



Beaux Mendes, *Oma*, 2022. oil and charcoal on half-chalk ground on panel, 10 1/4 x 10 3/4".

BERLIN

Beaux Mendes

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For this exhibition, Beaux Mendes—a descendant of a long line of rabbis and Holocaust survivors—returned to their ancestral home of Germany in order to reckon with their inherited legacy. The LA-based artist painted in the Black Forest, where the Nazi philosopher Martin Heidegger kept his hut, as well as in the Elbe Valley, which inspired Caspar

David Friedrich, among other German Romantics. In an accompanying exhibition text, Mendes writes, “I’m returning to Frankfurt to paint [my grandmother’s] house and I think I may also paint myself.”

While this exhibition features no self-portraits in the conventional sense, Mendes’s small paintings, executed on nontraditional surfaces like wooden panels and muslin, instead do something uncanny in the Heideggerian sense, fusing metaphysical exploration with landscape excavation. This is not to say that the human body is totally absent; its form might be, but its absent presence figures into these rigorous, often dark-pastel examinations of place. *Oma*, 2022—titled after the affectionate term for grandmother in German—offers a homely cabin in the forest, the sloping ground in front of it animated with a slush of yellowish white. Here, as elsewhere, the thin washes of paint elicit a sense of dreamy, watery wonder.

In another untitled painting from 2023, is that a close-up of twisted tree trunks, or is that the buttocks of one nude body mounting another from behind? These haunted landscapes come encrypted in a mist of secrecy, and it is this mystery that sustains them, enabling them to linger on the walls of our minds. Perhaps you *can* go home again.

— Travis Jeppesen