



*Susan*, 2023. Oil on canvas. 39 x 61 inches. Photographer: Andris Søndrol Vidsal. Courtesy of the artist and Perrotin.

## JASON BOYD KINSELLA

### *EMOTIONAL MOONSCAPES*

February 24 – April 6, 2024

Perrotin is pleased to present Oslo-based artist Jason Boyd Kinsella's inaugural U.S. exhibition, *EMOTIONAL MOONSCAPES*. On view through April 6th, the exhibition consists of two immersive environments on the gallery's second and third floors, introducing the artist's foray into combining various mediums, such as painting, sculpture, and video.

Jason Boyd Kinsella is a portraitist not much interested in what people look like. His have no people in them at all, in fact, or at least not the way we're accustomed to seeing ourselves. Kinsella understands portraits can do one of two things: they can capture the likeness of their subject—the contours of a face, their jowliness, their creases and crags; or they can distill something truer, where likeness is secondary to affect. This is the difference between what someone looks like to others, and what they look like to themselves. Good portraits are always psychological portraits.

We are all utterly convinced that we engage with the world in deeply specific ways legible only to us, our perceptions and quirks and mechanisms irreducible. But the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator prescribes only 16 possible personalities, 16 ways of being in the world (introvert/extrovert; carefree/worried, and so on). Nevermind that these binaries are mostly rejected as pseudoscience. Kinsella, having successfully jettisoned traditional facial structures, finds new

purchase for the typology, an abiding fascination ignited by a childhood gift of a Briggs book. He maps the Indicator's precepts onto intricate, teetering assemblies of geometric forms — building blocks, literally, of psychological attributes.

While the results have the clean, highly finished surface of Google architecture or alien tesserae, their spiritual forebears are in fact the Old Masters. The classicism is all there: the 3/4 quarter pose, the finely-tuned sfumato, the fixation on linear perspective — like Rogier van der Weyden's Portrait of a Lady stripped of flesh, reduced back down to rhomboids. Though they're piles of blocks, they retain humanness. They emote, are inquisitive, proud, defiant, taciturn. They can be vulnerable or steely, cool or sheepish. All of this is accomplished without eyebrows.

Kinsella demands a neat order to his imagined sitters. They are built from distinct units whose contours, color and form betray their personalities, their quirks, their annoyances, their faults. They're more ordered than a human face, except not really. Faces follow a certain logic and so too do Kinsella's (his preliminary sketches share something with a Disney animator's storyboard, as though he were anthropomorphizing a toaster or some other household appliance whose feelings you were blithely unaware of until now). Even though Kinsella's portraits are personal readings of friends and acquaintances, he insists there's no Rosetta Stone to his language. Still, it's easy to



*Schism* (detail), 2023. Oil on canvas. 51 x 112 inches. Photographer: Andris Søndrol Vísdal. Courtesy of the artist and Perrotin.

imagine a sphere indicating a quickness to anger, or an upturned ellipsoid signifying a tendency toward making jokes to mask pain.

Like all good portraits, these characters are of their time. They share a genus with digital avatars, the selves we build to represent ourselves on the Internet, transmuting our personae via digital tools, filters, text-to-image language models to produce light fictions of who we think we are. They're contradictory in this way: flat but dimensional, referencing AI iconography but rendered by hand, talking about the digital via the analogue. Kinsella doesn't seem to have any compunction about this. Why should he? Humanness is hopelessly complex.

Kinsella is a sculptor who paints. He sculpts too, in the sense that he makes dimensional objects, but his paintings seem wrought out of the same tactile stuff. He manages to pull dimensionality out of paint to the point where you're compelled to walk around it, even as you're fully aware there's nothing on the other side except blank canvas. On the first floor, Kinsella introduces us to Mille Blossom, a character study across painting, sculpture, and video, the first time he's presented across all these media in one room. Image drifts into sculpture slipping into video, the DNA gliding from paint to steel and resin to pixel with little friction.

Kinsella doesn't make self-portraits, except every picture he makes is a kind of self-portrait, his presence wrapped up in his pictures,

implicated in it, "an intangible familiarity," he calls it, a feeling that hangs between the shapes. His shapes, held together by a thin gravity, have a precarity, the feeling that things could easily come undone. This makes them, in the end, about life — stubbornness in the face of impermanence. On the second floor — the emotional moonscape of the show's name — sits its largest work. *Connection* (2024) depicts two figures that yearn to connect but never do, isolated in a yawning, serene expanse. Something keeps them apart, but they knock against it anyway.

- Max Lakin

[More information about the artist >>>](#)