

Mike Kuchar

Big, Bad, Boys

June 9 – July 8, 2023



François Ghebaly is honored to present *Big, Bad Boys*, the gallery's third solo exhibition with legendary artist and filmmaker Mike Kuchar. *Big, Bad Boys* marks the gallery's second exhibition at our new West Hollywood space located at 1109 N Poinsettia Place, West Hollywood.

Mike Kuchar has been a majorly influential figure in the underground film and comics scenes since the 1960s, first in his hometown of the Bronx and, from the 1970's on, in the creative hotbed of San Francisco. Together with his twin brother George, the Kuchars gained cult recognition for their over-the-top, no-budget films that sent up Hollywood epics, weepy romances, and sci-fi B movies. In iconic films like *Sins of the Fleshapoids* (1965), *The Craven Sluck* (1967), and *Death Quest of the Ju-Ju Cults* (1976), Mike developed his distinctive style that jettisoned traditional narrative structure and acting professionalism in favor of extravagant, tender sagas that

would have a significant impact on emerging theorizations and expressions of camp as an artistic sensibility.

Throughout the 1970s, Mike Kuchar began to support his filmmaking with gay erotic drawings that would grace the covers and pages of gay magazines and erotic comic books like *Gay Heart Throbs*, *Meatmen*, and *First Hand Magazine*. These evocative works evolved to become an integral part of his oeuvre. Kuchar imbued his drawings with a unique combination of gonzo lewdness and uncompromising joy, garnering an underground fandom and eventual critical acclaim.

Big, Bad Boys offers an expansive presentation of Kuchar's work, bringing together recent and historical drawings along with video works from the past fifteen years, including *A Distant Nearness* (2018), *Thoughts and Feelings* (2019), and

Mike Kuchar

Big, Bad, Boys

June 9 – July 8, 2023

Animal (2009). Kuchar's latest pencil and felt pen drawings, replete with his signature blend of eroticism and humor, animate a diverse troupe of characters ranging from a muscular devil wrestling with a serpent to a curious portrait of a bearded man led by an enormous sentient ant. *Big, Bad Boys* serves as testament to Kuchar's lifelong engagement with themes of desire, freedom, and the human condition, making visible the intricate threads that weave through his multifaceted body of work.

Big, Bad Boys will be on view from June 9 through July 8, with an opening reception taking place from 5 to 8pm on Friday, June 9. On Saturday, June 10, Mike Kuchar will give an artist talk with L.A.-based artist William E. Jones at 3pm. Live figure drawing classes will be hosted at the gallery throughout the exhibition including on opening night. For more information, please visit our website.

Mike Kuchar (b. 1942, New York, USA) is an artist and filmmaker who lives and works in San Francisco. His work in film and video has been shown internationally at numerous screenings and festivals, including the Tate Modern, London; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, Berkeley; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; and the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, among many others. His drawings have been in solo and group exhibitions at Anton Kern Gallery, New York; Institute of Contemporary Art, London; Jan Kaps, Cologne; and Kimmerich, Berlin. Kuchar was the recipient of a John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship Award in 2017, an Avant-Garde Masters Grant from the National Film Preservation Foundation in 2012, and a United States Artists Fellowship Award in 2006.