

Jeremy Demester

Ram Muay

First Floor, 41 Dover Street, London W1S 4NS

19 January – 25 February 2023

Opening: Thursday, 19 January, 6 – 8 pm

The mystery of things – where is it?

Why doesn't it come out

To show us at least that it's mystery?

What do the river and the tree know about it?

And what do I, who am no more than they, know about

– Alberto Caeiro (Fernando Pessoa),
The Keeper of Sheep, XXXIX

Ram Muay is a ritual dance performed by muay Thai fighters prior to their bout, to pay respect to their teachers. The artist salutes his mentors, who put him on the path to mastery and grace. **Jeremy Demester's** (b. 1988) exhibition embodies this gesture, visually translating the salutation into painting and ceramics.

At the root of this new series is a reflection on nature derived from the fantastic colours of Arnold Böcklin's symbolist landscapes, Fernando Pessoa's poem *The Keeper of Sheep*, Marguerite Yourcenar's *The Abyss* or Colette's *Green Wheat* and its sensual descriptions of the smells, colours and lights of Brittany.

Through literature, Demester finds delight and freedom in the face of nature: paying attention to delicate leaves, fragrant flowers, abundant fruits, and how closely we are interwoven with nature, united within a single substance. Literature and art are both the vessels of this harmony, and the doors through which we gain access to it.

Like guardians of the senses, large earthenware jars with organic and ageless shapes are poised to collect and spread the treasures offered by art and nature. Their own set of senses allows them to feel the paintings we look at, where patterns sprout and grow in multiple layers of vibrant colours, overlapping each other, bewildering the eye as it seeks depth.

As we move from canvas to canvas, a structure emerges; bodies appear and dissolve into abstraction; shapes and forces find balance in intuitive brushstrokes. We witness the genesis of a narrative, in which a struggle is resolved through eurhythmy.



Jeremy Demester, *Ram Muay*, 2022

In *Ram Muay*, Demester returns to figuration, marking a turning point in his practice and completing a cycle initiated in 2017 with *Fire Walk With Me*, a period of experimentation that took him to the most abstract frontiers of the landscape genre. This exhibition is a salutation after the fight.

Jeremy Demester (1988, Digne), lives and works between France and Ouidah, Benin. Demester's work has been presented in institutional solo and group exhibitions, including at Fondation Zinsou, Ouidah (2021 and 2015); MUba Eugène Leroy, Tourcoing (2019); Stiftung zur Förderung zeitgenössischer Kunst in Weidingen (2018); Château Malromé, Saint André-du-Bois (2018); Musée d'art moderne et contemporain de Saint-Étienne (2016); Palais de l'École des Beaux-Arts, Paris (2016); and Palais des Beaux-Arts, Paris (2015), among others.

Demester's work can be found in the collections of Fondation Zinsou, Ouidah; Istanbul Modern; Rennie Museum, Vancouver; Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain Saint-Étienne Métropole, among others.

In 2019, Jeremy and his wife Marie-Sophie Eiché Demester founded Atoké, a non-profit organisation that supports children in Benin by providing access to nourishment, education, healthcare and legal assistance.

Further exhibitions:

Berlin:

13 January – 25 February 2023

Karel Appel

Encounter in Spring and what follows

Curated by Franz W. Kaiser

Bleibtreustraße 45, 10623 Berlin

13 January – 25 February 2023

Marting Kippenberger

heute denken - morgen fertig

Works from private collections from the 80s and 90s.

Photographs by Wilhelm Schürmann and Andrea Stappert.

Curated by Josephine von Humboldt

Goethestraße 2/3, 10623 Berlin

25 January – 25 February 2023

Carroll Dunham

Selected Drawings

Bleibtreustraße 15/16, 10623 Berlin

3 February – 11 March 2023

Barry Flanagan

Potsdamer Straße 77-87, 10785

Paris:

14 January – 25 February 2023

Ai Weiwei, Leila Babirye, Simone Fattal, Adam Pendleton

Distant Voices

46 & 57, rue du Temple, 75004 Paris

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