

## PRESS RELEASE

### Zeichnungen und Drucke

### Drawings and Prints

Joe Bradley, Carroll Dunham, Alex Hank, Shara Hughes, Tobias Pils, Ugo Rondinone, Tschabalala Self, Steven Shearer, Josh Smith

March 21 – May 10, 2025

Opening on Thursday, March 20, 6 – 9 pm

Lichtenfelsgasse 5, A-1010 Vienna

Galerie Eva Presenhuber is pleased to present *Zeichnungen und Drucke / Drawings and Prints*, a group exhibition exploring different approaches to drawing and print, demonstrating the range and richness of these mediums on various types of paper and wood.

In his drawing practice, **Joe Bradley** (b. 1975 in Maine, ME, US) uses such unorthodox materials as scraps of cardboard, loose paper, and even sticky notes. One aspect of his practice that remains constant is his emphasis on process: the intuitive movements of the artist's hand, as well as the effects of material, memory, and environment. Though vaguely familiar-reminiscent of children's drawings, comic book sketches, cave paintings, and ideograms—the images seem devoid of specific meaning, exploring the implications of the creative act itself. Coming across subject matter is exactly how the artist describes making art: being out in the world and finding just the right thing. His always recognizable scrawl harvests iconography and marks from a net cast wide and far through time. In many ways, Bradley holds up a mirror to the art world, finding humor in the ever-shifting trends and traditions of recent art history.

**Carroll Dunham** (b. 1949 in New Haven, CT, US) uses simple lines and forms to create extraordinary views, in which the often sexually charged motifs mask the fact that they are composed with great care. In the two displayed colorful Monotypes (2016), he paints directly on the wood, which later serves as a printing plate. In doing so, he uses the texture of the wood as a pre-structure, underlining knotholes and emphasizing certain lines. The bodies of his characters respond to the wooden texture – the knothole with the anus and the finespun texture of the wood with the vagina. *Untitled* (2021) shows his figures centered within drawn and centered frames. Both figures' appendages spread beyond the limits of the canvas, calling us to imagine what lies beyond the frame or, more darkly, outside the enclosure. The figures look down or away, bracing themselves against each other's rigid bodies. Here Dunham has shown us sex, yet the new paintings and drawings are typically profoundly unsexy and not at all about desire.

**Alex Hank's** (b. 1973 in Mexico City, MX) series of portraits of young men features larger-than-life graphite on birchwood drawings, using locally sourced wood from around Hank's barn in the Swiss alps. The choice of birchwood enhances the masculinity of the subjects, while graphite—despite the scale—captures their spontaneity and delicacy. Inspired by the immediacy of works on paper, Hank sought a support with more weight and presence, with the timber adding a sense of corporeality. His portraits depict beautiful men—cheeky, superior, teasing, yet vulnerable. The artist's fascination is evident, though the power dynamic remains ambiguous. There's intimacy, but the nature of the relationship, the moment of capture, and deeper truths remain elusive. Their beauty is both surface-level and introspective, tinged with a Dorian Gray-like darkness. The sitters seem to withhold something, creating a tension between privacy and the artist's desire to see. As observers, we seek clarity, but Hank leaves space for mystery—inviting us to look beyond the mask without ever fully unmasking them.

In contrast to how her paintings are made, **Shara Hughes'** (b. 1981 in Atlanta, GA, US) drawings were not made in the studio but rather at home in a more relaxed, private environment. In this tranquil setting, Hughes creates drawings using ink, watercolor, markers, crayons, oil pastels, colored pencils, and paint pens. The nature of these materials do not allow for many changes once the color is applied, and each drawing is finished in one session. This direct technique, with its harsh lines in combination with the private atmosphere, allows the artist to delve even deeper into her practice, which radically draws from the inward. "I often think about my drawings as a run-on

sentence that never ends. I believe the drawings work as a release of my subconscious rather than fully forming something that has evolved and resolved itself. I think they open up questions rather than answering them and that's the kind of vulnerable edge I'm looking for."

**Tobias Pils'** (b. 1971 in Linz, AT) approach to drawing has evolved significantly over the past few years, shifting from a daily routine to an occasional practice. Rather than working exclusively in his studio, he prefers to draw in a variety of environments – at home in the quiet hours after his children have gone to bed, in the storage room of his gallery for a few hours, or even while on holiday. His ink drawings serve as meditative reflections on completed works, often paintings, and carry a strong emotional resonance. In contrast, his much smaller pencil drawings function as drafts, architectural sketches and notes for future works, and embody a more distant and analytical quality. For Pils, drawing is about finding the right mood, the right speed and the right proportions. Thoughts pass through like fleeting trains, driven by an intense desire. Lines take on the quality of veins, creating a link to something past and yet present.

Drawn and written in Indian ink, **Ugo Rondinone's** (b. 1964 in Brunnen, CH) *Diaries* have been playing an important role in the oeuvre of the Swiss artist since 1992. They are conceived as notations covering an entire year with titles such as 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995 and 1996; yet, both the evocation of actual event duration and the contents are of a fictive and literary nature. In his sheets – formally inspired by underground comics – Rondinone blends fiction with metaphors of authenticity, leading readers and viewers into the "lonely" spaces and times of a report about individual experience sounding out, bearing, manipulating and stylizing the borders of everyday experience: boredom, rapture, love and failure, speechlessness, uneventfulness, and excessiveness.

In her *Homebodies* series, functioning as windows into the home, **Tschabalala Self** (b. 1990 in Harlem, NY, US) explores the psychological significance of the domestic space, which serve as a metaphor for a general sense of interiority. *Home body*, a colloquial term for an introvert who prefers to stay within the confines of the home, underscores the inherent tensions at work in domestic settings, where socially-prescribed identity and gender politics still furnish our so-called 'safe spaces'. Groupings of intimate vignettes, as seen in *Lonely Girls #2*, situate Self's chorus of imagined characters within domestic scenes.

The exhibited new drawings (all from 2024) by **Steven Shearer** (b. 1968, New Westminster, CA) diverge from his usual studies and photo-based works, embracing an automatic drawing approach with no erasing or revisions. Executed in a single session, these pastel chalk drawings feature abrupt movements and angular lines, resulting in abbreviated, expressive depictions. The series explores two groups: sculpted-looking busts with blank eyes and frontal figures adorned with face paint and headgear featuring multiple eyes. The head coverings evoke mythical or religious imagery, blurring the boundaries between the figures and their adornments. Recurring motifs, such as anthropomorphized landscapes, emerge subtly within the compositions, reinforcing a dreamlike, layered quality in Shearer's evolving exploration of male portraiture.

The practice of **Josh Smith** (b. 1976 in Okinawa, JP) is in many ways defined by the artist's relentless and multifaceted productivity, which is reflected in particular in his embrace of print media. Each print, monotype, or artist book does not function as an endpoint, but rather as a stage in an ongoing and heterogeneous process of image production, in which motifs and materials are recycled, refined, and reimagined through a variety of processes. The monotypes presented here stem from a painterly print technique that involves a unique impression. This selection demonstrates the ways in which Smith's graphic work employs repetition as a model for investigating and upending recurrent themes. "Each work implies that there are others," Smith writes of his practice. "I try to strip out as much of the content as possible, so the viewer does not have to reach for a meaning. You don't have to look at one thing and try to get it. The one in front of me is the one I am looking at now."

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