

BORTOLAMI

Patrick Angus

15 January – 27 February 2021

Opening Friday, 15 January from 11am – 6pm

Bortolami Gallery is pleased to announce an exhibition of historical works by Patrick Angus (1953-1992), an artist known for his strikingly intimate portraits of men and honest depictions of the gay experience in 1980s New York.

The exhibition presents three quintessential paintings and an extensive selection of works on paper spanning from the late 1970s until the artist's untimely death in 1992. Angus keenly drew what he saw, and in these early portraits he renders men in graphite, colored pencil, pastel, watercolor and oil—lounging, sleeping, and posing in figure drawing classes and domestic interiors. Captured in a fluid yet sharply observant style, Angus shepherded in a unique form of expressive social realism.

Raised in a sheltered California suburb of Santa Barbara, Angus took an early interest in visual art and began lessons in portraiture and genre subject matter at age thirteen. In college, Angus discovered David Hockney's scenes of glamorous gay life in Los Angeles. Grappling with his sexuality during this formative period, Hockney's work offered Angus a sense of liberation and inspired him to relocate to LA in 1975. Angus ultimately lacked access to elite creative communities and the world of affluence he sought, leading him to commit his time to figure drawing and exploring the intricacies of the male portrait as his central theme.

Angus' move to New York in 1980 introduced a radical shift in subject matter as he gained entry into the gay cinemas, bath houses, and male strip clubs of the city. *Hanky Panky* (1990) and *I Get Weak* (1991) depict scenes from the Gaiety Theatre and The Prince, famous gay theatres frequented by the artist in Times Square. An erotic movie glows as interactions take place among the backlit audience—a movie-goer holds up the red cherry of a cigarette in a beckoning hand and shirtless hustlers lean against the walls of stairwells leading to shadowy back rooms. *Self-Portrait as Picasso* (1980) similarly displays a complex composition wherein Angus contemplates his mirror reflection, obfuscated by a fireplace mantle topped with a litany of objects including a classical bust. These scenes, both public and private, generate a web of uncertainty between viewer and image, all the while illustrating Angus' distinctive use of tonal figuration and deft sensitivity to light and space.

While garnering notoriety and recognition in the queer community through a small circle of supporters, including Robert Patrick, a gay writer and playwright, Quentin Crisp, and Douglas Blair Turnbaugh, the general public considered Angus' work obscene. It was only in the last few years of his life before he succumbed to AIDS at the age of 39 that he began to see the beginnings of his success.

Patrick Angus (1953-1992) was born in North Hollywood, California and died in New York City. Past exhibitions include *Body. Gaze. Power. - A Cultural History of the Bath*, Staatliche Kunsthalle Baden-Baden, Germany, in 2020; *Patrick Angus: Voyeur*, Long Beach Museum of Art, California, in 2019; *On Our Backs: The Revolutionary Art of Queer Sex Work*, Leslie-Lohman Museum of Art, New York, NY in 2019; *Patrick Angus. Landscapes and Portraits*, Galerie Thomas Fuchs, Stuttgart, Germany, in 2019; *Patrick Angus. Private Show*, Kunstmuseum Stuttgart, Germany, in 2017; Fort Smith Regional Art Museum, Arkansas, in 2015; *First Sight*, Loom Gallery, Milan, Italy, in 2015; and *Patrick Angus*, Galerie Thomas Fuchs, Stuttgart, Germany, in 2015. A monograph on Patrick Angus was published by Hatje Cantz in 2016 and a publication on the exhibition at the Kunstmuseum Stuttgart by Distanz Verlag in 2017. Angus is represented in the collections of the Leslie-Lohman Museum of Art, New York, NY, the Kunstmuseum Stuttgart, Germany, and the Schwules Museum, Berlin, Germany. The estate of Patrick Angus is represented by Galerie Thomas Fuchs.