

EQUINOX GALLERY
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Jack Kenna: How Slowly Time Passes, How Quickly Things Change

February 25th to March 22nd, 2023

Reception for the artist: Saturday February 22nd, 2 to 4pm

Equinox Gallery, Vancouver

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Jack Kenna's practice is defined by an energetic visual style where he reflects the dynamic nature of our media saturated world. His index of imagery is expansive, derived not only from published sources but also from personal experience, giving him the freedom to merge historical still life painting with his own vast archive of cell phone photography and imagery. This breadth of references allows him to create works that convey the paradoxes inherent in the contemporary experience.

Kenna takes great pleasure in painting, switching dynamically between mediums (from oil, acrylic, and gouache, to collage, and spray paint), and rotating between finalizing large paintings and beginning small studies. The artist explains: "There's so much visual information presented every day in so many different forms and perspectives, trying to get all of that down in paint is an endlessly interesting task." The choice of how to paint objects is at the forefront of many of these works. Vases are treated with spray paint to give a ceramic effect, while the shiny coat of a cat is created effortlessly with a few thick paint strokes.

The title of the exhibition, *How Slowly Time Passes, How Quickly Things Change*, offers a reflection on the slipperiness and contradictory nature of time as represented through objects that demarcate its passage: calendars, candles, flowers, clocks, even a hot cup of coffee cooling down. The title also relates to how time can be tracked through the relentless "advancements" of technology, represented by obsolete iPhones, dated electronics, and the knobs and dials of 1970s modular synthesizers. The works also reveal themes and symbols that speak to a particular mode of post-pandemic experience, largely dictated by digital interactions with the world. On their own, power strips, cords, and cables are seemingly common objects used to maintain function in work and life. Here, exaggerated and oversized, tapped with a maximum of electrical plugs with tangled cables extending in all directions, they activate the canvas and suggest a state of being over-worked, over-stimulated, and out of time.

Observing and responding to shifts in scale offers another way of considering these works, as some life-size objects are deliberately contrasted with wildly oversized mixing boards, wires, and power strips. At a colossal scale, these electronics offer a reconsideration of space, perception, and significance. Rendered on dark grey and blue backgrounds, they seem to float in space, with the cords extending beyond the edge of the canvas, potentially connecting to something beyond. Kenna notes: "My tendency to imply that the composition continues past the edge of the canvas is a way for me to describe that the canvas is only a snippet of this whole world that

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I'm creating, and a way for me to play with the boundaries between what is and what is not 'inside' the painting. The expanding composition is a part of this, as is the inclusion of windows, digital screens, paintings within paintings, or sketchbook pages with drawings of new scenes. Each painting adds to the visual world I am creating and they are all connected in some way."

Jack Kenna received his BFA from Emily Carr University of Art + Design in 2019. He has participated in residencies at the Bonnie McComb Kreye Studio Residency and the Vancouver School Board. Recent exhibitions include *Platforms 2020: Public Works*, commissioned by the City of Vancouver; *Gridworks*, a solo exhibition at Slice of Life Gallery; *Inside Cat* at Telephone Gallery; *Tumbling Blocks* at Burrard Arts Foundation; and *A Matter of Influence* at Howard495. Jack Kenna divides his time between Vancouver and New York.