

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Julian Hoeber
I Went to See Myself but I Saw You

Blum & Poe, Los Angeles
March 11–April 15, 2023
Opening reception: Saturday, March 11, 5–7pm

Los Angeles, CA, February 24, 2023—Blum & Poe is pleased to present *I Went to See Myself but I Saw You*, Los Angeles-based artist Julian Hoeber's eighth solo exhibition with the gallery.

Many of the works presented in *I Went to See Myself but I Saw You* deploy geometric motifs, a device that Hoeber has used throughout his career, as part of a new series structured around the concept of stereoscopic vision—the process of seeing three-dimensionality derived from two eyes operating independently of one another. The paintings and sculptures presented here emulate this phenomenon, creating image pairs that are both unexpected and nuanced. These image pairs, placed side-by-side on a single panel or sculpture, expose the visual gymnastics required to see with two inputs: an experience that is both functional and imperfect. By hyper-focusing on and reframing the act of seeing, one begins to understand their perception of the world as fallible and constructed.

Hoeber has a long-demonstrated interest in giving physical form to cerebral or internal experiences. Since the artist's first exhibition with Blum & Poe in 2002, *Killing Friends*, he has investigated the breakdown of inner versus outer and persistently exposed the faulty nature of popular cultural dichotomies. Beginning in 2020, Hoeber began researching and making paintings inspired by the work of Sir Charles Wheatstone. In 1838, Wheatstone invented the Wheatstone stereoscope, a device allowing independent right-eye and left-eye views at the same time. With this viewer, one could create the conditions for binocular rivalry: wherein the mind will try, often with great difficulty, to reconcile the two different images that it is seeing. Under these circumstances, human cognition triggers a contingent and shifting pattern of overlay between the two vignettes. Hoeber recreates this experience in the wall-mounted sculptures presented here, such as in *What Two Animals Are Most Alike?* (2023), which depicts both a rabbit and a duck. Depending on the viewer's position, *What Two Animals Are Most Alike?* transforms—becoming part-rabbit and part-duck as the mind struggles to meld the input that it is receiving from each eye.

Both the Wheatstone stereoscope and Hoeber's investigations manipulate the act of looking to bring the viewer closer to understanding how the outside world is internally processed. Robert Smithson also cited Wheatstone's stereoscope as a major influence on his two-part sculptural work *Enantiomorphic Chambers* (1965)—the studies for which are in the collection at the Museum of Modern Art, New York. Of this sculpture, Smithson said, "To see one's own sight means visible blindness." In response to this statement, and to the work presented in *I Went to See Myself but I Saw You*, Hoeber states, "I'd say that seeing one's sight (something I agree is at the center of experiencing the Wheatstone viewer) is not so much visible blindness as necessitating a revision of regular sight as less trustworthy. I'm trying to get people right up to the surface of the contingency of their own vision."

In these works, Hoeber looks back at the history of painting, realizing that the single-point perspective used in the Renaissance period was meant to create a seamless and cohesive space by leaving out the complexities of what it is to truly see through two eyes. Binocular vision has two vanishing points that are made obvious when bifurcated by a device such as the Wheatstone viewer. The paintings that Hoeber presents in this exhibition each have two vanishing points, forcing onlookers to encounter them in steps—

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first one side, then the other. When interfacing with the geometric forms and small orbiting moon of *28 Days or 17 Miles* (2022), the eye is drawn to each side of the composition. This is the case with all of the paintings presented here, due to the artist's recurrent use of multiple vanishing points. When confronting these paintings up close, the spectator naturally gets pushed to either side of the work, depending on which portion they are looking at. Hoerber offers this experience to the viewer—intending each panel as a device to produce this kind of two-part looking.

I Went to See Myself but I Saw You resists Western picture making's propensity for depicting a cohesive vision of the world. Hoerber acknowledges that these more traditional works leave out a great deal of complex information—for example, how the simple act of human sight actually goes through many steps in its journey from exterior to interior perception. In bifurcating the single vanishing point in his works through the logic of Wheatstone, stereoscopic vision, and binocular rivalry, Hoerber evokes an element of the sublime—an existential jolt that causes one to reconsider their own way of perceiving the world. As the artist puts it, "I'm interested in the idea that viewers and viewing are always slippery and a bit fractured."

Julian Hoerber (b. 1974, Philadelphia, PA) holds a BA in Art History from Tufts University, Medford, MA, a BFA from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA, and an MFA from the ArtCenter College of Design, Pasadena, CA. Hoerber's work is featured in public and private collections internationally including Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, TX; DESTE Foundation for Contemporary Art, Athens, Greece; de Young Museum, San Francisco, CA; Francis Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery, Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, NY; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA; Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas, TX; Palm Springs Art Museum, Palm Springs, CA; Rosenblum Collection, Paris, France; Rubell Family Collection, Miami, FL; and the Western Bridge Museum, Seattle, WA. Julian Hoerber lives and works in Los Angeles, CA.

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-one 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

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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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