

# REBECCA CAMACHO PRESENTS



Forrest Kirk  
*Beneath No One*

14 January through 25 February 2023  
Opening Reception: Saturday 14 January, 5pm to 7pm

Rebecca Camacho Presents is pleased to announce an exhibition of new works by Los Angeles based artist Forrest Kirk. Forrest's anomalous style merges figurative storytelling with gestural abstraction. Moving fluidly between realism, geometric form, pure color and texture, Forrest frequently incorporates elements of mixed media and collaged segments culled from his own original images. The result is an optical and spatial landscape that keeps the eye from resting. Rooted in literature, history, and individual experience, Forrest's narratives reference psychological uncertainty and anxiety arising from underlying power structures, specifically those experienced in contemporary urban environments.

At the inception of each new body of work, Forrest's research-based practice investigates time and place specific to an intended end, either visual or geographic. As a point of departure for *Beneath No One*, his debut exhibition at the gallery, Forrest's study turned inward. Grounded in a series of personal morning affirmations, Forrest visually translates the maxim 'I'm beneath no one. I'm immune from criticism. I'm fearless.'

A compositionally unified series of unstretched, framed canvas paintings dialogue with historical portraiture. The structure of a figure, however amorphous, is present in each *Beneath No One* work. Against a vibrant blue-sky backdrop, the outline of a bust is evident. Yet the center composition of each frame is abstract, amplifying Forrest's interest in the frenetic interior versus the defined exterior. Frequently featuring a Romanesque helmet or warrior-like armor, the figures appear ready for battle but do not translate as violent or aggressive. They are at once tumultuous and calm, glistening and dark, rough and orderly, of the past, present, and future, both familiar and foreign. Whether self-referential or universal, Forrest's portraits embody the chaotic multi-dimensionality of human existence.

In singular contrast in the exhibition, the largest painting in the show, also aptly titled *Beneath No One*, turns from human figuration and highlights the outline of a majestic elephant. A spiritual symbol of luck and prosperity, elephants are powerful beings that use their strength to remove obstacles and negative forces. They represent wisdom, long life, memory, and vitality. Visually layered with representational and conceptual imagery, the painting offers another adaptation of Forrest's morning mantra.

Forrest Kirk (b. 1975 San Diego CA) received his BFA from California State University Los Angeles in 2008, followed by a year studying classical painting techniques in a Parisian atelier. In 2019, Forrest was a resident at the Bed Stuy Artist Residency, Brooklyn NY. In 2021 he was awarded an American Academy of Arts and Letters grant and his artwork was acquired into the collection. Additionally, his work is in the permanent collection of the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles CA and Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, San Diego CA. Recent institutional exhibitions include the Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Santa Barbara CA, the Brand Library & Art Center, Los Angeles CA and the Torrance Art Museum, Torrance CA. Forrest's work has been reviewed by *The Los Angeles Times*, *Artillery Magazine* and *LA Weekly* among others.

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Gallery hours: Thursday, Friday, Saturday 12noon to 5pm

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