

A RETURN TO THE REC ROOM

BY MICHAEL SMITH



Secret Horror
by Michael Smith, 1980

MAY 16 – JUNE 21, 2025

Opening Reception:
Friday, May 16th, 8-11 PM

Performance by **Michael Smith**
Including **Baby Ikki's 50th Birthday Party**

Refreshments provided by
Kiss Wine
Illuminated Brew Works
Visitor

Soccer Club Club is delighted to announce *A Return to the Rec Room* by artist **Michael Smith**, curated by **Jay Sanders**.

Michael Smith has produced performance works, commercial television, promotional business video simulations, adult puppet shows, immersive installations, drawings and photographs, often in collaboration with other artists and directors such as Mike Kelley, Doug Skinner and Joshua White. His deadpan, pathos-laden style of humor draws on influences including 1960s comics Jackie Vernon, fellow Chicagoans Shelley Berman and Bob Newhart, actor-directors Buster Keaton and Jacques Tati, playwrights and authors Samuel Beckett, Alfred Jarry and Dale Carnegie and TV shows from his youth.

For five decades, Smith's groundbreaking work has pushed the limits of entertainment, comedy and art from within. With unconventional pacing, repetition, precise timing, subversive obtuseness, and a blurring of fiction and reality, Smith has plumbed the depths of American culture through his two performance personae, Mike and Baby Ikki. His work often lampoons the practices and promises of the entertainment industry, art world and American capitalism, exploring themes of fitting in, ambition, the obsolescence of "just past" motifs and tastes, failure and aging.

A Return to the Rec Room will feature a variety of Smith's work throughout the years, from the 1970's onward—videos, drawings, performance documentation, and installations.

This exhibition's opening coincides with the imminent release of Smith's career spanning 8-DVD boxset, *Mike's Box* (co-produced by ARTPIX and Moikai), a comprehensive collection of work from the 70's to the present available to the public on May 30th. The boxset is accompanied by a richly illustrated 128-page catalog with an essay by Tim Griffin, and documentation from exhibitions at international venues like The Tate Modern, London, MoMA and The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York City and the Museo Jumex in Mexico City, as well as filmed conversations between the artist, curators and collaborators.

MICHAEL SMITH (born 1951 in Chicago, IL) is an American artist known for his performance, video, and installation works. His early performances took place at avant-garde venues in New York City including **The Kitchen**, **Franklin Furnace**, and **Artists Space**, as well as iconic downtown clubs such as **CBGB** and the **Mudd Club**. He eventually performed in other, more mainstream clubs and institutions, such as **The Bottom Line**, **Carolines**, the **Whitney Museum**, and the **Museum of Modern Art**. He produced videos for **Saturday Night Live** and **PBS** and a comedy special for **Cinemax**. In more recent years, he has exhibited at the **Metropolitan Museum of Art**, **New Museum**, **Museum of Contemporary Art**, **Los Angeles**, and **Tate Modern**, among others. Smith has received many fellowships and honors from notable organizations, including the **National Endowment for the Arts**, **Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation**, the **John Simon Guggenheim Foundation**, **New York Foundation for the Arts**, and the **Herb Alpert Award in the Arts**. A career-spanning retrospective DVD box, **MIKE'S BOX**, will be released on May 30 via **Jim O'Rourke's Drag City** imprint **Moikai**.