

Anton Kern Gallery

Tal R

For Immediate Release

Boy Walking and Cinnamon: Sculptures and Paintings

September 9 – October 24, 2020

August 11th, 2020—Anton Kern Gallery is pleased to announce its first solo exhibition with Danish artist Tal R, entitled *Boy Walking and Cinnamon: Sculptures and Paintings*. The exhibition will consist of fifteen paintings and twelve bronze sculptures and will open September 9, running through October 24, 2020.

Tal R is best known for his paintings and their exceptional display of energy and imagination in a colorful and exuberant universe. For the first time, he has also thrown himself into classical bronze sculpture. In *Boy Walking and Cinnamon*, the viewer can experience the artist's motifs transformed into three dimensions—a striking parade of figures in patinated bronze. His creatures have arrived in New York with arms and legs, heads and paws, wings and shoes, beaks and eyes.

Concurrent with Anton Kern's presentation, Tal's sculptures also make their institutional debut at the Glyptoteket in Copenhagen, in a solo exhibition entitled *Animals and People* on view through January 2021. As curator Christine Buhl Andersen writes in her essay included in the exhibition catalog:

Standing and walking, sitting and reclining, on horseback, kneeling and twirling. On the one hand belonging to the family of animals and people to be found in the life of the artist today...on the other hand, closely related to the history of sculpture as we know it from the 19th-century Paris of Degas, Rodin and Maillol and the gentleman's study of Modernism: Mr. Giacometti, Mr. Ernst and Mr. Moore...Forms and figures digested and reincarnated as fragments and scraps, surprisingly re-born like scavenged remnants recycled in the hands of Tal R today, in a different world – in a new age. Other familiar elements, indeed whole people or creatures, seem to have wandered from the artist's own drawings and paintings...Recast in more sense than one.

Take the top of the tall Headless Drummer Boy, with his drum, arms and drumsticks akimbo. At first glance we see long, Giacometti legs on the move. But no, this is 21st-century fashion, baggy Adidas pants following the beat, an overgrown and grown-up street kid with limbs out of synch, erect and mindless, marching ahead on reflex and instinct.

On the first and second floors, alongside the sculptures, Tal R's paintings unfold to the viewer using a simple compositional device to create his complex, atmospheric worlds. Objects such as vases filled with flowers, small statuettes of various origins, even the occasional piece of fruit or bowl, are gathered on top of a table or a cabinet. The tabletops are tilted and flattened towards the picture plane pushing the objects right into our field of vision, turning them into protagonists of some mysterious play. A closed drawer or a keyhole may still be visible at the base of each painting; however, no legs are revealed, no further physical space is suggested. Yet, the artist keeps the right margin of his compositions free and accessible as if to invite us to carefully enter the paintings' space. It's a subtle invite: take it or leave it. Once you accept, you'll find objects of ardent interest; dimly lit in dark and solemn, yet luminous, interiors, redolent of the smell of paint, varnish, and incense.



Tal R, *Adidas Boy*, 2019, patinated bronze, 61 3/4 x 10 5/8 x 25 5/8 in (157 x 27 x 65 cm)
Edition of 3 plus 1 AP (#2/3)

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The reality of these paintings is a mythologized reality, processed by the artist, distorted and enriched by all possible references and allusions to literary works, to mythology, or to other, more exotic domains of reality. Crucially, the evocation of cinnamon, Tal R reveals, is based on a story by Polish writer Bruno Schulz entitled "Cinnamon Shops," published in 1934. In it, on a nightly walk, the narrator describes accidentally encountering, not a mundane spice or curiosity shop, but rather a place that is the "manifestation of the unseen...Peer through the keyhole with the utmost caution," and you will, the narrator continues, "witness an interior monologue between the objects."

Just as the story suggests, the light in Tal R's paintings is muted. Perhaps it's a winter night, quiet and cozy, with the silvery light of the moon illuminating these paintings. It surely creates a meditative mood, a pulsing of the real, "which in metaphysical moments" the viewer can "experience as the glimmer of revelation" (B. Schulz). The light hints at the possibilities of the night, an atmosphere that stimulates our inventiveness and can bewitch our imagination. Ordinary objects become charged with mystery, the marvelous becomes animated and real, and even the colors in the paintings become solids and leading players. It's an invisible world made visible.

Much the same can be said about his sculptures, with the new exception at play that sculpture always starts out as a reality in the space it shares with the viewer. Its presence is both metaphorical and concrete, and its existence in the physical realm can somehow increase the mystery of its origins and meaning. Tal R's bronze sculptures are lush in materiality, tactile with thick and rich surfaces. The creatures and figures are familiar, somehow, but in circumstances that call on the viewer to stay, marvel, and wonder: the headless drummer; a hybrid goat figure; an Adidas Boy who seems in a state of action, but to or from where remains unclear. The grouping of sculptures resembles familiar archetypes yet set in circumstances that invite the viewer to contemplate and stay a while in Tal R's universe, rather than delivering a clear set of finite answers or ideas.

Tal R has exhibited prolifically throughout the world, including a current solo exhibition at the Glyptoteket in Copenhagen through January 2021. Other solo exhibitions were held at a number of institutions including: Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Denmark; Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Netherlands; Hastings Contemporary, UK; Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, USA; Museum of Modern Art, Denmark; Pinakothek der Moderne, Germany; Museum Kunstpalast, Germany; Magasin III Museum & Foundation for Contemporary Art, Sweden; Kunsthalle zu Kiel, Germany; Kunsthalle Tübingen, Germany; Holstebro Kunstmuseum, Denmark; Essl Museum, Austria; Instituto de Artes Gráficas de Oaxaca, Mexico; Centro Cultural dos Correios, Brazil; Kunsthalle Mannheim, Germany; Statens Museum for Kunst, Denmark; Horsens Kunstmuseum, Denmark; Aarhus Kunstmuseum, Denmark, among many others. Tal R's work is included in many notable collections worldwide, including Centre Pompidou, Paris; Museum Kunstpalast, Germany; The Art Institute of Chicago, USA; Essl Museum, Austria; Magasin III Museum & Foundation for Contemporary Art, Sweden; Bonnefanten Museum, Holland; Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma, Finland, and many private collections.

Gallery Hours

Tuesday through Saturday
10am – 6pm

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