



**GOOD TO KNOW.FYI** presents **SAFE HOUSE**  
by **JOHN BARTLETT**

A virtual exhibition on Walter's Cube App + Online  
May 27<sup>th</sup>-June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020



John Bartlett, Image to the left: Parklife 2005, oil on canvas, 6 x 4 ft (72 x 48") Image to the right: BED, 2019, Oil on canvas, 5 x 4 ft (60 x 48")

World Wide Web, May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020. **GOOD TO KNOW** is pleased to announce **SAFE HOUSE**, the first online exhibition of painter John Bartlett, featuring paintings from 2005 to 2020. In response to the global shelter-in-place, social distancing and protective personal measures, **SAFE HOUSE** depicts scenes familiar to our current lifestyle exploring themes of solitude, confinement and the poetry of every day.

Through the years, Bartlett has depicted rooms haunted by traces of human presence and previous activity. Uninhabited interiors seemingly still and isolated from the outside world but filled with memories. Acknowledging the importance of solace, Good To Know shares these sentiments and is pleased to present this exhibition for viewers to enjoy from the comfort of their home throughout the duration of the quarantine period via Walter's Cube application and Walter's Viewing Room.

From the very start of his career, Bartlett has been focused on creating narrative paintings by producing works that oscillate between representation and abstraction. As Bartlett explains, *"[I am interested] in how paintings are constructed, how they are made. I sample different styles and visual language to create my own realities."*

His paintings range from history painting of the everyday to allegorical visions fused with darker themes and meditative tones. Although some of the chosen works for this exhibition were made over two decades ago, they explore timely issues that are now more present than ever; solitude, confinement and new norms of living.

The works that depict masked figures were made as a response to the 9/11 attacks. These paintings deal with threats from terrorism, germ warfare and general fears of environmental issues which felt palpable to the artist at that time. In 'FLIES', an isolated figure protects himself with mask and gloves, whilst in 'EXODUS' the protagonists are shielded out in gas masks as they move through a wooded landscape. These fears and uncertainties from external environmental factors outside our own control, prophetically illustrate the similar sentiments caused by the novel Covid-19 pandemic sweeping well across the globe. On "Flies" and "Exodus" Bartlett states these works *"are typical of my work process generally never minding the differences in subject matter. The painting grows through the adding and erasing of imagery until finally the overall image arrives. The narrative of the painting is ambiguous and the composition complex. The ambiguity is where I believe the strength lies, allowing the viewer to interpret on their terms."*

Opposed to the first set of paintings representing apocalyptic anxieties from external factors, the second body of work emphasizes one's interior world and sanctuary, depicting different personal spaces such as a bedroom, a living room, an art studio/workshop. These controlled spaces now carry new meaning and reveal deeper layers, as more than 90% of the population has been confined to their homes during quarantine. These interior spaces have become our new landscape changing the way we see, think and activate these spaces and blurring the lines and distinctions from the social, the private and the work realm. Although we are all obeying to this confinement within our own respective realities- inclusive of economic, social and personal differences-, these works serve to share this common experience we are all going through. And despite physical separation, a newfound universal solidarity is formed. As a society, we face adapting for today and for the future at the expense of what we intuitively yearn for; physical comfort, social consolation. These tests of nature, explore our internal world as well. And this is what Bartlett has been prophetically depicting since his paintings from 9/11.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

JOHN BARTLETT

SAFE HOUSE

CURATED BY GOOD TO KNOW

May 27<sup>th</sup>-June 27<sup>th</sup>

*SAFE HOUSE* is viewable online via the Walter's Cube Viewing Room and with a smartphone via the Walter's Cube free application

To visit the exhibition: <https://walterscube.com/>

For press, inquiries or sales please contact: [info@goodtoknow.fyi](mailto:info@goodtoknow.fyi)

### **ABOUT JOHN BARTLETT**

John Bartlett was born in London in 1960. He studied at the Royal Academy Schools, London from 1991-94. On leaving Art School he supported his Art Practice financially by working at the National Gallery, London. In 2013 he moved to Folkestone Kent with his partner and young son and has devoted his energies full-time to Art Projects since then.

Bartlett's work is held in private and public collections throughout the world. He is best known to date for his monumental work 'History Painting' (1993/4) which now forms an integral part of the Museum of London's permanent collection. This contentious work has received a great deal of media coverage in Britain over the years primarily because it depicts the 1990 Poll Tax Riots in Trafalgar Square. Alongside the MOL he has had large scale works bought by the V&A, Guildhall Art Gallery (Lon) and has a selection of drawings in the collection of the Royal Academy of Arts.

In 2012-13 the Guildhall Art Gallery held a mid-career retrospective of his work featuring over fifty of his paintings & drawings in an exhibition entitled 'London Sublime'. This show also featured the temporal work 'Rise of the Invisible' a 25 ft wall drawing installation that made reference to the 2011 London Riots.

Notable private collectors include Nicholas Penny - former Director of the National Gallery, London & Andrew Wilton - former Keeper of the British Collection at the Tate. Wilton curated the exhibition 'American Sublime' that travelled to the States in 2002.

### **ABOUT GOOD TO KNOW**

Good to Know is a curatorial collective by Alex Valls, Julianna Vezzetti and Juliana Steiner focused on creating site-responsive exhibitions in unique satellite locations with artist driven ideas.

[info@goodtoknow.fyi](mailto:info@goodtoknow.fyi)

[@good\\_to\\_know.fyi](https://www.instagram.com/good_to_know.fyi)

[www.goodtoknow.fyi](http://www.goodtoknow.fyi)