

Jack Lawler - *You Want To Get There First, I Want To Get There Last*

October 27th – December 4th, 2022

Opening reception: Thursday, October 27th, 6 - 9 pm

No Gallery - 105 Henry Street Store #4 NYC NY 10002

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We have a strange tendency to believe that the moment in which we live is the ultimate one, that our opinions or experiences are as distilled and real as they could possibly be with the past left as primitive and the future an evolution beyond comprehension. The failure to observe the oscillation and expansion of time is an integral part of the human condition.

In Jack Lawler's debut solo exhibition with the gallery, *You Want To Get There First, I Want To Get There Last* the artist will present three new paintings which have taken almost two years to complete. The works take reference from what were once images of the future that quickly became antiquated, influencing a body of work that owes as much of its visual language to mosaic as it does to early digital imagery.

These new paintings mark a departure from Lawler's previous works which utilized impasto painting to produce heavily textured reimagining of imagery cribbed from early clip art, video games and digital graphics. Lawler has eschewed the direct nature of these works in favor of a process more closely mirroring a dot matrix printer, redesigning source imagery as a printer's firmware would before hand sculpting each individual dot with oil paint.

The labour acts as a bridge between the classical, romantic history of oil painting and the obsolete-fantasy landscapes the artist renders. If the artists of the European Renaissance were attempting to show God their appreciation for intelligent design through their use of light, perspective and composition, Lawler's new works are a wry smile towards the beauty and warmth of nostalgia as represented in the aesthetics of obsolete technologies.

Embodying a past aesthetic for potential futures, these three paintings evoke a sense of displaced nostalgia. There is no attempt to represent specific real life situations, instead operating on a surreal dream-logic to entangle the viewer in a space which inhabits remembered and invented narratives simultaneously.

Windows on The World (2021-2) is Lawler's 'Heaven Painting' inspired by early renaissance painters like Paolo Ucello and Piero Francesca's utilization of perspective as a representation of the vastness of both the holy and natural landscape. The work is a sort of death-trip, Saint Peter showing a highlight reel of your happiest memories as

an appetizer for eternal bliss. The work itself incorporates images influenced by drawings the artist made as a child, with snippets of cityscapes giving way to infantilized images of paradise - beaches, palm trees and floral arrangements acting as a trail of breadcrumbs around the tunnel corner and into the clouds.

At some point in the not-so-distant past, the imagery which these paintings are evocative of represented a future where technology presented the potential for utopian living. The glowing pixels of early arcade machines, primarily played by children and teenagers, were altars at which hours were spent in service of entertainment - they were just killing time because time was the only thing both guaranteed and abundant.

In *You Want To Get There Soon, I Want To Get There Last* Jack Lawler employs the tools of the renaissance as a means of inhabiting a recent nostalgia, of subverting our contemporary time-squeeze in favor of an imagined slower past. These three paintings may have taken years to produce due to their complex process but that's only half of the reason, more importantly they act as an opportunity for the artist to slow down and spend time in the fantasy of these painted worlds, imbuing them with memory, in service of the present moment.



No is an ambiguously commercial art gallery established in 2019, located in the lowest of the Lower East Side, Manhattan. Its programming focuses on work which pushes the boundaries of transgression, working primarily with emerging artists whose practices address the relationship between external and internal experiences in the contemporary cultural landscape as well mid-career artists with a trail of burnt bridges behind them.