

**STANDARD (OSLO)  
PRESS RELEASE**

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**MATHEW CERLETTY  
"MINERAL SPIRITS"**

**22.09.-28.10.2023 / PREVIEW: FRIDAY 22.09.2023 / 19.00 - 21.00**

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In 2013, The New York Times popularized and gamified the Harvard Dialect Survey by culling data from hundreds of thousands of responses to their linguistic project. A series of multiple-choice questions were used to pinpoint on the U.S. map where "you are from". In the adolescent stages of social media, the results were widely shared, especially between those transplants to the urban jungle who endearingly let their "y'all's" slip out in hastily written emails or backyard parties. The colloquial term- an obvious shibboleth highlighting your otherness when attempting to blend in.

When surrounded by Mathew Cerletty's nine paintings in "Mineral Spirits", similar feelings arise as one tries to decipher a possible link in the initial randomness and determine the origin for this body of work. Overtly American references will be lost on many Norwegians, such as Bucky Badger, the mascot from the University of Wisconsin or the words "Crate & Barrel", an upper middle class home goods chain. But Cerletty welcomes an audience without preconceived ideas, as it allows references a more open interpretation. We can decide what these words and symbols mean outside of their branding and baggage. The real test here - getting to the essence, or the spirit, of the work.

With every question, the ensuing heat map got you closer to "home". Tag sale, yard sale, garage sale, rummage sale. Blissfully unaware until that click reveals how rarely «doodle» bug is used outside of downtown Dallas (and apparently Louisiana) - but mountain lion reigns supreme over cougar. Which brings us to the query, "What do you call the area of grass in the middle of some streets?". I have no word for this. The dreaded Department of Motor Vehicles refers to it as an obstacle, a traffic island, or a median, the latter being Mathew Cerletty's choice. At the very least, one thing Americans can agree on, something to "Keep Right" of. Now, Cerletty has deemed it worthy of oil on canvas, rendered almost as flat as the powder-coated steel of signage we are accustomed to. The idea of right and left instills the notion of right and wrong. Do not deviate from the path laid out for you. This guideline is lodged between an emotionally distressed painter's palette, unused, which appears to be weeping, and a fanned-out stack of brightly colored papers, at this scale reading as monochrome paintings on the precipice of spilling out and inflicting maximum bodily damage. Here Cerletty allows himself to broach a kindergarten version of abstract painting, in the box of linear, opaque style. Tools of the painterly trade, and a hint to his devotion to the craft.

An empty sink basin with no drain and confounding perspective nods to both Rober Gober and Ellsworth Kelly. A pair of immaculate rubber gloves, reaching up or searching for the next dirty dish, we slowly realize both are right-handed, a reflection of one and not in fact two. All works point to mundane objects or instances and are elevated into the realm of contemporary painting. They are playful in their simplicity and formal execution. The exhibition ends with a full length mirror, so pristinely executed you almost think you will catch a glimpse of yourself. But in its absence of visual reflection, we just see paint, a luminous gradient. It supplants the viewer's presumptions, leaving us in the end searching for our own location.

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Mathew Cerletty (b. 1980, Wauwatosa, Wisconsin) lives and works in Brooklyn, New York. "Mineral Spirits" marks Cerletty's second solo exhibition with STANDARD (OSLO) following his first at the gallery, "Whiskers" (2019) and a two-person presentation with Julia Rommel, "Stay-at-Home Dad" (2017). Solo exhibitions include The Power Station, Dallas; Karma, New York; Office Baroque, Brussels; Blum & Poe, Los Angeles, amongst others. Selected group presentations include Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Aishti Foundation, Beirut; The Flag Foundation, New York; Museo Madre, Naples; Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, California.

Cerletty's work is held in numerous collections, including Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Astrup Fearnley Museum, Oslo; Buffalo AKG Art Museum, Buffalo, New York; Aishti Foundation, Beirut and Milwaukee Art Museum, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

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*For further information please visit our webpage: [www.standardoslo.no](http://www.standardoslo.no) or contact Mary Grace Wright at [gracie@standardoslo.no](mailto:gracie@standardoslo.no) or +47 412 79 510 / +47 22 60 13 10. STANDARD (OSLO) is open Tuesday-Friday: 12.00-17.00/ Saturday: 12.00-16.00. Sunday and Monday: Closed.*

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