

PAUL KASMIN GALLERY



Mother, 2011; oil on canvas; 58 x 40 3/4 inches; 147.3 x 103.5 cm

Nir Hod: *Mother*
March 28-April 28, 2012
515 W. 27th Street, New York, NY
Opening: Thursday, March 28th, 2012, 6 - 8pm

Paul Kasmin Gallery is pleased to announce a solo exhibition of 11 new paintings by the artist Nir Hod, which have never been shown before as a series. Referencing the iconic photograph taken by the Nazi photographer Franz Konrad, of Nazi soldiers clearing out the Warsaw Ghetto during the Second World War, Hod's paintings maintain a tight focus on the woman closest to the photographer, cropping out completely the more famous young boy to her left. By removing this faceless and often overlooked woman from the historical context of the photograph, Hod asks the viewer to consider who she was and to imagine the life that she could have had. Hod depicts her posing or dancing against a lush, cinematically lit background, a beautiful handbag draped across her arm. Alluring and fashionable, the woman in these paintings has completely escaped from the horrible reality of the original photograph.

Photographs can clearly illustrate and encapsulate moments from our history, but they never tell us the full story of the people and events captured within their frames. As Dan Porat of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem writes in his book *The Boy: A Holocaust Story*, "Looking at a photograph, the viewer sees the surface facts and comes to believe he or she has grasped the inner truth of the events depicted, can feel the pain, can see the evil, while in fact knowing nothing of the protagonists, circumstances or context associated with those events."

Throughout his career, Hod has explored the relationships between glamour and loneliness, beauty and death. He first saw the Warsaw Ghetto photograph as a child, when it was widely used to illustrate articles and texts about the Holocaust. Although initially drawn to the young boy, he became increasingly fascinated by the woman in profile as he repeatedly returned to the photograph. In this series of paintings, using techniques and color palettes that references Old Master portraits from Peter Paul Rubens and El Greco to Gerhard Richter's photo-realism, Hod acknowledges the beauty of this anonymous woman and attempts to give her memory a new existence. Nir Hod was born in Tel Aviv in 1970 and received his B.F.A. from the Bezalel Academy of Art and Design in Jerusalem. He lives and works in New York.

Press Contact: Justin Conner, FITZ & CO, Justin@fitzandco, 212-627-1455 x233