

Petzel

ROSS BLECKNER ***Pharmaceutria***

April 24 – June 15, 2019
Opening Reception: Wednesday, April 24, 6–8pm
456 West 18th Street

Petzel Gallery is pleased to announce *Pharmaceutria*, a presentation of paintings by Ross Bleckner. Opening April 24 and on view through June 15, this exhibition of recent works marks the artist's first solo show in New York City in five years and his debut at Petzel's Chelsea location.

For *Pharmaceutria* (sorceress in Latin), Bleckner, as if an alchemist, conjures a painterly, prescient response to current moods and times. Much as the artist's *Cell Paintings* were a political, consciousness-raising call-to-action during the 1990s AIDS epidemic, the works included in *Pharmaceutria* are an antagonistic, visual retort to the divisive 2016 elections.

Each of *Pharmaceutria*'s large-scale paintings, bearing brooding titles such as *Burn Painting (Out of Head)*, 2015; *When You Think You Have Nothing*, 2019; *Your Map of This Place*, 2019; *Flag*, 2019; and *Burn Painting (2050: Not My Future)*, 2016, has been destroyed and then "brought back to life," Bleckner says. "I torch them literally but organically. When the fire hits the paint, it reacts. It's a process of construction and reconstruction." A rebirth.

The *Pharmaceutria* series, completed within the last three years, signals a return to form for Bleckner, one of contemporary art's Masters. The show features the artist's signature dark, hypnotic Monet and El Greco-inspired canvases and investigates themes of anxiety, loss, memory and change while proposing, through seductive images of pulsating beauty and emotional urgency, an idea of personal and social healing, whether partial or complete.

Ross Bleckner was born in New York City and grew up in Hewlett, NY. He received a Bachelor of Arts from New York University in 1971, a Master of Fine Arts from Cal Arts in 1973, and he has taught at many of the nation's most prestigious universities. During his career, Bleckner has exhibited throughout the United States, and Internationally, at venues such as SFMoMA, the ICA Philadelphia, Kunsthalle Zurich, Moderna Museet in Stockholm, among others. In 1995, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York held a major retrospective of his works. Works by Bleckner are also held in public collections throughout the globe, including MoMA, MoCA, and the Whitney Museum of American Art.

Petzel Gallery is located at 456 West 18th Street New York, NY 10011. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday from 10:00 AM–6:00 PM. For press inquires, please contact Ricky Lee at ricky@petzel.com, or call (212) 680-9467.