

**Friedrich Kunath**  
***One Man's Ceiling is Another Man's Floor***

**Blum & Poe, New York**  
**November 7-December 22, 2018**  
**Opening reception: Wednesday, November 7, 6-8pm**

Blum & Poe is pleased to present *One Man's Ceiling is Another Man's Floor*, Friedrich Kunath's sixth solo exhibition with the gallery.

This show follows Kunath's *Frutti di Mare* of 2017—a carpeted, scented, multi-room installation flecked with tie-died tube socks and outfitted with mirrored floors, a mechanical spinning canvas, and a vertical piano. By virtue of the natural balance of expansion and contraction, the psychedelic excess of *Frutti di Mare* in Los Angeles leads us to the composed, classic tone of *One Man's Ceiling is Another Man's Floor* presented in New York City. Or as Kunath put it, "That was my *Sgt. Pepper's*, this is my *Let It Be*."

Kunath carries on his study of a dichotomous human condition—an exploration in happiness and sadness, romanticism, nostalgia, longing, the fetish of authenticity, and the myth of genius. This exhibition negotiates the facets of personal experience registered on a psycho-emotional pendulum that swings between the search for deep existential meaning and purpose, and a frenetic, nonsensical and humorous nihilism. Here, two distinct groups of paintings, divided by a floor/ceiling, function as equal instruments in Kunath's current exercise of distilling emotion from quotidian transactions. The works hanging on the upper level are executed with the precision of airbrush and a formalized, preconceived design, representing a measured and intentional approach to Kunath's artistic output. These compositions were created in pairs, all set to seascapes of varying tonalities.

A floor below, heavily impastoed oil paintings thread together excavated impulses and subconscious narratives drawn from months spent developing each work. In contrast to the airbrushed works from the floor above, Kunath relinquishes control and allows the painting to unfold through a process of automatism. His penchant for vacillating between somber and hopeful self-reflective emotive wanderings emerges at times as a crestfallen figure mourning his kite caught in a tree, or two silhouettes gazing towards a horizon—the phrases "I thought we had a deal" or "It gets easier" alternately hovering nearby in India ink. Hints of the artist's surrounding domestic world are laced throughout, conversation fragments subtly carved into the surfaces. A final component, cartoonish personalities step out of the canvases actualized here as small bronze sculptures. Regulars in a cast of characters developed over many years—a stoic businessman wearing a tree trunk, a ghost ironing a ghost-shaped sheet, a slumbering vagabond tucked into his suitcase—these personas are emblems of Kunath's world, one where the ordinary blurs with the sublime, and polarities reign supreme.

In conjunction with this exhibition, a new major monograph devoted to the last fifteen years of Kunath's work will be released by Rizzoli Electa. Entitled *I Don't Worry Anymore*, this book offers new insights into the artist's work across media, organized conceptually rather than chronologically in eight chapters. Featuring new writing by four contributors—art historian James Elkins takes an historical approach to Kunath's work, linking him to both recent and older traditions of European painting; Ariana Reines contributes a poem inspired by the artist's work; James Frey

offers a short essay motivated by Kunath's persona; and the artist and John McEnroe, the famed tennis player, have a spirited conversation about their shared passion for the game of tennis.

Friedrich Kunath (b. 1974, Chemnitz, Germany) lives and works in Los Angeles. His work has been exhibited widely and has been the subject of numerous solo exhibitions including: *Juckreiz*, Sammlung Philara, Düsseldorf, Germany (2016); *A Plan to Follow Summer Around the World*, Centre d'art Contemporain d'Ivry – le Crédac, Ivry-sur-Seine, France (2014); *Raymond Moody's Blues*, Modern Art Oxford, Oxford, UK (2013); *Your Life is Not for You*, Sprengel Museum, Hannover, Germany (2012); *Lonely Are the Free*, Schinkel Pavillon, Berlin, Germany (2011); Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2010); Kunstsaele, Berlin (2010); *7 x 14*, Staatliche Kunsthalle Baden-Baden, Germany (2009); and *Home Wasn't Built in a Day*, Kunstverein Hannover, Germany (2009). His work is also featured in prominent public and private collections such as the Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, PA; Centre Pompidou, Paris; DESTE Foundation for Contemporary Art, Athens; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Hessel Museum of Art, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, CA; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Pinault Collection, Paris; and the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN, among many more.