

Harm Gerdes
Synthetic Spirits
June 10 – July 8, 2022
Opening Friday, June 10, 11–8PM

Peres Projects is pleased to present *Synthetic Spirits*, Harm Gerdes' (b. 1994 in Darmstadt, DE) second solo exhibition at the Berlin gallery.

Gerdes' painting practice is process-based and experimental, a push and pull between spontaneous and methodical approaches which pool together on each canvas. This exhibition exemplifies his experimentation in operations/ procedures – bringing a period of half a year of work together in the gallery space.

His process begins with intuitive hand drawn sketches, which he then digitizes to refine and develop the composition before transferring them back to canvas. The contrast between control and spontaneity is the thread throughout the process. By pouring a fluid acrylic material and tipping the canvas, he allows the mixture to run towards gravity and create textures and compositions out of his ability to plan or control and then switches to using an airbrush which requires focus and direction.

Shifting between instinctive movements and reflexive modes, Gerdes works intuitively, developing his visual plane as he works rather than working toward a predetermined final painting. Drawing from influences such as Hilma af Klint and Giorgio De Chirico, this 'in-betweenness' in his work opens up a space for mysticism and the uncanny – considering the spiritual needs within our extended present.

The artist conceptualizes the work itself as an autonomous being, which experiences shifting relationships as the painting moves between spaces and is then recontextualized according to the bodies and surroundings in its constellation. In this exhibition, the artist proposes that each painting has its own spirit and character, raising questions of autonomy, agency and the sacred.

Almost every part of the work is created from a synthetic material. Working with acrylic paints and a polyester canvas, Gerdes intentionally pushes back against the traditional and canonical medium, and his own training in oil painting. In doing so, he insists on addressing and reflecting on the present, and creates paintings that responds to our material conditions.

The artist describes looking at the planet from above, and how visible it is to see the few areas we leave untouched, while the rest are structured by us, "wherever there are humans, there is so much pollution, so much plastic". Gerdes compares his paintings to this landscape – much of the composition is ordered, but in pouring the liquid acrylic across the canvas, the physicality and movement of the paint lends an elemental quality.

The paintings are meant to be encountered by the viewer as a crude source – of nourishment that feeds the mind and moderates the connection between the psyche and the physical. What we absorb from Gerdes' works is an experimental spirit, insisting that we encounter and grapple with our present.

This is Gerdes' second solo exhibition with Peres Projects in our Berlin gallery. In addition, Gerdes has exhibited in a number of group exhibitions including *Werden: From Michaelangelo to*, Tiroler Landesmuseen, Innsbruck, *There is no sea but the sea*, Meyer Riegger, Karlsruhe, *Klasse Katharina Grosse*, Kunstverein Lippe, *Mit Kunst für die Kunst*, Kunsthalle Darmstadt and at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf in Germany. In 2020, he graduated from the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf.

For further information and sales inquiries, please contact Javier Peres (jp@peresprojects.com), Benoît Wolfrom (ben@peresprojects.com), or call at +49 (0) 30 275 950770.

For artist information please contact Nick Koenigsnecht (nick@peresprojects.com).

For press and media inquiries, please contact media@peresprojects.com or +49 (0) 30 275 950770.

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.