



## **BILL WARD: *PAINTINGS***

JANUARY 31 - MARCH 21, 2025

**OPENING RECEPTION:** FRIDAY, JANUARY 31, 6-9 PM

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Gallery 16 is excited to present our first solo exhibition of paintings by Oakland artist Bill Ward.

Ward's paintings and drawings are meditations on the objects, people, and environments that shape our daily lives. Ward's paintings create complex, layered scenes featuring the everyday objects in his studio, curiosities and attractions in his own Oakland neighborhood. His paintings radiate with energy and explore both the real and the imagined.

Much of his work is based on observations gleaned from walks around his neighborhood in West Oakland. Like any great story, some details are embellished. But, his scenes of city life reverberate with humor and pathos, like a modern take on a Pieter Bruegel scene. Fantasy and exaggeration are employed as tools for humor, and for eliciting a dialogue with the viewer. His canvases reveal familiar urban scenes: a neighborhood park, a liquor store, a church, a barbecue restaurant jammed next to Victorian homes, gardens bursting with color. In the background, the Port of Oakland bustles with full container ships. As viewers get closer, other details come into focus: people on the street are carrying guns, and dogs travel in packs. Ward's compositions teem with stories and experiences that are happening simultaneously in this environment.

Ward's observations of everyday life also turn inward, to more personal conversations about objects as storytellers. For example, *Books (2023)* features titles like *Plasma Physics* and *Quantum Electrodynamics* alongside Diebenkorn, Giotto, Van Gogh, and Guston monographs. Ward explains that his father was a physicist, and after he died, Ward and his siblings all jostled to pick the physics books from his library. Seen together, the books, Polaroid camera, notebooks, and VHS tapes speak to the accumulation of both knowledge and memory that guide us long after family members and friends are gone.

### **About the Artist**

Bill Ward's paintings and drawings present richly colored, fantasy-inflected observations of everyday life in Oakland. His work has been exhibited at Gallery 16 (San Francisco) and the Richard L. Nelson Gallery (Davis), among others. He graduated with a BFA from Humboldt State in 1996, and an MFA from UC Davis in 1998.

GALLERY 16

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