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Peter Shear
Reality Show

BLUM Los Angeles
July 13–August 30, 2024
Opening Reception: Saturday, July 13, 6–8pm

I woke in a spacious room with lavender wallpaper and brocaded, antique drapes. There were clothes laid out for me on a fainting couch. They fit as if they had been tailored for me. As I descended the staircase, I had no idea what to expect. A maid showed me to the breakfast room and brought me coffee and biscuits. I stared out the window at the gardens. After a while, a man entered the room and asked me if I had everything I needed. "Oh yes," I said, "everything is lovely." "Do you have any questions?" he asked me. "No," I said. "Later, Gwen and I will show you around the grounds," he said. "I look forward to that," I said. Then he left me there all alone. Gwendolyn. It's strange how one knows nothing, and, yet, knows more than one wants to know. I knew that I would fall in love with Gwendolyn. I knew that there would be a duel. I knew that this graceful mansion would burn to the ground. I sat there waiting, incredibly lonesome with my awful knowledge.¹

(James Tate, "The Fragrant Cloud")

Los Angeles, CA, Embargoed until July 3, 2024—BLUM is pleased to announce the representation of Bloomington, Indiana-based artist Peter Shear on the occasion of *Reality Show*, the artist's first solo exhibition with the gallery.

Utilizing the art of suggestion, Shear loosely renders recognizable forms in distinctive palettes to create paintings that trigger open-ended recognition in their viewers. Drawing inspiration from a range of topics as disparate as the internet is vast, Shear intakes a large quantity of visual information—a single painting may, for instance, be influenced by the oeuvre of Dutch Golden Age painter Judith Leyster, an image of several neatly arranged green Adidas Sambas, a drawing by contemporary British artist David Shrigley, and a news headline that reads "Where's Princess Kate?" The resulting works broadly deploy intuitively familiar aesthetics to underscore our universally shared connection to the collective unconscious.

¹ James Tate, "The Fragrant Cloud," in *Return to the City of White Donkeys: Poems*, (New York: Ecco Press, 2005), courtesy of Estate of James Tate.

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With compositions that alternate between pure abstraction and representational elements, Shear avoids stylistic categorization, instead preferring to respond to and channel the whims of his materials. Activating an interest in the artifice of painting, Shear cross-pollinates devices that span the medium—diffusing mountain-like crests into the prongs of gestural brushstrokes in *Land* (2023) or playing with depth perception as created by shading a geometric abstraction in *Double Sided* (2024). By resisting the traditional schools of painting, Shear makes room for a viewer to situate his work amongst any number of subjective things or ideas.

Taking this prompt for individualized interpretation one step further, Shear states that his paintings are meant to encourage viewers to “finish the sentence.” In other words, the intention of each work has been left open-ended in a generous gesture that allows space for personal associations and experiences. In this way, the connection formed between individual and painting is the work’s purpose—each canvas or panel is otherwise left open and free of determination until the next psyche sets out to explore it.

In a post-internet era, Carl Jung’s collective unconscious has materialized in Instagram—this platform has become the well from which much of the population draws their imagery and information. Shear’s work is informed by the manner in which social media impacts our absorption of news. “I think the way that my paintings cycle in and out of themes or argue with each other mimics the Instagram environment—you’re seeing, for instance, a Rothko next to Hypebeast sneakers. The mind tells a story about that, and I’m interested in how people put things together.”

The artist’s first monograph, *Accident Report*, was released earlier this year by American Art Catalogues. Shear will sign copies during the public opening, Saturday, July 13, at 6pm.

Peter Shear (b.1980, Beverly Farms, MA) lives and works in Bloomington, IN, and has shown his work across the United States and internationally. Recently, his work was the subject of the solo exhibition *Time Stamp* at Herron School of Art + Design, Indiana University, Indianapolis, IN (2019). Group exhibitions include *The Feminine In Abstract Painting*, The Milton Resnick and Pat Passlof Foundation, New York, NY (2023); *A Wild Note of Longing: Albert Pinkham Ryder and a Century of American Art*, New Bedford Whaling Museum, New Bedford, MA (2021); *Locus Focus: Peter Shear and Arvind Sundararajan*, 840 Gallery, University of Cincinnati, OH (2018); and *Basic Instinct, Peter Shear and Ellen Siebers*, FJORD, Philadelphia, PA (2016).

About BLUM

BLUM represents more than sixty artists and estates from eighteen countries worldwide, nurturing a diverse roster of artists at all stages of their practices with a range of global perspectives. Originally opened as Blum & Poe in Santa Monica in 1994, the gallery has been a pioneer in its early commitment to Los Angeles as an international arts capital.

The gallery has been acclaimed for its groundbreaking work in championing international artists of postwar and contemporary movements, such as CoBrA, Dansaekhwa, Mono-ha, and Superflat, and for organizing museum-caliber solo presentations and historical survey exhibitions across its spaces in Los Angeles, Tokyo, and New York. Often partnering with celebrated curators and scholars such as Cecilia Alemani, Alison M. Gingeras, Sofia Gotti, Joan Kee, and Mika Yoshitake, the gallery has produced large-scale exhibitions focusing on the Japanese Mono-ha school (2012); the Korean Dansaekhwa

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monochrome painters (2014); the European postwar movement CoBrA (2015); Japanese art of the 1980s and 1990s (2019); a rereading of Brazilian Modernism (2019); a revisionist take on the 1959 MoMA exhibition, *New Images of Man* (2020); and a survey of portraiture through a democratic and humanist lens (2023); among others.

BLUM's wide-reaching program includes exhibitions, lectures, performance series, screenings, video series, and an annual art book fair at its base in Los Angeles. BLUM Books, the gallery's publishing division, democratically circulates its program through original scholarship and accessible media ranging from academic monographs, audio series, magazines, to artists' books.

Across the three global locations, BLUM prioritizes environmental and community stewardship in all operations. In 2015, it 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 is committed to fostering inclusive and equitable communities both in its physical and online spaces and believes that everybody should have equal access to creating and engaging with contemporary art.

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