiture and still life is nothing new for Becerra's painting practice. He once described this as a "True study in color and composition that informs and helps complicate my color palette for my more expansive paintings." Nothing is lost in the work in terms of painting technique, but rather a hyper-focused and daring attempt to capture a humanistic feeling with his figures and objects.

We see a soft and intimate side to Becerra's painting, *Skyy's Mom*. A painting that was made in his Los Angeles studio a few months after the birth of his son. A connective and healing moment between mother and child is captured with urgency while never negating the power of vulnerability. Vertical and horizontal lines pulsate throughout the composition and one's eyes are drawn directly to the mother gazing at her child. In our chaotic and fast-moving world, this moment serves as a refreshing match that illuminates a long, dark tunnel.

In the exhibition, music doesn't take on the multi-sensory experience that it's typically utilized for in Becerra's performances. But rather serving as a through line in how it connects him to the world and is an ever-present background in his life. *Saxophone and Records* is a still life that was painted only a few days after the instrument was used in a performance in Los Angeles at the gallery Various Small Fires. Again, the urgency is felt to capture a fleeting moment which was heavy and spiritually driven only some days beforehand.

Together the works share an undercurrent, as suggested by the exhibition's title, *Pleasure Paintings*. A refreshing and intimate look into the artist's life and work.