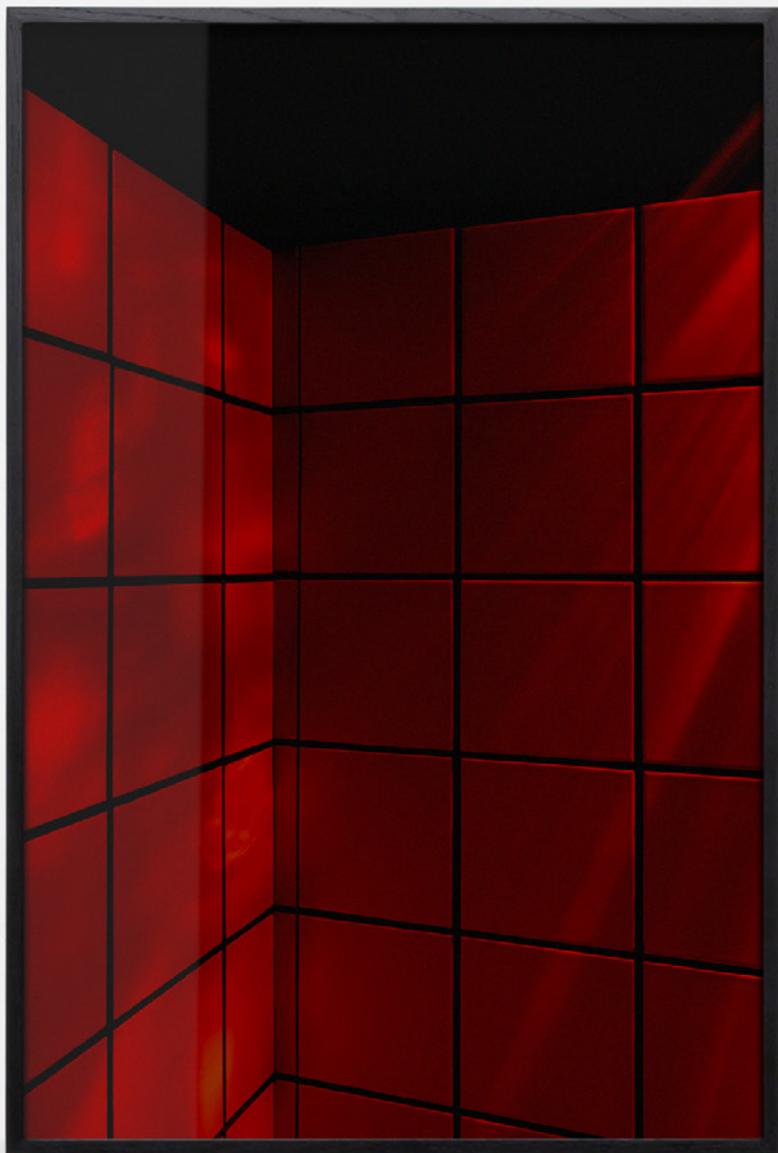


PHH

PETER HAY HALPERT FINE ART

Mario
Kiesenhofen
Surroundings

PRESS
RELEASE



MARIO KIESENHOFER SURROUNDINGS

2 June – 2 July, 2022

PETER HAY HALPERT FINE ART

in cooperation with
Anders Wahlstedt Fine Art

521 West 26th Street, First Floor
New York, NY 10001

Tue–Fri: 11 am–6 pm

Sat: 11 am–4 pm

and by appointment:
+1 646 220-8657, phh@phhfineart.com
www.phhfineart.com

ARTIST RECEPTION
9 JUNE 2022, 6–8 PM

PANEL DISCUSSION
14 JUNE, 7 PM

Mapping Queer Surroundings
A Panel on Visibility and Space

Austrian Cultural Forum New York
11 East 52nd Street
New York, NY 10022

Speakers to be announced

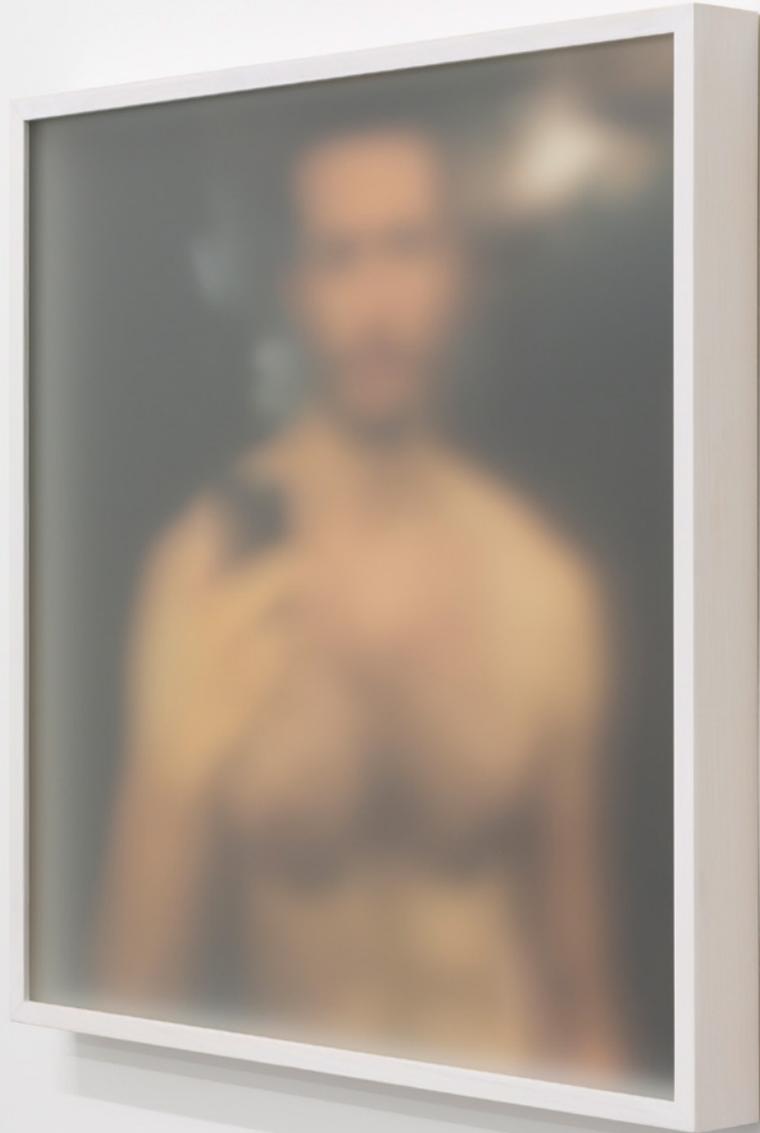
Registration required:
events@acfnyc.org

Mario Kiesenhofer, *Indoor – NYC Inferno, Manhattan*, 2018,
pigment print, framed behind grey glass

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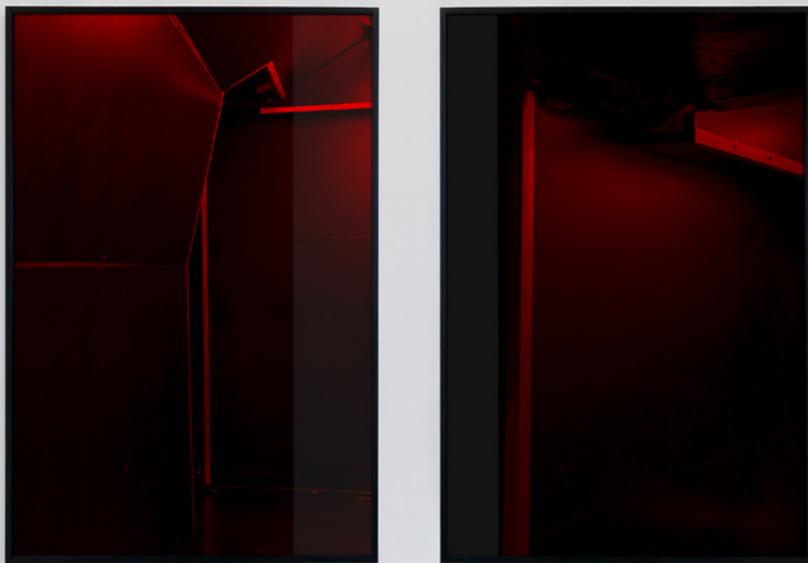
austrian | cultural | forum^{nyc}



Peter Hay Halpert Fine Art is pleased to present *Surroundings*, an exhibition by emerging queer artist Mario Kiesenhofer. For his first solo show in the United States, Kiesenhofer blurs body representations and maps queer surroundings. He focuses on safe spaces used by the gay community for intimate encounters and sexual interactions, as well as representations of gay men in virtual settings reflecting how they create and control these spaces.

you focus only on me

The artist explores these surroundings with his camera, appropriates pictures of online dating profiles and covers the photographs with grey or etched glass, creating highly formal lens-based objects that blur realities.



The artist's exploration of queer spaces and architectures manifests in the black-mirror-like photographs of his *Indoor* series, presenting filtered insights into selectively accessible queer underground sex venues, darkrooms, gay-clubs and saunas around the world. Kiesenhofer captures these safe spaces during daytime when the clubs are closed, using only the light that is present on location. Captured in geometric compositions, we find ourselves reflected in the grey glass that covers and protects the sensitive motifs, exploring their intimate atmosphere.

The photographs of the Parisian gay sex club *L'Impact*, for example, suggest a comparison with William Eggleston's photograph of a red ceiling, whose pioneering theme of the banal and everyday is also reflected in Kiesenhofer's photographs as he focuses on raw and trivial details such as screws and self-made interiors that nevertheless become signifiers of difference when considering the queerness of these spaces.



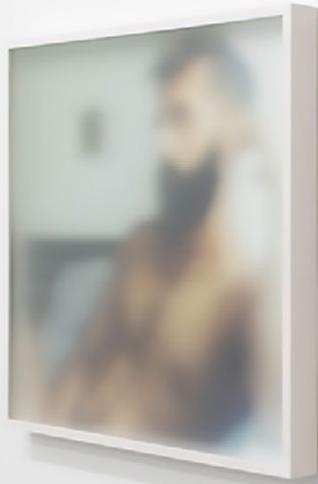
William Eggleston, *Untitled*, ca 1973
© Eggleston Artistic Trust. Image courtesy of Eggleston Artistic Trust and David Zwirner.



At the same time, Kiesenhofer confronts us with very specific and hyper-masculine military motifs such as a truncheon attached to a wall at the London underground sex dungeon *The Bunker*, which served as a protective bunker during the time of World War II and now is a safe space for the gay fetish scene. Again, the context in which the motif appears is of great importance and is highly topical against the backdrop of Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine, where the underground in contested areas currently serves as a safe space for civilians.

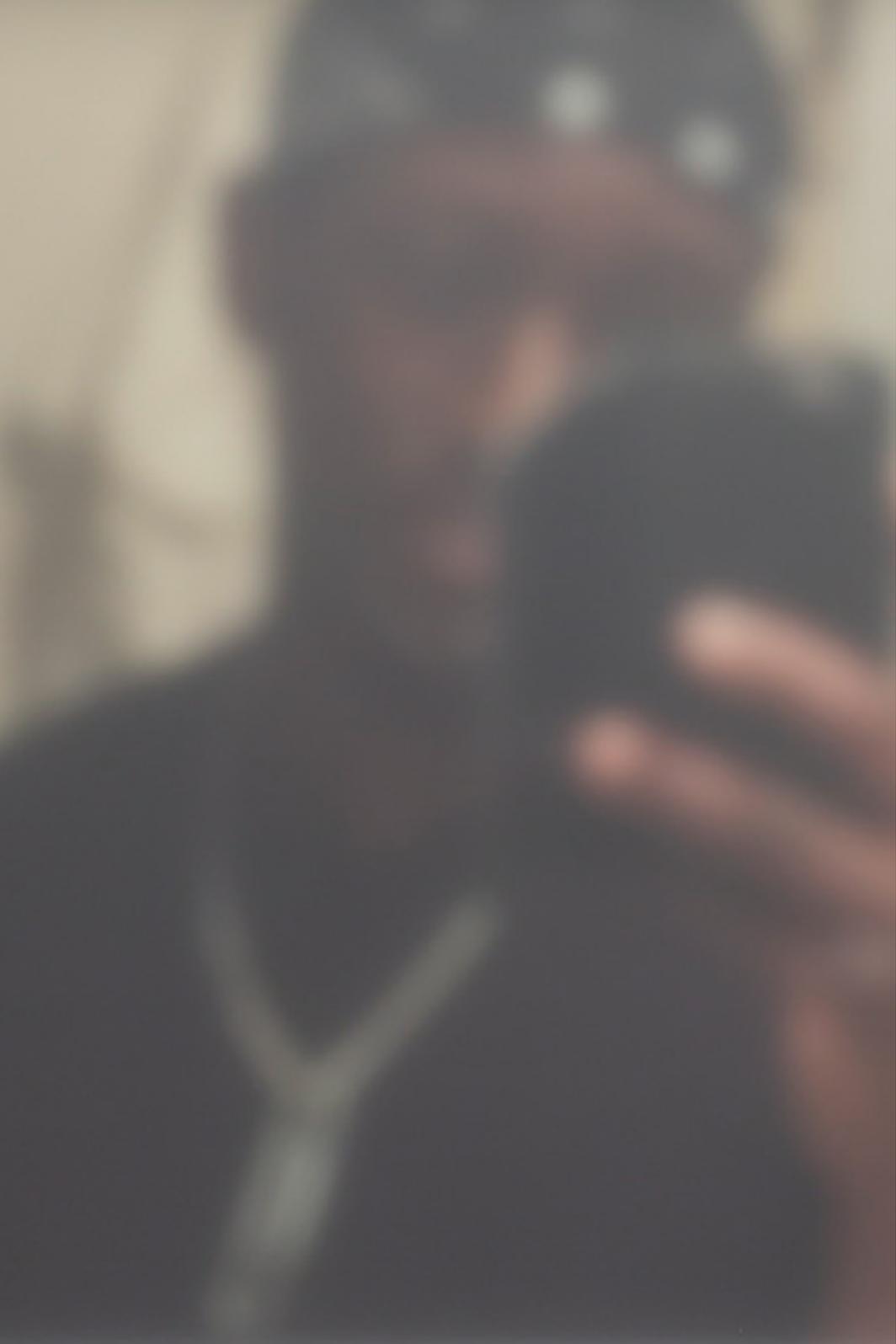
**you are safe
with us**

These works contrast with the blurred portraits of the series *You Are Here*, where Kiesenhofer presents another side of the contemporary gay cruising culture.



Protected by etched glass the appropriated profile pictures of gay online dating platforms are telling an opposing visual story. Blurred and alienated, these selfies and body close-ups offer insights into the mechanisms of a market yet create a portrait of vulnerability and self-projection. In 2018, it was disclosed that the gay dating app Grindr was sharing sensitive user data such as their location and HIV status with third parties. In this context, Kiesenhofer's use of blurred glass to protect the profile images and queer surroundings can be read as an allegory for data privacy at a time when democratic values and the right to freedom of sexuality are once again at risk in certain parts of the world.

**I am moving away
from you**



In the context of the pandemic, the associated social restrictions and the shift into virtual space, Kiesenhofer's work depicts an even more thoughtful picture of this current void and loss.

His specific use of display materials plays with queer visibility and augments the relationship that the artworks form with the exhibition space and its viewers. Combined with text fragments on the walls of the gallery space, Kiesenhofer's lens-based objects connect different layers of queer presence, creating an immersive tension that invites the viewers to become involved.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a panel discussion at the Austrian Cultural Forum New York on June 14, 2022: *Mapping Queer Surroundings – A Panel on Visibility and Space*.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Mario Kiesenhofer was born in 1984 in Austria. He lives and works in Vienna and is represented by Peter Hay Halpert Fine Art in the USA.

Kiesenhofer studied Photography and Video Art under the guidance of Matthias Herrmann and Dorit Margreiter at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna. His works have been shown in London (Austrian Cultural Forum), Tokyo (A- Gallery), Poland (BWA Gallery, Tarnów) and at the Vienna Museum (among others). In 2018 he was a resident at the International Studio & Curatorial Program in Brooklyn and a finalist for the Wolf Suschitzky Photography Prize. In 2020 Kiesenhofer was awarded a special mention by the jury at the Portfolio Review at Fotomuseum Winterthur in Switzerland. He is co-founder of *Streulicht* – a discursive publication series on photography and related arts.

Exhibitions (selection):

- 2021 *Safe Spaces Remote Places*, TOP19BTM19, Vienna, AT
Shifting Layers, Bildraum 01, Vienna, AT
- 2020 *Fotohof Calling*, online exhibition, Fotohof, Salzburg, AT
Plat(t)Form, Portfolio review, Fotomuseum Winterthur, CH
- 2019 *Sensations. Closer the People*, Kunstverein Schattendorf, AT
Queer Art Space Vienna, Kunsthalle Exnergasse, Vienna, AT
Everlasting Light, Artspace Tim Nolas, Vienna, AT
- 2018 *Wolf Suschitzky Photography Prize Exhibition*, Austrian Cultural Forum, London, UK
- 2017 *Preface. Image Politics in Fashion and Arts*, A-Gallery, Tokyo, JP
- 2016 *Sex in Vienna*, Vienna Museum, AT
Pattern. City. Tarnów, BWA Gallery, Tarnów, PL
- 2010 *Five Directions of Photography through Photography*, Gallery Hilger, Vienna, AT

FOR INQUIRIES PLEASE CONTACT:

**Peter Hay Halpert
phh@phhfineart.com
+1 646 220-8657**