

## *Utopia*

November 26 – January 7, 2022

Opening Friday, November 26, 11 – 7PM

Peres Projects is pleased to present *Utopia*, a group exhibition with works by Sholto Blissett, Harm Gerdes, Nicholas Grafia, Donna Huanca, Bayrol Jiménez, Shuang Li, Cajsja von Zeipel and Ziping Wang.

This exhibition explores imagery of mysticism as a vehicle for understanding the complexity and ambiguity of contemporary life and our unstable realities. While the title of the exhibition makes reference to Thomas More's 16th century book, *De optimo reipublicae statu deque nova insula Utopia*, the works also consider the Greek origins of the word Utopia - "ou" meaning "not" and "topos" meaning place or nowhere.

An earlier title of More's satire was "A little, true book, not less beneficial than enjoyable, about how things should be in a state and about the new island Utopia". This emphasis on the affective experience of the text (as enjoyable), is taken up by the exhibition, which focuses on mysticism as an altered state of insight and transformation.

Works by von Zeipel, Huanca, Jiménez and Grafia encourage embodied responses, inducing mystic inner experiences. These artists approach mysticism as speculative systems, with a set of ideals and spiritual connections rather than narrative approaches. The sensorial and emotional properties of these works examine capacities for self-creation and reinvention.

World building as a function of mysticism is also a motif that runs through the works included in *Utopia*. The imagery in Blissett, Gerdes, Li and Wang's works probe the boundaries of their surroundings as a means for understanding and creating environments. These visions of the world emphasize affective atmospheres, referencing the nowhere that is inherent to utopia.

Mysticism is shared by many traditions and religions, which demonstrates its endurance. These works which span painting, video and sculpture consider the influence that mysticism holds over truth. The artists participating in the exhibition explore these properties and interpret them in their own alternate ecologies and queer futures.

Sholto Blissett (b. 1996 in Salisbury, UK) lives and works in London. He read Geography at the University of Durham before undertaking an MA in painting at the Royal College of Art, London. Recent exhibitions include Nicola Vassell Gallery, New York, White Cube, London, Unit London, London and Saatchi Gallery, London.

Harm Gerdes (b. 1994 in Darmstadt, DE) lives and works between Dusseldorf and Darmstadt. In 2020, he graduated from the Düsseldorf Kunstakademie. Gerdes' paintings are abstract studies of color, composition and materiality. Viewed from a distance or digitally, they appear almost like exports from the latest, super high bit video games. He recently had his first solo exhibition at Peres Projects.

Nicholas Grafia (b. 1990 in Angeles City, PH) completed his MFA at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf in 2019. Recent solo exhibitions include KOENIG 2 by\_robbygreif, Vienna, Kunsthal Aarhus, Aarhus, Anderson's Contemporary, Copenhagen and group exhibitions at the Museum Ludwig, Cologne, Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw and the Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen Düsseldorf in Dusseldorf. Grafia had his first solo exhibition at Peres Projects in 2021. Upcoming solo exhibitions include the fiebach minninger in Cologne, the Düsseldorf Sponsorship Award and he will also participate in group exhibitions at the KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin, The Contemporary Art Museum of Luxembourg and Copenhagen Contemporary.

Donna Huanca (b. 1980 in Chicago, US) studied at Städelschule, Frankfurt and was the recipient of the DAAD Artist Frankfurt and a Fulbright research grant. Recent solo exhibitions include OBSIDIAN LADDER, curated by Olivia Marciano at the Marciano Foundation, Los Angeles, LENGUA LLORONA, curated by Aukje Lepoutre Ravn at Copenhagen Contemporary, Copenhagen, PIEDRA QUEMADA, curated by Stella Rollig at the Belvedere Museum, Vienna, the Yuz Museum, Shanghai and Peres Projects, Berlin.

Bayrol Jiménez (b. 1984 in Oaxaca, MX) lives and works in Oaxaca. He studied at the National School of Painting, Sculpture and Engraving, La Esmeralda, and at the Villa Arson National Superior School of Art in Nice, France. Recent solo exhibitions include Páramo, Guadalajara, 14a, Hamburg, Metro Northshields, Newcastle and Dukan Gallery, Leipzig. He has also participated in group exhibitions at the Foundry Darling, Montreal, Museo de Arte Carrillo, Mexico City, SeMA Nanji, Seoul and National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.

Shuang Li (b. 1990 in Wuyi Mountains, CN) received her MA in media studies from New York University in 2014. Li has had solo exhibitions at Cherish, Geneva, Callies, Berlin, Peres Projects, Berlin and SLEEPCENTER in New York. She has also participated in numerous institutional exhibitions including at the Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève, Geneva, Kunstverein Bielefeld, Bielefeld, UCCA Dune, Qinhuangdao, Times Museum, Guangzhou, Tai Kwun Contemporary, Hong Kong, Centre Pompidou, Paris, in collaboration with the Mao Jihong Foundation, Taikang Space, Beijing, Flux Factory, New York, K11 art museum, Shanghai and at Oberlin College in Oberlin, US.

Cajsa von Zeipel (b. 1983 in Gothenburg, SE) lives and works in New York, US. Her work delves into identity, gender, queerness and normativity. Recent solo exhibitions include Arcadia Missa London, London, Strap-on Projects, New York, Västerås Konstmuseum, Vasteras and Cherish, Geneva. She has also participated in group exhibitions at the Kristinehamns Konstmuseum, Kristinehamn, Heritage Museum, Seattle, Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, Dusseldorf, Copenhagen Contemporary, Copenhagen and Moderna Museet, Stockholm.

Ziping Wang (b. 1995 in Shenyang, CN) lives and works in Shenyang. She holds an MFA from the Pratt Institute, New York and a BFA from the Rhode Island School of Design. Recent solo exhibitions include Unit London, London, WT Foundation, Kyiv, Galerie Marguo, Paris and Gessoisland Artspace, Shenyang. She has also participated in group exhibitions at Yinchuan Museum of Contemporary Art, Yinchuan and Phillips, Hong Kong.

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Please note that attendance will be subject to all local COVID-19 related requirements at that time. We will publish updated info prior to the event.