

Doron Langberg: *Give Me Love*

Exhibition 3 September–6 November 2021

Victoria Miro, 16 Wharf Road, London N1 7RW



Doron Langberg, *Bather*, 2021
Oil on linen
243.8 x 203.2 cm
80 x 96 in
© Doron Langberg
Courtesy the artist and Victoria Miro

Victoria Miro is delighted to present *Give Me Love*, the gallery's first solo exhibition by Doron Langberg. The exhibition will feature panoramic works alongside the chromatic depictions of figures in interiors for which the New York-based painter has become widely known.

An increasingly prominent voice among a new generation of figurative painters, Doron Langberg has gained a reputation for works that hinge on a sense of closeness. Langberg's paintings, luminous in colour and often large in scale, celebrate the physicality of touch – in subject matter and process. His intimate yet expansive take on relationships, sexuality, nature, family and the self proposes how painting can both portray and create queer subjectivity.

For his first solo exhibition with the gallery Langberg will show paintings depicting a range of subjects from queer love to wildflowers and sweeping landscapes, describing this body of work as 'a broadening of subject matter and deepening of content'. The most explicit pieces in the exhibition, depicting friends having sex, are nearly abstract because of their magnified scale. These works give material form to moments of desire, evoking the fluid and slippery nature of queer friendships.

Langberg also touches on the tenderness and complexity of a relationship with a lover. The brilliant palette of these pieces doesn't only signify queerness, it also creates a parallel between the transcendent feeling of, for example, witnessing a rainbow or magenta sunset and the preciousness of moments when love is most felt.

Because of the loss of his sister and being unable to go home or see family due to the pandemic, Langberg's past year was marked by grief and longing for home. Moved by these difficult experiences, he created portraits of his siblings and encompassing landscapes of the Menashe mountains where he grew up. Their turbulent sweeps of colour or rough, textured surfaces echo Langberg's attempt to grapple with existential themes such as the finality of death and the life force of spring.

The broad scope of subjects and experiences in the exhibition is connected by Langberg's deeply felt use of paint. The slow unfolding of colour and gesture transforms figures and objects into materiality. These gaps between paint and the things it describes lend the work its distinct emotional and psychological register. Langberg's masterful treatment of textiles, clothing, and exterior and interior patterns creates environments that move in or out of focus, in which figures emerge from or recede into their surroundings. In works such as the large-scale painting *Bather*, flesh, water and the geometry of a tiled bathroom dissolve into a high-key luminescence. Here, a chromatic range – related to the world but not quite 'of' it – serves to enshrine the everyday.

The flow between inner and outer worlds or emotional and perceptual realities, speaks not only to those occupied by the subject of the painting, but by the artist and viewer as well. These breathing spaces might encourage us to consider painting, in the artist's words, 'as a place where experience originates'. The work of Pierre Bonnard, Edvard Munch or Alice Neel exemplifies this idea – it does not only represent emotional turmoil or tender intimacy, it is emblematic of it. Inspired by the empathic work of queer artists and writers such as James Baldwin, Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Agnes Martin or Ocean Vuong, Langberg asks how he might represent a queer experience in a way that is as far reaching.

For the exhibition title, the artist has co-opted the title of a pop song – *Show Me Love*, by Robyn – altering it slightly to foreground vulnerability. 'Giving yourself over to the emotionality of pop songs is such a corner stone of gay culture,' Langberg explains, 'and this one pleads for love, which is ultimately the subject of all my work'. At its core, Langberg's practice reaches towards experiences we can all share in, pointing to the ways in which painting – as declarative as a pop song – might address fundamental aspects of our lives.

Building on Langberg's commitment to creating space for queer experiences through his work, Victoria Miro and the artist will donate a portion of the proceeds from the exhibition to the Ali Forney Center in NYC, supporting queer homeless youth, and to Queercircle, an LGBTQ+ led charity working at the intersection of arts, culture and social action in London.

About the artist

Born in 1985 in Yokneam Moshava, Israel, Doron Langberg currently lives and works in New York City. He received his MFA from Yale University School of Art, holds a BFA from the University of Pennsylvania, a Certificate from PAFA, and attended the Yale Summer School of Music and Art, Norfolk. Langberg has attended the EFA Studio Program, Sharpe Walentas Studio Program, Yaddo artist residency, and the Queer Art Mentorship Program. He is the recipient of the American Academy of Arts and Letters John Koch award for painting, the Elizabeth Greenshields Foundation Grant, and the Yale Schoelkopf Travel Prize.

Works by the artist are currently on view at the Schwules Museum, Berlin (until 30 August 2021) and in *Any distance between us*, which explores the power and significance of intimate relationships in works of contemporary art, at RISD Museum, Providence, Rhode Island (until 13 March 2022). Langberg's work is also included in *Breakfast Under the Tree*, a group exhibition curated by Russell Tovey, at Carl Freedman Gallery, Margate, Kent (until 15 August 2021). Work by the artist will feature in a major group exhibition at the Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston in 2022.

Previously, his work has been shown at institutional venues including the LSU Museum, American Academy of Arts and Letters, Leslie-Lohman Museum and The PAFA Museum. His work is in the collections of The PAFA Museum and RISD Museum.

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