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OPENING JANUARY 19TH, 6 – 8PM

Richard Hawkins *Hotel Suicide*

January 19th – February 23rd, 2018
8th Floor

In the mid- and late-aughts, Los Angeles-based artist Richard Hawkins created a series of paintings that combined several themes of his oeuvre—the male physique, desire both sated and unfulfilled, and the historically, culturally, and socially marginalized—in a series of paintings based on the clandestine yet widespread phenomenon of sex tourism in Thailand. Painted in candy-colored hues, Hawkins' scenes are set alternately in brothels and hotels, dual sites of exchange for his chosen subject matter. Hawkins rendered the prostitutes with exquisite skin and placid faces, whereas patrons are portrayed wrinkled and weathered to cartoonish degree. In some cases, either or both are afforded anonymity with compositions truncating figures to their torsos. The scenes are episodic and incidental, often relating to phases of the transaction at hand—idle displays of detached seduction and ravished hotel rooms.

For his fifth solo presentation at the gallery, Richard Hawkins presents *Hotel Suicide*, a collection of drawings and works on paper accompanying the most narrative and psychically charged painting in the series, initiated in 2007 and resumed ten years later: *And then come the dawn* (2017). In a series focused on exchange and connection, *Hotel Suicide* proffers a psychologically interior chapter, telegraphing loneliness and desolation. Two works on paper—*Expanding Horizon* and *Not Interested*—capture scenes from a bar, while small sketches in black acrylic, ink, and pencil all take place in an insulated hotel room (all works 2007). Repeating, in various compositions, a body collapsed in a bathroom, the sketches appear as much artists' studies as alternate plans of execution by the painting's subject, mimicking the ruminations of a suicidal mind.

In an effervescent style belying its subject matter, *And then come the dawn* portrays a suicide's aftermath: a hanging body, rendered faceless by the painting's composition; a dismantled chair, surrounded by three frenzied cats; a nightstand topped only with pill bottles and a roll of toilet paper. These sordid details are painted in an energetic hand and saturated palette, carrying traces of Bonnard and Matisse in the scene's vibrating passages of pattern and light. In *And then come the dawn*, as in other works by Hawkins, Hawkins muddles distinctions between high and low, applying high modernist strategies to depict illicit acts.

Hotel Suicide will be accompanied by the release of a publication of the same title. Richard Hawkins lives and works in Los Angeles. His work is included in the permanent collections of Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles; the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; the Williams College Museum of Art, Williamstown, MA; the Hessel Museum, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; the Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art, Oslo; and the Tate Collection, London.

For more information please visit www.greenenaftaligallery.com.