FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONOR BACKMAN
DIORAMA
October 10 – November 9, 2013
Opening: Thursday, October 10, 6-8pm

Mixed Greens is pleased to present Conor Backman's first solo exhibition in New York. *Diorama* consists of new paintings and sculptures that continue Backman's engagement with representation, reproduction, origin, and translation.

The exhibition's title references both the contemporary interpretation of the word diorama as a framed, re-created model landscape, and the word's origin as a picture-viewing device developed by Louis Daguerre in the early 19th century. Daguerre, best known for inventing the daguerreotype process of photography, began his career as a painter. His dioramas marked a transition between painting and photography, combining double-sided painted screens and varying degrees of illumination from camera obscuras to produce a theatrical experience. These two understandings mark the starting point for Backman's show.

As with previous bodies of work, Backman is purposefully creating a space where materiality and illusion meet. In his "Painting Palettes," for instance, painting functions as both a noun and verb. Details of palettes used in former paintings are photographed, scaled up, and traced onto canvas. As these tracings are rendered in oil, the palette used to create them is located on the same surface. The perfunctory marks of the mixed palette sit alongside, and sometimes combine with, the represented gesture.

Other works within this exhibition speak to the diorama as a locus of information—a site spanning across history and geography. Paintings of citrus behind black Plexiglas refer to greenhouses and computer screens—poignant symbols of manufactured availability, exempt from seasonal restrictions. Backman alludes similarly to natural history museums, art history textbooks, and magazines as precursors to new technologies, smart phones, and personal computers. All are sources of amalgamated, decontextualized information.

Lastly, works draw from art historical discourse related to painterly and photochemical processes, referencing Daguerre's inventions. For example, Backman's paintings of caverns function as metaphors for the photographic dark room, while also pointing to cave dwellings as the site of humankind's earliest known paintings. The famed Shroud of Turin is an additional reference due to its complex assessment as either the burial cloth of Christ, the earliest known photograph, or a painted canvas. These multiple, layered interpretations are what drives Backman's practice.

Like the artists behind the creation of the Museum of Natural History's dioramas, where the margin between floor and wall (the 'tie-in') is essential in creating a transcendent illusion, Backman investigates a space in-between: Between image and object, illusion and reality. In doing so, the artist aims to address a range of issues from the dissemination and recontextualization of art on the internet, to the history of representation itself. Although artists have explored illusion in the portrayal of the world for hundreds of years, Backman shows us new ways to challenge perception today. His interest lies less in illusion itself and more in the spaces between two given physical and/or theoretical states.

Conor Backman (b.1988) recently relocated to Ridgewood, NY, from Richmond, VA, where he earned BFAs in Sculpture and Painting from VCU in 2011. His work has been included in group exhibitions at James Fuentes, NYC; Reynolds Gallery, Richmond, VA; Higher Pictures, NYC; Stadium, NYC; Shoshanawayne Gallery, Santa Monica, CA; and Saamlung in Hong Kong, among others. His most recent solo exhibition, The Other Real, took place at Nudashank Gallery in Baltimore, MD, in the spring of this year. Backman was co-owner of REFERENCE Art Gallery in Richmond, VA, from 2009-2012.