

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Aaron Garber-Maikovska
Cushion of Air

Blum & Poe, Tokyo
March 19–May 7, 2022

Tokyo, Japan, March 3, 2022—Blum & Poe is pleased to present *Cushion of Air*, the gallery's second solo exhibition with Los Angeles-based artist Aaron Garber-Maikovska.

The work presented in *Cushion of Air* allusively depicts Garber-Maikovska in a state of performative movement wherein he channels the human condition through his gestures captured and recorded in ink and oil on fluted polypropylene boards. Furthering the artist's explorations of communication, interpersonal connection, urban sprawl, and the body, the pieces that comprise this exhibition act as memorandums or physical documentations of the visual language that Garber-Maikovska has developed throughout his oeuvre—growing beyond, but keeping the codes of, the motions enshrined in his early time-based performances.

When speaking on the process of painting, Garber-Maikovska uses words such as “excavate” and “reveal” to describe how he achieves a finished work; he is a facilitator of the final composition, activating the process of art making from a place outside of himself. However, in tapping into the action of painting as made available through the collective unconscious, he is also accessing reflections on the cultural moment in which his body exists. Garber-Maikovska points to the contrast between nature and capitalism—experiencing liminality in the parking lot of a Panda Express that encroaches on a yet-undeveloped expanse of nature, for example—as a core tension influencing his painting and performance.

While elements of Garber-Maikovska's practice tap into latent knowledge, he has also consciously developed specific conditions, that act as a scientific control would, within his ongoing somatic studies. Each painting begins in the same way. The backs of the artist's translucent substrates are painted white. The fronts are then drawn upon with a black marker that the artist fills with ink. The resulting black lines set the subject for each work: formally delineating space within the piece, sometimes acting as a written language, and occasionally depicting a facial profile. Atop these prepared vessels, caulking guns filled with paint, ridged 3D-printed tops for paint tubes, and homemade blocks of oil are used to create different marks. Functionally, these “pathways” of paint appear on the polypropylene as the dictated dots and dashes of morse code would on a page.

The application of and interactions between colors matter just as much to Garber-Maikovska as the scraping away of pigment to reveal the board underneath. The artist meticulously cultivates levels of transparencies in his oils, using them to both expose and construct the interiors of his compositions. He will often scrape away a swatch of his carefully placed paint, a motion that he calls “moving through,” in order to create formal contrast as well as a moment within each painting that unveils his materials. This calling of attention to the materiality of the work also signals back to the process of its making—further emphasizing the performance-based nature of Garber-Maikovska's practice. In the works of *Cushion of Air*, the medium-specific qualities of the artist's painting practice synthesize the theatrics of his performance work, non-traditional materials, and the social concerns of a post-postmodern society.

BLUM & POE

Los Angeles, New York, Tokyo

Aaron Garber-Maikovska (b. 1978, Washington D.C.) lives and works in Los Angeles. His work is represented in the collections of the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington D.C.; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA; Pérez Art Museum, Miami, FL; and the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN.

About Blum & Poe

Blum & Poe was founded by Tim Blum and Jeff Poe in Santa Monica in September of 1994 as a space to show local and international contemporary art in all media. Blum's extensive experience in the Japanese art world combined with Poe's keen knowledge of emerging artists in Los Angeles resulted in an international program of influential artists. Throughout a twenty-seven-year history, Blum & Poe has shaped the trajectory of contemporary art by championing artists at all stages of their careers—cultivating the lineages that run between emerging and established practices and working with artist estates to generate new discourse surrounding historical work. Currently, Blum & Poe represents fifty artists and nine estates from sixteen countries worldwide.

In 2003 the gallery moved to a larger space in Culver City, and in 2009 Blum & Poe purchased and renovated its current 22,000-square-foot complex on La Cienega Boulevard. In this location the gallery has since staged museum-caliber surveys, examining the historical work of such movements as the Japanese Mono-ha school (2012); the Korean Dansaekhwa monochrome painters (2014); the European postwar movement CoBrA (2015); Japanese art of 1980s and '90s (2019); a rereading of Brazilian Modernism (2019); and a revisionist take on the 1959 MoMA exhibition, *New Images of Man* (2020). To produce these exhibitions, Blum & Poe has worked with celebrated curators such as Alison M. Gingeras, Sofia Gotti, Joan Kee, and Mika Yoshitake.

In 2014, Blum & Poe opened galleries in New York and Tokyo to focus on intimately scaled projects in new contexts. These expansions tie into the gallery's wide-reaching program that includes exhibitions, lectures, performance series, screenings, and an annual art book fair at its base in Los Angeles. Blum & Poe's publishing division democratically circulates its program through original scholarship and accessible media ranging from academic monographs, audio series, magazines, to artists' books. In 2020, the gallery launched Blum & Poe Broadcasts, an online platform showcasing artists' projects in conjunction with physical installations or as standalone digital endeavors.

Across the three global locations, Blum & Poe prioritizes environmental and community stewardship in all operations. In 2015, Blum & Poe was certified as an Arts:Earth Partnership (AEP) green art gallery in Los Angeles and consequently became one of the first green certified galleries in the United States. The gallery is also a member of the Gallery Climate Coalition, which works to facilitate a more sustainable commercial art world and reduce the industry's collective carbon footprint. Blum & Poe is committed to fostering inclusive and equitable communities both in their physical and online spaces and believes that everybody should have equal access to creating and engaging with contemporary art.

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