

Petzel

JON PYLYPCHUK

Waiting for the Next Nirvana

January 9 – February 29, 2020

Opening Reception: Thursday, January 9th, 6–8pm

456 West 18th Street

Petzel Gallery is pleased to present *Waiting for the Next Nirvana*, an exhibition of new paintings by Canada-born, Los Angeles-based artist Jon Pylypchuk. The show will be on view from January 9 to February 29, 2020 and marks Pylypchuk's first solo exhibition at the gallery's Chelsea location in nine years.

An expression and result of Pylypchuk's past and current years as a rock musician (he is a founder of KISK, the KISS cover band) and as an artist, the paintings featured in *Waiting for the Next Nirvana* are imbued with nostalgia, anticipation, energy, confidence, and, foremost, seductive and rebellious emotion. The works, with titles such as *I don't need flowers, I just need you*, *Basketball season is over cupcake!*, and *Your goodness keeps this badass begging* are made of fabric, wood, glue, watercolor, glitter, black cue balls, and polyurethane, among other materials, and evoke feelings of existential angst.

"Guns n Roses took a swing at the establishment in 1987 with *Appetite for Destruction*, and garbage cans across the Southland were loaded with hairspray canisters that would never be used again," says Pylypchuk. But "by 1991, in four short years Guns n Roses had become the establishment. Lush orchestration, epic songs, backup singers, extra musicians to fill out the sound, Axl Rose seated behind a piano...Long gone were the days he would dive off stage to punch someone in the face who'd pissed him off. Now he wouldn't even go on stage until he 'felt right' and everything was perfect." So much for Grunge; much less teen spirit.

"I don't think mainstream rock music has been shook up, re-envisioned, made exciting again," says Pylypchuk, who is also known by his alter ego Rudy Bust. "By 1994 Kurt Cobain blew his brains out. Maybe it was heroin, maybe it was stomach pain, maybe it was fear about where music was going. In any case, that ended it and we were left with Creed and Nickelback and a host of others who profited on sounding like safe substitutes."

Pylypchuk stopped trying to be a rock star in 1995 because, he says, "I wasn't good at writing songs. Instead, making things without thinking, pulling things out of the nothingness, gluing shoelaces and scraps of things to paper and making them talk, documenting my anxieties over mortality was where I landed. Art had no rules and still shouldn't. Things weren't perfect then and they aren't perfect now. That time in my life was my first nirvana."

For this exhibition Pylypchuk has conjured a body of work that has been marinating for 20 years. "I have been sitting in the studio for the past year looking at my paintings and asking myself 'Could I be the next Nirvana?'"

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Pylypchuk is a multidisciplinary artist who works in painting, sculpture, installation and video. Working with simple materials (fake fur, wood, fabric, sheet metal, beer cans, electric light bulbs, polyurethane foam, etc.), Pylypchuk reinterprets the collage and bricolage practices derived from Art Brut. Often his 'creatures' draw upon the animal world to explore the frailty of human existence and social relationships. Pylypchuk's characters seem to have lost their way, appearing in a wounded condition, harmed by either themselves or by others. They combine a hearty dose of cynicism and anger at the unfairness of it all with a wicked sense of survivalist humor.

Born in 1972 in Winnipeg, Canada, Pylypchuk studied at the University of Manitoba School of Art, where he co-founded the collective known as the Royal Art Lodge in 1996 with fellow artists Michael Dumontier, Marcel Dzama, Neil Farber, Drue Langlois and Adrian Williams. Its members were mostly graduates from the University of Manitoba, Canada who were united in their outsider status and who liked to break the unwritten rules of artistic production. They sent childlike drawings to the National Gallery of Canada, suggesting they exhibit them, and held all-night drawing sessions. In 1998 he moved to Los Angeles, where he is currently based.

Since coming to international attention, Pylypchuk has exhibited in New York, Düsseldorf, Münster, London, Los Angeles, Cleveland, Paris, San Francisco, Miami, Tokyo, Montreal, Seoul, Guadalajara and St. Petersburg. His works are in the collections of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles; The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; The Saatchi Collection, London; The Museum of Old and New Art, Berriedale; and the Whitney Museum, New York.

Petzel Gallery is located at 456 West 18th Street New York, NY 10011. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday from 10:00 AM–6:00 PM. For press inquiries, please contact Ricky Lee at ricky@petzel.com, or call (212) 680-9467.