

## PRESS RELEASE

**John Dilg**  
**Leaving the New World**

**January 14 – February 18, 2023**  
**Opening on Friday, January 13, 6 – 9 pm**  
**Lichtenfelsgasse 5, A-1010 Vienna**

**Artist Presentation: John Dilg speaking about his work**  
**Friday, January 13, from 7 – 8 pm**

Galerie Eva Presenhuber is delighted to announce the second solo exhibition by the American artist John Dilg.

John Dilg's new old-school paintings in his exhibition *Leaving the New World* navigate taxonomies of painted forms derived from found images and his memory of the American landscape. These paintings variously depict trees, tree stumps, fractal regrowth, steep-faced mountains, lakes, waterfalls, moons, and a tornado. These images collectively suggest a place that absorbs time and its changes with a calm, sentient alertness. While they reference the landscape through their image forms, they also reveal painting as landscape through their process, as the thin canvas with its visible weave becomes the terrain in which paint is affixed. The gentle chroma—from earth and cedar to pale viridian and steely gray—is carefully applied with an open surface dry-brush scumble. These paintings emit an internal glow, fluidly transporting us to vast realms, temporal and atemporal, and propelling a psychological journey through archetypal associations. Dilg's paintings seduce the viewer with their formal specificity and craft and the varied art references they conjure. Memory provides the forms and compositional relationships. All the paintings look back at the viewer, quietly confident of their own vitality. He confines himself to a narrow range of tones and temperatures, with the subtlety seen in the paintings of Morandi, Klee, Pissarro, and Vuillard.

These works unavoidably speak to the ecological challenges to earth and climate change in particular. They evince survival, even as human activity seems relentlessly determined to destroy the future. In a way Dilg expresses a sublime tempered by stoic resignation, the viewpoint of an Old World romantic artist but in 2022, after two centuries of America's despoliation of its wilderness heritage and its recent quixotic efforts to reach the stars. With their melancholic loss of arcadia and calm rejection of the illusion of America's manifest destiny, his paintings find their home in the sublime of wonder and danger, such as is found in Caspar David Friedrich, a perspective that places civilization's inevitable follies within the awesome scale of nature. Dilg's particular fusion of romanticism and modernism evokes a space age Gothic, making visible both the vitality and fragility of the planet.

Dilg hints at prognostication through the stars, whose light we experience eons after its emission. These paintings don't explain what is being foretold, whether the future of a planet or the life of the universe or even something personal. Dilg's own five-decade quest is revealed now in these inspired, enlightened paintings that just now reach our eyes.

*Franklin Evans*

John Dilg was born in 1945 in Evanston, IL, US, and received a BFA from the Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, RI, US. He is the recipient of a Fulbright Grant to India, a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship, and three residencies at the YADDO Foundation, Saratoga Springs, NY, US. Dilg's work is represented in the public collections of institutions including the Arkansas Arts Center, Little Rock, AR, US; the Figge Museum of Art, Davenport, IA, US; the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, Chicago, IL, US; and Museu d'Art Contemporani Vicente Aguilera Cerni, Villafamés, ES.

For further information, please contact Katharina Zimmer ([k.zimmer@presenhuber.com](mailto:k.zimmer@presenhuber.com)).

For press images and information, please contact David Ulrichs PR ([press@presenhuber.com](mailto:press@presenhuber.com), +49 176 5033 0135).