

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***EN PLEIN AIR*****19 JULY – 31 AUGUST 2019
SIMON LEE GALLERY, LONDON****BAS JAN ADER | ANGELA BULLOCH | GEORGE CONDO | HOLLY COULIS | DEXTER DALWOOD | HANS-PETER FELDMANN | BERNARD FRIZE | JUSTIN JOHN GREENE | MARTIN KIPPENBERGER | RYAN MROZOWSKI | PAULINA OLOWSKA | JOÃO PENALVA | JOSEPHINE PRYDE | JAMES ROSENQUIST | HEIMO ZOBERNIG**

Simon Lee Gallery, London, is pleased to present *En Plein Air*, bringing together works by artists who seek to reinterpret the artistic tradition of painting outdoors for a contemporary audience. The plein air approach has been prevalent since the mid-19th century, although it gained traction in the 1860s as a practice essential to the development of the Impressionist movement. While artists had long painted from observation to create preparatory sketches or studies, during this period the plein air method led to a naturalistic style that threw out the academic rulebook in the pursuit of formal and compositional spontaneity. The artists included in *En Plein Air* are united by a desire to refresh the audience's interpretation of outdoor painting, whether via landscapes or portraits, photography or painting, figuration or abstraction, and in this way, the exhibition explores scenes of the outdoors in relation to contemporary studio practice.

As exemplified by the diverse practice of these artists, the outdoors unearths a vast range of reactions and emotions, delivering countless possibilities, realities and perspectives. Whereas Dexter Dalwood, Ryan Mrozowski and Heimo Zobernig play with colour, line and pigment to eternalise and romanticise the wind-swept and sun-soaked disorientation of a long, hot day, João Penalva and Angela Bulloch look upwards, to the evening and night sky respectively, highlighting the mysterious unknown of the expansive cosmos, or the burnt orange of a setting sun.

For James Rosenquist and Zobernig, landscape painting remains inextricably entrenched within the great Impressionist tradition. Zobernig, like Bernard Frize, forgoes detailed narrative in favour of dramatic and gestural swathes of paint, preferring to capture the spirit, rather than a perfect picture of the outdoors. Rosenquist favours a more representational approach, taking Claude Monet's iconic garden as his starting point, while Zobernig uses Edouard Manet's seminal *Déjeuneur sur l'Herbe* as the basis for his most recent, and highly abstracted, paintings.

Elsewhere, Holly Coulis presents the viewer with an arrangement of bucolic props at a picnic scene: plump citrus fruit in hues of yellow and orange, a full carafe, and a liquor-filled glass. Rather than fill in the outdoor landscape, Coulis animates the scene with buoyant summer tones. With photography as her chosen medium, Josephine Pryde achieves a similar effect, juxtaposing close, atmospheric detail – muddied footprints and rings of ice, with the comparatively distant photograph of frosted shrubs, and bare trees. Both Coulis and Pryde, as well as Paulina Olowaska and Justin John Greene, remind us that being outdoors can be a highly personal and intimate experience; it can serve as time for meditation or quiet contemplation.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

About Simon Lee Gallery

Founded in London in 2002, Simon Lee Gallery represents artists of diverse generations whose practices explore a wide range of media, from sculpture and painting to video and photography, and who share a broad interest in an exploration of the conceptual. Aiming to provide a significant international audience for its artists, the gallery also regularly punctuates its programme with historical exhibitions and curated group shows, which present shifts in contemporary art practice and thought, whilst broadening the dialogue with artists outside of the gallery's core programme. In addition to its UK activity, in 2012 the gallery opened a space in Hong Kong, which introduced its artists to a wider public in Asia, with a fully independent programme. In 2014, Simon Lee Gallery opened an office and private viewing space in New York. In 2017, this space was re-launched with a year-round programme of exhibitions and events, showcasing the work of emerging and established artists in dynamic group and solo exhibitions.

Facebook, Instagram, Twitter: @SimonLeeGallery
www.simonleegallery.com

Image: Holly Coulis, *Lemon Sun, Pyramid, Waterfall*, 2019. Oil on linen, 127 x 152.4 cm (50 x 60 in.) Courtesy of the artist, Simon Lee Gallery and Klaus Von Nichtssagend Gallery.

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