

**Navid Nuur**  
*STEP BY STEP*

Bleibtreustraße 15/16, 10623 Berlin  
4 November – 23 December 2022  
Opening: Friday, 4 November, 6 – 8 pm

*Step by step*

*Let's improvise digital mantras!  
Doubt into destiny!  
Filling the pores of the studio  
with a musical smell.*

*Its flakes and scales  
are collected  
collaged  
and turned into a current.*

*While mining my memory  
for marbling manoeuvres  
surrendering to the final  
silent stir.*

*Must skim colours!  
from its trendy too-friendly froth!  
Only then to be fondled with  
virgin tools.*

*Still we saunter on a path  
paved by painters from the past.  
Challenging myself to tread  
only on the moss between.*

*Step by step*

– Navid Nuur, 2022

Galerie Max Hetzler is pleased to present the solo exhibition *STEP BY STEP* by **Navid Nuur**, on view at Bleibtreustraße 15/16, in Berlin.

Uniting new and recent works, the exhibition outlines the artist's life-long fascination and ongoing exploration with marbling. From a young age, Nuur felt a spiritual power emanating from marble, always questioning why it was lingering in the background, in the form of decorative inlays or marbled manuscript bindings, rather than being centred as a pure artistic form. This investigation of assumed truths is central to Nuur's practice: by questioning preconceived ideas, the artist probes (un)conscious thought for the small, nondescript processes in our material world.

The exhibition spans back to Nuur's early experimentations with marbling and its visual qualities. In his large-scale painting *Untitled*, 2015, the intricate whirling pattern of marble is emulated with gesso, a paint mixture traditionally used as a primer for canvasses. Presenting us with a prepared, yet technically unfinished surface, the artist leaves room for our own imagination to project ideas onto the canvas, which remains caught in a liminal, 'in-between' state. The same introspection can be found in a series of works on paper, *When Meaning gets marbled*, 2015, where Nuur generated works that refer to the long tradition of 'marbled paper', a material which historically served as a backdrop for sacred texts in both Eastern and Western cultures. Here, the artist employed liquid graphite, a medium which acts like ink but appears like pencil when dried, blurring the boundaries between different media to present marbled paper in a new light.

Nuur's in-depth exploration of marbling in recent years led to the creation of a new body of work, titled *Mono no aware ness*. Evolving out of a journey compared by the artist to 'travels on the water', using only intuition as his compass, the result is an ocean of colour and movement, with swirling lines shifting and melding under the viewer's gaze. Carefully planned yet open to chance, the present works are the result of a laborious and time-consuming process. Working with multiple layers of paint, Nuur suspends each colour coat in a clear liquid, which he manually manipulates with induced vibrations and specifically crafted tools. Each layer of paint is then transposed onto a concave metal plate. After multiple rounds of paint application, the numerous layers lose their individuality, merging into a symposium of chromaticity. Bordering on coincidence but consciously crafted, this series of works captures fleeting moments of time in solid form. Nuur felt this duality – the stillness of transience – reflected in written form in the Japanese term '*mono no aware*'. Translating to 'the pathos of things' or 'an empathy toward things', while also encompassing the English term 'aware', this idiom lends the works their title.



Navid Nuur, *Mono no aware ness*, 2010–2022, Photo: jhoeko

Alongside this new body of work, a series of 'Wind Maps' are presented. These visual diagrams are used by the artist as a starting point for the marbled works. The sketches, made on transparent paper, indicate the colour palette, stroke movements of water, and the tools that were used for the individual layers of paint. Like musical improvisation, these maps are created out of the artist's stream of unconscious thoughts, acting like a guiding force in an unpredictable artistic process, which is itself entirely exposed to the internal workings of colour and material transformation. Accompanying the exhibition, the poem *STEP BY STEP* was written by Nuur following the production of his first marbled works, acting as a lyrical reflection of his immersive time in the studio.

Click [here](#) for a video of Navid Nuur in his studio, working on this recent body of work.

**Navid Nuur** (\*1976, Teheran) lives and works in The Hague, Netherlands. Nuur studied at the Piet Zwart Institute, Rotterdam and Plymouth University. Nuur's work has been the subject of solo exhibitions at international institutions including the Kunstmuseum Den Haag, The Hague; Marta Herford Museum, Herford (both 2020); NDSM Werf, Amsterdam (2019); Be-Part, Platform for Contemporary Art, Waregem (2017); DCA Dundee Contemporary Arts; Trafó House of Contemporary Arts, Budapest (both 2014); Bonnefanten Museum, Maastricht; Parasol Unit, London (both 2013); Matadero, Madrid (2012); Kunst Halle Sankt Gallen (2011); Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst, Ghent; Kunsthalle Fridericianum, Kassel; and De Hallen Museum, Haarlem (all 2009). Works by Navid Nuur are held in major public collections including the Bonnefanten Museum, Maastricht; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem; Kunsthaus Zürich; Neuer Berliner Kunstverein, Berlin; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst, Ghent; and the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, among others.

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4 November – 23 December 2022

#### **Darren Almond**

*Distant Silence*

Bleibtreustraße 45, 10623

Window Gallery, Goethestraße 2/3, 10623

4 November – 23 December 2022

*BodyLand, curated by Lauren Taschen*  
Goethestraße 2/3, 10623

11 November 2022 – 14 January 2023

**Hans Hartung**

Potsdamer Straße 77-87, 10785

Paris:

26 November 2022 – 5 January 2023

**Raymond Hains**

*Affiches Lacérées / Torn Posters*  
57, rue du Temple, 75004

London:

9 November 2022 – 7 January 2023

**Grace Weaver**

*TRASH-SCAPES*  
41 Dover Street, W1S 4NS

Marfa:

25 May – 4 December 2022

**Albert Oehlen**

*Sculptures and Works on Paper*  
1976 Antelope Hills Road, TX 79843

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