

Purdy | Hicks

PIERRE BERGIAN – INTERIORS 29 JANUARY - 23 FEBRUARY

Purdy Hicks Gallery is pleased to announce a forthcoming exhibition of Belgian artist Pierre Bergian.

Bergian studied Art History and Archaeology and combined with his fascination for architecture, his paintings explore space and structure and make use of the presence of architectural components.

This new series, entitled 'Interiors', looks at rooms and spaces that are often almost empty, bar a small selection of furnishings and objects. They are unanimously devoid of people. As a child, Bergian was intrigued by the many old, abandoned houses he encountered in towns such as Bruges, Lille and Ghent. Empty and dark, without artificial light, these buildings were shrouded in an air of the mysterious, further inspiring the interest of the artist. Through his work, he aims to discover more about the atmosphere of similar environments, something which could be easily achieved through photography, but would perhaps reveal too much in the process. The comparatively slow application of paint onto canvas gives the image more time to penetrate the mind and allows us to really absorb what it is we are looking at, despite the Spartan nature of its initial appearance.



These vacant rooms take on an almost surreal form. The absence of visual distraction causes us to look closer and also highlights what is to be seen. As an artist, Bergian has encountered many architects, decorators and collectors: all people who, within various forms and through various mediums, deal in the business of creating an environment. That an opening observation might be that these rooms are often filled with art, whether it be hung on the walls or piled against an easel on the floor, is a reflection upon this and, of course, his own career as an artist. The role they play may seem limited, often being depicted as no more than a square shade of colour upon the wall, set into frames but possessing little detail, but in doing so Bergian insures our attention is focused more on the composition and presence of his work rather than what is displayed within the scene.

The clarity bestowed to the interiors is referred to by Bergian himself when he points out that "My paintings are a little similar to still lives'. We are aware, perhaps, that people might occupy them in some way, but for the moment they are hidden and our view into their habitat is suspended into perpetual uncertainty. The room is the focus, both as a space and as an object. The involvement of natural light and the effect it has on a room is another idea that is explored. The interior paintings of 17th century Dutch and Flemish artists and the clean, tangibly 'fresh' depictions of light they employed are a clear source of inspiration. We are aware of where it enters, what it falls upon and where it cannot quite reach, creating a visual communication between the various components of the room, the sporadic details placed inside them and the light that illuminates them.



An empty room has countless different connotations for people. However, it is something that we all recognise as being central to our own individual habitats. Bergian states, "I am persuaded that we are unconsciously very fascinated by interiors of buildings. Because these are the places in which we spend the largest part of our lives". Like stage sets, the air of abandonment is never quite alleviated despite the fact his 'Interiors' are never physically empty, but it does not detract from our desire to study them, to ponder what is through the doors or project our own lives into them.

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