

REENA SPAULINGS FINE ART
6916 SANTA MONICA BLVD
LOS ANGELES, CA 90038

Richard Hawkins
New Paintings
April 22– May 27

...and structure is always needed in life. So, you know, I just love my structures to crumble and then I just restructure with the structure that I previously had. And it's always a stronger structure every single time.

—Sunlightremedy@Onlyfans.com

Reena Spaulings presents *New Paintings* by Richard Hawkins, the artist's first Los Angeles solo exhibition in six years. In Hawkins's paintings, the figure is always kidnapped from some cooler, more technological, non-art medium such as the paparazzi photo, online porn, mainstream television or cinema. Composition comes charged with the violence and desire of the cut. The act of slicing, cropping and isolating the figure follows a DIY, possibly occult logic whereby desired objects are invited into higher, more potent encounters and exchanges. Hawkins seems to reveal the deep fakeness already operating in all seeing and desire. Collage, meanwhile, has always involved the shredding of reality.

Hollywood hunks such as Justin Bieber and Adam Driver commingle with gay porn actors in vibrant, large-scale compositions teeming with flowers and butterflies. Slicing his fetish figures from their usual digital and tabloid channels, the painter returns them here in unseemly combinations with art historical content. In *ASMR*, Bieber is plugged into a Picabia machine painting with added Miro parts. In *The Supermundane* and *On the Terrace*, Hawkins levitates a Rick Owens runway model and then the decapitated head of a gay influencer/beauty enhancer over lush mauve and violet landscapes taken from Pierre Bonnard. In *Sprinkler*, the pop star Nick Jonas, endowed with imagined genitals and aiming a water hose, is transported onto a canvas pulsing with otherworldly blooms lifted from the Symbolist works of Odilon Redon, magnified and rearranged by Hawkins. Rampant colors and piled up imagery suggest a mad pollination at work between mediums and times, the living and the dead.

Following his recent material and iconographic experimentations on the work of Antonin Artaud and Forrest Bess, Hawkins now unlocks the visionary potential of color and scale. He looks to *cangiantismo*, or High Renaissance special effects achieved by painting with anti-naturalistic colors in unusual combinations. Seeing art history his own way, the artist speculates on the unlikely collaboration between Alfred Jarry and Bonnard, asking what a "pataphysics of painting" might look like now, in our time of Grindr and Instagram. Hawkins never lets us forget that painting is an art of jabbing and smearing, or even taking a knife to color. Here, the power and meaning of figuration depends entirely on a simultaneous counter-power of erasure and disfiguration.