

Petzel

DIRK SKREBER
days before

May 2 – June 23, 2018

Opening Reception: Wednesday, May 2nd, 6–8pm
35 East 67th Street

Petzel Gallery is pleased to announce the sixth solo-exhibition—his first at our Upper East Side location—of New York-based artist Dirk Skreber.

May 1st, 1986: a brand new amusement park featuring a Ferris wheel and bumper cars is set to open in Pripjat, a town in the northern Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, close to Chernobyl. It never does. Five days prior, the core of Chernobyl's nuclear reactor erupts. Despite contamination, the amusement park opens for a few hours on April 27th—to distract panicked residents. The city is evacuated and to this day the abandoned amusement park sits in the 30km perimeter known as the *Chernobyl Exclusion Zone*.

Anticipated by Andrei Tarkovsky's movie *Stalker* (1979) the *Chernobyl Exclusion Zone* has come to epitomize isolation in which time is an incomprehensible void.

Deserted wastelands resonate with Skreber, who grew up in a town on the East German border where *death strips* and *no man's lands*, bearing WWII relics, became the legal and illegal exploratory ground for the teenager.

In his new, mostly oil paint on aluminum honeycomb works, Skreber draws a line from his youthful expeditions through to Pripjat's deserted territory and the cinematic depictions of Tarkovsky, directly to contemporary painting. Simultaneously Skreber nods to the long history of artistic representations of urban decay that confront society's faith in human perseverance.

The honeycomb material with its exposed edges is congruent with dislocation, or the sharp contraposition of familiar with unknown, pleasure with discomfiture, days after with days before and vice versa. The observer is lured by vibrant colors evoking radiation-saturated perceived terrains, into which everything and everyone involved is plunged.

Dirk Skreber (born 1961, Germany) lives and works in New York.

Petzel Gallery is located on the third floor of 35 East 67th Street between Madison and Park Avenues, New York City. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday from 10:00 AM–6:00 PM. For press inquiries, please contact Janine Latham at janine@petzel.com, or call (212) 680-9467.