

BERGGRUEN

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SAM MESSENGER
Colour Veils

March 30 – April 29, 2023

Berggruen Gallery is proud to announce *Colour Veils*, an exhibition of recent paintings and works on paper by Sam Messenger. This show marks his second solo exhibition with the gallery. *Colour Veils* will be on view from March 30 through April 29, 2023. The gallery will host a reception for the artist on Thursday, March 30, from 5:00 to 7:00 pm.

Sam Messenger combines repetition and unpredictability to create delicate veils that evoke the organic patterns of billowing cosmic nebulas and crystalline gossamer. *Colour Veils* presents twenty new works created from Messenger's methodological use of ink and acrylic on paper or linen. The tactile dimension of Messenger's works reflects the artist's meticulous handling of ink and pigment on paper - a manual technique that harkens back to his early training in graphic design, technical drawing, and printing practices. These new works represent a slight departure from those previously exhibited in Messenger's 2017 eponymous exhibition with the gallery; While his earlier work predominantly featured backgrounds of varying shades of black and grey, *Colour Veils* incorporates an abundance of color - ruby-toned reds, creamy taupes, shades of indigo, and a stunning injection of sky-blue bring new life to this series of veils.

In this exhibition, Messenger continues experimenting with his chosen medium's organic capabilities while deftly addressing formal considerations such as tone, contour, and structure. This new body of work has been crafted entirely through freehand techniques, eschewing the use of rulers or straight edges. After the color surface is dry, Messenger meticulously applies the line-work, made up of tiny marks which follow a generative rule, covering the surface of the work in interlocking geometric patterns. This layering process instills the works with a kinetic energy, as planes of linear repetition swell and contract to create a fluid rhythm of spherical forms with a fibrous delicacy. Messenger's hand-drawn approach allows the artist's natural touch to infuse the underlying mathematical structure with subtle variations and idiosyncrasies, producing boundless waveforms with an ethereally animate quality. This structured yet unpredictable ebb and flow imbues each individual work with a uniquely mesmerizing textural quality and visual complexity.

Titles of individual works, such as *Veil for Belladonna* and *Veil from Aconitum*, reference various flowering plants, the colors of the backgrounds and foregrounds corresponding with the hue of its bloom. In this way, Messenger highlights his works' poetic qualities while suggesting a deeper

10 HAWTHORNE STREET
SAN FRANCISCO CA 94105
TEL 415 781 4629
INFO@BERGGRUEN.COM
BERGGRUEN.COM

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connection to the natural world. Analogous patterns of mathematical structures and growth in nature are unearthed, as allusions to the Fibonacci sequence evoke the mysterious alchemy of the cosmos. As the thin lines of Messengers' veils swell and undulate, these gauze-like geometric structures and floral hues intertwine to coalesce into a poetic expression of abstraction.

Sam Messenger was born in London in 1980. He received his M.A. at the Royal College of Art, where he was awarded the Parallel Prize in 2005. Messenger's work has been exhibited internationally at institutions such as The British Museum, London; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; the Courtauld Institute of Art, London; the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia; and the Norton Museum of Art, West Palm Beach. Messenger's art is also featured in numerous public and private collections, including The British Museum, London; Williams College Museum of Art, Williamstown, Massachusetts; Museum of Art Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, Rhode Island; and Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas. Messenger currently lives and works in London.

Colour Veils, March 30 – April 29, 2023. On view at 10 Hawthorne Street, San Francisco, CA 94105. Images and preview available upon request. For all inquiries, please contact the gallery by phone at (415) 781-4629 or by email at info@berggruen.com.