

TWO PROPOSALS TOWARD THE FORMATION OF A NEW ART SCHOOL

Dan Levenson

6 August – 10 September, 2022

**Praz-Delavallade** Los Angeles is pleased to present *Two Proposals Toward the Formation of a New Art School* opening August 6 and running through September 10, 2022. The imaginary State Art Academy, Zürich (SKZ), forms the basis of **Dan Levenson's** practice as an artist. Through performance, video, installation, objects and paintings, Levenson expounds on the curriculum and philosophy of an institution that, although never existed, reflects on art institutions both past and present.

The first proposal, "SKZ Kindergarten Maquette," takes the form of a miniature kindergarten classroom, itself an artwork, that is based on live interactive performances Levenson exhibited with children aged 2-9 in 2019 and 2020. The maquette contains miniature scale versions of the components of the live performances: flat-pack modernist children's easels and mannequins wearing painting tunics. The mirrored walls of the classroom maquette suggest infinite expansion. Kindergarteners are gently introduced to the same strict formalist principles which form the basis of the advanced graduate program. An accompanying video documents the live performances.

The second proposal, "Chance Operations," consists of a second miniature classroom and an accompanying board game. The classroom furniture are modernist geometric desks and chairs which come apart and pack flat. Designed for advanced students, each student would be given a board game with dice that have each side painted a different color. With a roll of the dice, the color of both the classroom furniture and the paintings is determined.

The exhibition includes two new paintings by **Dan Levenson** representing student artwork from his imaginary art school. The design of the paintings follows the same principles as both the kindergarten lesson and the advanced graduate classroom, giving the entire exhibition an overall sense of unity.

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His recent work concerns the Kindergarten attached to the imaginary art school. "SKZ Children's Painting Workshop" is an experiment in collaboration with children, presented as installations and performances. The workshop draws inspiration from Friedrich Fröbel's original 1837 concept of the Kindergarten: a garden that promotes natural learning and creative growth. Children are invited into an installation environment with sculptural painting easels, hand-painted painting smocks, and brightly colored banners. Children paint on large abstract silkscreened coloring-book pages. Their interactions with the printed composition invite reflection on creativity and freedom.

P R A Z  
D E L A V A L L A D E

**Dan Levenson** (b. 1972, New York, NY, lives and works in Los Angeles) is a visual artist working in installation, performance, video, painting, and sculpture. His work addresses issues of subjectivity, education, creativity and freedom and takes the form of artifacts rescued from the ruins of an imaginary art school: the State Art Academy, Zürich (its initials in Swiss-German are SKZ). As a painter, he follows the strict formalist pedagogy of his imaginary school: geometrically dividing metrically sized canvases to create abstract compositions. He expands on the story through performance, installation and video. Levenson has taught performative drawing lessons taken from the school's curriculum at the Hammer Museum, American Jewish University, USC's Roski School of Art, and the Saas-Fee Summer Institute in Berlin, Germany. He has exhibited at The Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Vielmetter Los Angeles; Honor Fraser, Los Angeles; Praz-Delavallade, Paris and Los Angeles; de boer Gallery, Los Angeles; PARTICIPANT INC, NYC; LAXART, Los Angeles; White Columns, NYC; and Vox Populi, Philadelphia, PA. He has an upcoming exhibition with James Fuentes. He is the recipient of a Pollock/Krasner grant and Yaddo and MacDowell Fellowships, among other awards.

**Praz-Delavallade** has a longstanding relationship with both American and European artists whose practices span a variety of mediums. The gallery was founded 1995 in Paris with an inaugural exhibition that included work by Paul McCarthy, Mike Kelley, Richard Petitbon, Jim Shaw, and Benjamin Weisman. In 1997, Praz-Delavallade was part of a burgeoning art scene in the 13th arrondissement on the eastern side of Paris, along with Air de Paris, Almine Rech, Art: Concept, Jennifer Flay, and Emmanuel Perrotin. Due to its strong connections with artists in Los Angeles, the gallery was known for bringing an international program to the growing Paris art scene, by featuring artists such as Sam Durant, Jim Isermann, John Miller, Analia Saban, and Marnie Weber, among others. In 2010, the Paris gallery moved to its current location at 5 rue des Haudriettes in the Marais and has continued its support of Los Angeles based artists by exhibiting a new generation that includes Matthew Brandt, Heather Cook, Nathan Mabry, Joe Reihisen, Ry Rocklen, Amanda Ross-Ho, and Brian Wills alongside European artists such as Soufiane Ababri, Philippe Decrauzat, Pierre Ardouvin, Thomas Fougérol, and Fabien Mérelle. In the fall of 2016, Praz-Delavallade opened a new outpost at 6150 Wilshire Boulevard—on the renowned thoroughfare in Miracle Mile right across from the Los Angeles County Museum of Art—in an effort to create a bridge between the two cities it calls home.