

# FRAENKEL

49 GEARY STREET SAN FRANCISCO 94108 415 981 2661

For immediate release:



## ELISHEVA BIERNOFF

*Smashed Up House After the Storm*

Sept. 5 – Oct. 19, 2024

Fraenkel Gallery is pleased to present *Elisheva Biernoff: Smashed Up House After the Storm*, an exhibition of 13 recent works tracing the artist's expanding approach. Biernoff makes delicate paintings that meticulously recreate found, anonymous photographs—astonishingly faithful renderings on thin sheets of wood that match the intimate scale and detail of the originals. Severed from their original role as personal memories, the enigmatic photographs Biernoff selects evoke an element of ambiguity. By paying close, sustained attention to these objects, Biernoff brings their buried mysteries and emotions to the surface. Recent work has incorporated multiple images and non-photographic objects from sources such as nature or architecture, using these to make larger, more complex arrangements. This will be Biernoff's third solo exhibition at the gallery since 2017. A reception with the artist will take place on Saturday, September 7, from 2-4pm.

In several new works, Biernoff's focus has widened to include fragments of the walls on which the images hang, emphasizing the sculptural quality of these pieces. *Fragment*, 2024, recreates a section of

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knotty pine paneling that has changed color over time with exposure to light, leaving discolored shapes where pictures were once pinned. *Beyond Our*, 2023, measuring more than five feet tall, presents a photograph of a Sunday school interior and poster showing the earth from space, both hung on a painted rendition of a wooden wall. Together, the elements suggest questions about the larger forces that exist beyond the frame.

Biernoff often plays with doubling, finding connections inside the frame and out. *Strike*, 2021, the work that lends the show its title, depicts a splintered tree trunk and house with a mangled porch. In looping blue cursive on the verso, also carefully painted by Biernoff, a note describes the scene: “Smashed up house after the storm, July 1970.” Like the house, the photograph itself shows signs of damage—a column of yellow and pink discoloration disturbs the right side of the image, perhaps caused by water.

In other works, mirrors highlight the limits of what the camera could record—a reflected flash becomes a white haze, obscuring the picture-taker in *Gathering*, 2022. In *Likeness*, 2022, a man’s face is framed in a mirror on a crowded dresser, surrounded by snapshots and mementos. Installed on a small mirrored shelf, the reflections in the piece pile up, “creating a display that integrates with the painting rather than receding,” Biernoff writes.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue featuring all 12 paintings the artist has completed since mid-2021. Many of the works are reproduced to exact scale and, consistent with the previous publications, all paintings are reproduced recto and verso.

Biernoff received an MFA from California College of the Arts and a BA from Yale University. She also studied at the Slade School of Fine Art, London, and received a MacDowell Fellowship in 2016. Her work has been exhibited at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Contemporary Jewish Museum, the Asian Art Museum, and CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts in San Francisco; New Orleans Museum of Art; Copenhagen’s Louisiana Museum of Modern Art; and Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Bentonville, Arkansas. Biernoff’s work is included in the collections of the Buffalo AKG Art Museum, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Philadelphia Museum of Art, and Yale University Art Gallery, among others.

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Image: Elisheva Biernoff, *Strike*, 2021

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