

GAVLAK

MIKE DAVIS IT'S NOT EASY BEING GREEN

March 11 – May 7, 2016
Opening Reception March 11, 6-8pm

GAVLAK Los Angeles is pleased to announce "It's Not Easy Being Green," an exhibition of new watercolors by Los Angeles based artist Mike Davis. This is the artist's first solo exhibition with the gallery. The title refers not only to Kermit the Frog's famous song (Davis often paints Kermit when artistically stymied) but also to the supposed undesirability of green paintings.

The subjects of these watercolors fall into three primary categories: childhood imagery (family pets, a self-portrait of a young Davis playing violin), portraits of artists (Pablo Picasso, Frida Kahlo and Ed Ruscha), and of course, Kermit the Frog. For Davis, painting is a daily meditative practice that begins shortly after waking up. It is a method of extending his appreciation for certain images and thereby circumventing the short-attention-span-format of Instagram, where he culls many of the source photographs; it is also a cathartic activity, a means to process memories from a childhood both typical and highly atypical. In this sense, this exhibition is an image feed from the artist's subconscious.

After years of painting with acrylic in a large format, Davis switched to watercolors in 2013. The shift was meant to bring more immediacy to his practice. The medium's meditative value rests partly on its transparency, as nothing can be covered up, and partly on its deliberateness, as it requires a mental focus that helps induce a meditative state. Davis often spends months on a painting, sometimes years. One painting, entitled "For Cynthia," depicts a unicorn prancing on a shockwave from a nuclear explosion. What may seem like a surreal juxtaposition can also be viewed as a statement of intent: a will to persevere, even thrive, during life's most trying moments. In another painting, "'Cock' in Trafalgar Square," Davis spent close to a year and a half replicating the subtle Instagram filter of a photograph, which was taken on a rainy day in London. He gives as much attention to the blurry image of the blue rooster sculpture in the background as he does to the individual raindrops that have accumulated on the car window. Such devotion in this era of transience might qualify as the ultimate "like."

Mike Davis (born 1984) lives in West Hollywood. He received his BFA at the University of California Irvine in 2008.

For more information concerning the exhibition, please contact Tabor Story at tabor@gavlakgallery.com, or 323-467-5700. For all press inquiries, please contact press@gavlakgallery.com.