

George Little | *Leftoeuvres* 20 March – 9 May, 2021

KETELEER GALLERY is very pleased to present *Leftoeuvres*, the first solo exhibition by Danish-British artist George Little (°1988, London) with the gallery. Little studied at the Royal College of Art, London and lives and works in the city. The exhibition will consist of a series of recent paintings as well as an entirely new body of collaged cast reliefs.

Taking the title of the show as an entry point, *Leftoeuvres* (a 'tongue-in-cheek' non-word) is a composite of the artist's own oeuvre and leftovers invoking the wordplay and elastic linguistics in analytic cubism, the futurist cookbook and the writings of Gertrude Stein. It lays the place setting of the artist's practice with its continuous open dialogue with modernist history, especially in the locales of cafés, bars and restaurants.

George Little grew up around kitchen doors, amidst the hustle and bustle of London's Soho restaurant life. A unique context for a developing mind and one which acquired him a unique sensitivity and fascination for the visual and sensuous language hidden beneath the titillating parts that make up the chaotic whole of a lively dinner party. This new series of paintings takes 'the table' as the site of activity. Using the studio as kitchen, through metaphorical and aesthetic abstraction, the artist's works probe at the objecthood of painting.

With the rhopographical fascination (rhopos, meaning trivial objects, small wares, trifles) of *The Unswept Floor* Roman mosaics that humorously elevate discarded remains of feasting and the true-to-life chaotic messiness of a Daniel Spoerri readymade, Little objectifies the moments of fleeting but transformative interactions between man, food and surroundings by translating the accumulated impressions – still buzzing in our minds long after we've left – into abstracted free-flow compositions and compressions of oil paint, Damask Linen, doodled-on paper and Jesmonite.

"Displays full of lobster, prawns and clams, all bubbling away as scenes of effervescent chatter. Powdery white table linen and serviettes, stained by wine rings in surrounds of greenery, the repetition of circular forms, like those of bubbles from the seafood tank. Previous signs of mealtime bustling; spillage from glasses and platters, table dressings knocked over and stained in the framework of outdated touristic interiors. A craning of necks to glimpse a fleeting view of a sunset, over the sea, just missed. Discarded garnishes of olives and lemons swilled, spilled and fallen to the floor, kissed up to purely abstract and geometric forms, all jostling for elbow-room in the chaos and aftermath of the shared space and experience."

It all starts simply with a set table...

Usually an object is like a blank canvas, instantly igniting a wave of associations and imaginations – fed by a collection of scattered memories – of what could be done with it. With the three tables *Gueridon I, II* and *III* however, the opposite seems to have happened: these objects assimilate after the event, incorporating the artist's recollections, turned into playful conglomerates; visual confessions of spontaneous happenings.

Walking amongst these colourful slices of restaurant mementos, served from his studio/kitchen, we can almost hear the clattering of restaurant cutlery and the rustling of the sea, smell the scorching plates of food being carried around and feel the linen tablecloths under our elbows as we lean in to listen to someone's stories. Little is right to give the seemingly banal ritual of sitting down for dinner such a great deal of attention, it nourishes not just the body but also the spirit, something which has become all the more apparent since the start of 2020. Given the ongoing limitations that were placed on all of our social lives, Little's *Leftoeuvres* are a welcome joyous celebration and poignant reminder of those small things, the rhopos that give the most meaning to our lives.

Text by George Little and Lauren Wiggers.