

Billy Sullivan

Studio Visit

kaufmann repetto New York

kaufmann repetto is pleased to announce *Studio Visit*, Billy Sullivan's sixth solo exhibition with the gallery.

Billy Sullivan has been accumulating a substantial visual diary of art works and images for the past fifty-something years, beginning at a time when many of his friends and cohort – circulating in the wide orbitals around Max's Kansas City, the Factory, and Downtown in general – engaged in various forms of self-documentation simply as a matter of habit, and often just for fun. Indeed, this diaristic impetus is the thread that runs through Sullivan's entire career, and which forms a coherent body from the range of his painterly and photographic mediums and techniques, the evolution of his palette over time, the technological shift from 35mm slides to digital captures, as well as the diverse cast of subjects and characters that wend their ways through his work, often to reappear at unexpected moments.

In the most recent works in *Studio Visit*, completed over the past five years in both oil on linen and pastel on paper, Sullivan evokes encounters and dialogues with other artists as well as designers and writers – colleagues living and deceased, well-known and emergent, queer and not, newer and longtime friends.

Certain portraits encapsulate a studio visit by playfully quoting the other's work – the revealingly bent-over figure in the background of Carroll Dunham's profile; Parisian designer Irié ensconced on an abundantly floral motif seemingly sprung from his own patterned fabrics; and painter Anthony Cudahy, whose husband (photographer Ian Lewandowski) appears ready to step over the threshold of a life-scale pictorial space. Two other portraits memorialize a departed artist's personal energy – sculptor Barry Le Va, still formidable in his wheelchair; and Rose Royale (the "drag ego" of artist Ed Shostak) rendered in a flurry of red, hot pink, and black. Even a still life composition doubles as an artist's portrait, as with the vase of flowers, tambour table, and deep blue carpet from Elaine Reich's 2022 Matissean installation.

Sometimes Sullivan catches the sitter in a lull or a moment of reflection – painter Louis Fratino leaning forward in his studio; artist and writer Sunny Suits, set against the studio throng of Sullivan's mural-scale 1992 drawing *Gwalior Wedding*; or art critic Brooks Adams (Sullivan's boyfriend), presiding in the garden in his undone red-striped robe. Other times the retrieved moment translated into paint bears a more layered history, as with the double portrait of Amy Sullivan (the artist's first spouse) and Carol LaBrie (the pioneering Black fashion model) at Deux Magots in Paris on a November day in 1975 – which remakes an original pastel drawing destroyed by fire at The Locale (one of Mickey Ruskin's long-gone restaurants).

Designer Ricky Clifton makes two notably social appearances, in a painting and a pastel – first, chatting with photographer Nan Goldin in a red-paneled bookstore

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nook after a reading by painter Peter McGough, who eavesdrops in the foreground – and then sprawled on a sofa with artist Kayode Ojo. Sullivan also gestures implicitly to the community of his own gallery, as he pays visits to the home of painter Nicolas Party and his wife, novelist and editor Sarah Blakely-Cartwright, and to the studio of painter Katherine Bradford. Even the gallery's sister-owners take turns in the limelight – Francesca Kaufmann, posing in Prada and Marni in Freeman's Alley; and Chiara Repetto, bellying up to Sullivan's kitchen counter.

The exhibition concludes in the gallery's lower-level space with a salon-style installation of thirty-odd works selected from the full span of Sullivan's career to date, as if to imagine the studio visit itself – with all its many layered temporal and spatial encounters, juxtapositions, and echoes – restaged for display across a single physical plane.

Billy Sullivan (b. 1946, New York) has been exhibiting nationally and internationally since 1971. His work is also currently on view in *Friends & Lovers* at the FLAG Art Foundation in New York. Sullivan has had recent solo exhibitions at The Madoo Conservancy in Sagaponack, NY (2021); kaufmann repetto, Milan (2019); Rental Gallery, East Hampton, NY (2018); Monteverdi Art Gallery, Sarteano, Italy (2016); kaufmann repetto, New York (2016); Ille Arts, Amagansett, New York (2015); Galerie Sabine Knust, Munich (2014); Freymond-Guth Fine Arts, Zurich (2014); Nicole Klagsbrun, New York (2012); Baldwin Gallery, Aspen, Colorado (2011); Salomon Contemporary, East Hampton, NY (2010); and Regen Projects, Los Angeles (2008). His work has been featured in many significant group exhibitions, including: *The Minoaur's Daydream*, organized by Anthony Cudahy for Semiose, Paris (2023); *Drawing 2020*, Gladstone Gallery, New York (2020); *Pastel*, organized by Nicolas Party at the FLAG Art Foundation, New York (2019); Ugo Rondinone's *I ♥ John Giorno* at White Columns, New York (2017) and the Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2015); *GLAM! The Performance of Style*, Tate Liverpool (2014); *Open Windows*, Addison Gallery of American Art, curated by Carroll Dunham (2012); and *Whitney Biennial: Day for Night*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2006). Sullivan's work is in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Parrish Art Museum, Detroit Institute of Arts, Norton Museum, Portland Museum of Art in Maine, Denver Art Museum, and the Allen Memorial Art Museum at Oberlin College, among many other public and private collections.