

MARCH 10 - MAY 6, 2023

Rob Ober

Life on a Pale Horse



Installation shot of Rob Ober's solo exhibition *Life on a Pale Horse* at GNYP Gallery in 2023



Rob Ober
Ring Road (Moscow)
2023

acrylic on canvas

244 x 183 cm
96 x 72 in



Rob Ober
Barcelona
2023

acrylic on canvas

244 x 183 cm
96 x 72 in





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"I am not interested in making or manufacturing a painting," says Rob Ober. "Painting has to be an experience, no different than taking a walk in the woods." This seemingly simple statement, at least at first sight, contains not only something of the essence that dynamizes Ober's work but much of modern art in general. An entire, complex artistic canon was formed following these ideas: the notion of art as something born out of a particular operative process, a phenomenon most closely linked to experience—an inarticulate, immediate dynamic, beyond words and reason. Utterly personal, Ober's paintings, shown in his first solo exhibition at GNYP Gallery, are also very much historically bound.

Still, history must be more effectively defined here. Ober partially grew up in the USSR, the son of an American diplomat; situated in the middle of last century's geopolitical theater, it is reasonable to infer that political history was a quotidian concern. The stage of worldly, grand schemes. Something of that can be identified in the paintings in this show, for instance through the mysterious figures unapologetically facing us, with their menacing sensuality, the harsh and violent color contrasts—an echo of history's misdeeds and also expressionism, both Russian and German. In this regard, the titles of the paintings also approximate us, the viewers, to Ober's historical leanings and sensibilities.

However, history is also a private affair, interlaced with conscious and subconscious streams. In "Dynamo," for instance, a representation of an intimidating goalkeeper, Ober claims that he was surprised by a sudden urge to paint such figure, something that he would only later better understand: HC

Dynamo Moscow, it turns out, the hockey team to which Ober rooted for, was sponsored, among other national security structures, by the KGB. The painting, thus, presents a hidden truth, unfolding an alternative narrative.

The presence, in this regard, of "monstrous creatures" in some paintings, like in "Barcelona," points to this realm beyond reason, coming close to an ethereal, almost shamanic place. Instead of guiding us toward revelation, the exaggerated symbolism of mythologic and religious iconography—with strange halos, demons, witches, and also a Virgin Mary—activates in us a new encounter with the otherworldly. Ober seems to be trying to set in motion an almost mystical experience, beyond the stillness of dogma.

Influences, to him, come from everywhere, articulating various elements of our private life and whatever happens around us. Their advent in the form of art, however, the organization of diverse elements in something cohesive, transcends the rational domain, be it the preparation, the process, or the aftermath—an experience indeed.

"What attracted me to painting and still does," Rob Ober explains, "was the opportunity to express a feeling that cannot be expressed or experienced in words." Sooner than later, his own inclination infects and affects whoever looks at his paintings. And what remains is their honest strangeness, their powerful and striking forces, beyond reason and words.

João Gabriel Rizek

Rob Ober

*Dynamo (or how I grew up routing for the official team of the
KGB)*

2023

acrylic on canvas

244 x 183 cm

96 x 72 in





Rob Ober
Machaca
2022

acrylic on canvas

183 x 152.5 cm
72 x 60 in





Installation shot of Rob Ober's solo exhibition *Life on a Pale Horse* at GNYP Gallery in 2023

Maria Calandra
Happy Family
2023

acrylic on canvas

152.5 x 122 cm
60 x 48 in





Rob Ober

Swamp

2022

acrylic on canvas

122 x 91.5 cm

48 x 36 in



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Installation shot of Rob Ober's solo exhibition *Life on a Pale Horse* at GNYP Gallery in 2023

Rob Ober

Ushanka

2021

acrylic on canvas

122 x 91.5 cm

48 x 36 in



Rob Ober

Rob Ober (b. 1968, Wiesbaden, West Germany) is an American artist based in Kent, CT, who paints intuitive and highly-expressive images. His works depict a wide range of subjects including iconic deities, historical figures, carnal acts, his memories of living abroad, and languid alligators resting on the shore.

Born the son of a US diplomat, Ober spent his youth growing up in Moscow, Delhi, Athens and Bethesda, MD, all locations that inspire his art practice. Following college, Rob began obsessively collecting Russian nonconformist art, and in 2006 he opened Ober Gallery in Kent, CT, where he gave early shows to many artist-friends including Brian Belott, Katherine Bradford, Lance De Los Reyes, and Robert Nava.

Ober began seriously painting on his own seven years ago and has since shown at SHRINE, PM/AM, and Stems Gallery Paris.

Rob Ober

Solo Exhibitions

2023

Life on a Pale Horse

GNYP Gallery, Berlin (Germany)

2022

Motley Crew

SHRINE, New York (USA)

Group Exhibitions

2023

Summer Lovin'

Stems Gallery, Paris (France)

group show

PM/AM, London (UK)

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