

Brian Harte

8 Paintings (from the midlands)

Artist | Brian Harte
Exhibition Title | *8 Paintings (from the midlands)*
Dates | July 10 (Sat.) – August 7 (Sat.), 2021
Location | MAKI Gallery / Omotesando, Tokyo



Brian Harte, *Bedroom, (Part 2)*, 2021, oil and crayon on linen, 200.0 x 165.0 cm

MAKI Gallery is pleased to present *8 Paintings (from the midlands)*, Ireland-based artist Brian Harte's first solo exhibition in Japan. As suggested in the show title, a series of eight new paintings will be on view at MAKI Gallery / Omotesando, Tokyo. In part a continuation of the artist's past work, in which he draws from his immediate surroundings, this series uses autobiographical and personal imagery as vehicles to arrive at a larger narrative on contemporary life.

For the past five years, Harte has turned his focus on painting deconstructed interiors. The artist has taken to a strict format of breaking the picture plane in two: background and foreground, wall and floor. By limiting his scope of practice and devoting himself to paint within a fixed confine, Harte continuously explores his subject matter through an intimate but expansive space while developing his own visual language.

The canvas may seem cluttered or cryptic—even disorienting at first—but slowly, objects begin to materialize, emerge, and identify themselves as something familiar. Scattered across each frame are common household objects such as table lamps, furniture, picture frames, shoes, and so forth—all of which are set against kitchen tiles or vast painted walls. Indiscernible figures intermittently appear and disappear between the works, leaving open-ended questions as to who they are and why they are there. The seemingly banal items and occasional figures are in fact all taken directly from inside Harte's home: his wife and two children, a photograph of Philip Seymour Hoffman, a chair that once belonged to his great-uncle-in-law, a now broken sculpture he acquired in Paris long ago—these fragments from Harte's life are strategically woven into the turbulent and charged chaos contained in each painting.

Though the paintings appear to be direct reflections of the artist, something deeper lies hidden within. The featured work of this exhibition, *Bedroom, (Part 2)*, portrays an intimate scene of the artist's wife sleeping in their bedroom. However, upon closer look, one may begin to unravel a dreamy and almost ethereal world contained in the painting. With no horizon line to ground the image, the bed appears to be floating underwater, perhaps subtly referencing climate change. In *P. Chair, (Paddy's version)* and *P. Chair, (M and J)*, his wife's great-uncle's chair, which has been with the family for generations, is prominently displayed. The memories of the great-uncle, who was a revolutionary freedom fighter, are imbedded in the chair, transforming it into a portal to the past that allows one to travel through time and space.

Harte's organically composed and dynamic paintings include traces of himself and his surroundings, while intricately incorporating clues for untold stories and pathways to unexplored worlds. By casting an abstracted lens on the mundane detritus of the everyday, Harte attempts to capture the durational texture of daily life. The purposed network of objects and references offer a glimpse of a domestic space—a visual catalyst that inspires one to stage their own narrative. We hope you will take this opportunity to view Brian Harte's works at MAKI Gallery / Omotesando, Tokyo for his debut exhibition in Asia.



Brian Harte
P. Chair, (Paddy's version), 2021
Oil on linen
121.0 x 161.0 cm



Brian Harte
P. Chair, (M and J), 2021
Oil and crayon on linen
121.0 x 161.0 cm

**| Brian Harte**

Photo: Debbie Hickey

Brian Harte was born in 1978 in Ireland, where he continues to live and work today. He studied at the Crawford College of Art and Design in Cork, Ireland, graduating in 2001. Known for his large-scale canvases that waver between abstraction and figuration, Harte creates deconstructed interior settings which hold traces from his own domestic life. Household items, such as table lamps, chairs, or framed pictures, appear and disappear in each work alongside the occasional indiscernible figure, leaving clues for a narrative yet to unfold. Using both bold and muted colors, the artist creates portals that transport viewers through a visual network that is at once intimate and private, but also familiar and universal. Harte's recent solo exhibitions include *Endless Worlds*, Annarumma Gallery (Napoli, 2021); *Everything you touch*, GNYP Gallery (Berlin, 2020); and *This Life Domestic, Ever Gold [Projects]* (San Francisco, 2018). His works are included in multiple public and private collections, including Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg in Germany, who recently acquired two paintings for their permanent collection. In 2020, he also published an extensive catalogue of his work from the last five years, *Bread (and other paintings)*, in association with GNYP Gallery.

MAKI Gallery / Omotesando, Tokyo

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Closed on Sundays and Mondays

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