

## Jeremy Demester

### *Shepherds' Play*

Bleibtreustraße 15/16, 10623

9 November – 20 December 2024

Opening: Saturday, 9 November, 6 – 8pm

Galerie Max Hetzler is pleased to present *Shepherds' Play*, a solo exhibition of work by **Jeremy Demester** at Bleibtreustraße 15/16 in Berlin. This is the artist's ninth solo exhibition with the gallery.

Demester's vividly coloured paintings explore the experience and nuances of nature whilst touching on themes of memory and timelessness. Largely inspired by the artist's childhood in Provence, France, the intuitive compositions in this exhibition express a dialogue with natural elements. Viewers may discern trees, fires, winds or sunsets – subjects and symbols with personal resonance that simultaneously embody a primordial endlessness. In five works on paper, depicting nighttime scenes with enigmatic landscapes, the artist blends influences from prehistoric cave art to Impressionism and The Nabis. Painting, in other words, becomes a medium, an intermediary with which to traverse different worlds: figuration and abstraction, past and present, the visible and the occult.

In parallel with his research into nature and the elements, Demester's painted aluminium panel reflects upon the physicochemical properties of matter and colour. At first glance, *Essence Concrète*, 2024, appears to be perfectly monochrome. Yet, the copper surface, worked with industrial paints and renewed by shifting light, contains every hue of nature. At first surreal, immobile and cold, its colourful metamorphosis becomes seductive and fascinating, its strange materiality akin to the abstract paintings of Ad Reinhardt or the minimalist volumes of Donald Judd. It begs the question: How can painting represent that which nature cannot?

'These works, brought together here, form fragment by fragment the memory of a childhood spent in Provence, where the sky is witness to everything, the presence of plants infuses even the stones, the wind that animates each leaf and each blade of grass gives us a glimpse of the waves of absent seas. In these remote places, the world covers us, we are sheltered. But to do so, we have to lose track of time and the logic of history. Like the child I once was, searching these hills for fossils millions of years old, I'm looking for a sense of our place as humans on the time scale. Will we leave a trace in the earth? Nothing is less certain. So I paint something to remember.

During my peregrinations on the steep paths of the hills, the movements of the air give rhythm and voice to the branches and leaves of the aspens; to the wild grasses and thistles, the air is filled with the powerful



Jeremy Demester, *Le Tremble à Courbons*, 2024  
photo: def image

scent of rosemary and slate earth. I paint these moments when the wind seems to take the whole landscape in its hand to throw it in my face.

The scenes take place at night, when after a long day of hiking the peaks and torrents, we sit down, gather a few branches, put the stones in a circle and light a fire to spend the night. These drawings are what I see in the flames, of this nature that has been imprinted on me.

I've been initiated by springs and stones, I've shed tears in the strata, I've loved not far from the edge of thick larch forests. This raw nature devoid of culture shaped me. I was born of hot stone and senseless light, and the cold winters forged me into a race. I am the river of waving grass, I am the labour of the beehive, I am the devourer of light.'

Jeremy Demester, 2024

**Jeremy Demester** (b. 1988, Digne), lives and works between the South of France and Ouidah, Benin. Demester's work has been presented in institutional solo and group exhibitions, including at Le LAB – Fondation Zinsou, Cotonou (2024); Villa Carmignac, Porquerolles Island (2023); Ouidah Museum – Fondation Zinsou, Ouidah (2021 and 2015); Monnaie de Paris (2021); 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, Saint-Étienne (2016); Palais de l'École des Beaux-Arts, Paris (2016); and Palais des Beaux-Arts, Paris (2015), among others. In 2019, the artist and his wife Marie-Sophie Eiché Demester founded Atoké, a non-profit organisation that supports children in Benin by providing access to education, healthcare, nourishment and legal assistance.

Demester's work can be found in the collections of Fondation Zinsou, Ouidah; Istanbul Modern; Musée d'art moderne et contemporain, Saint-Étienne Métropole; Patrimoine Hennessy; and Rennie Museum, Vancouver, among others.

Further exhibitions and events

Berlin:

9 November – 20 December 2024

**Rineke Dijkstra**  
Bleibtreustraße 45, 10623

15 November 2024 – 18 January 2025

**Louise Bonnet**  
*Reversal of Fortune*  
Potsdamer Straße 77-87, 10785

Paris:

14 October – 18 December 2024

**Glenn Brown**  
*In The Altogether*  
46 & 57, rue du Temple, 75004

London:

3 October – 14 December 2024

**André Butzer**  
41 Dover Street, W1S 4NS

Marfa:

9 May – 8 December 2024

**Katharina Grosse**  
*The Super Eight*  
1976 Antelope Hills Road

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