

BERGGRUEN

GALLERY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DARREN WATERSTON

A Life in Fields

May 2 – June 13, 2024

Berggruen Gallery is pleased to present *A Life in Fields*, an exhibition of recent paintings and works on paper by American artist Darren Waterston. This show marks Waterston's first solo exhibition with the gallery. The show will be on view from May 2 through June 13, 2024. The gallery will host a reception for the artist on Thursday, May 2, from 5:00 to 7:00pm.

Darren Waterston's *A Life in Fields* envisions the landscape genre as an enigmatic investigation of human consciousness. Through symphonic sweeps of color, Waterston creates "devotional" paintings and works on paper that rely on the sublime to survey the human psyche. Each painting embraces the unresolved nature of conscious experience, using color as a stepping stone towards investigating our psychological interiorities.

Describing this body of works as "palette-driven," Waterston experiments with bursts of explosive color—crystalline cyans, mossy greens, and hot pinks—that mirror the complexities of an inner psychological world, refracting emotion and sensation through color. Colors are paired to exist slightly outside the purview of visual accord, demonstrating Waterston's ongoing interest in beauty and terror's reciprocity. The colors further evoke this spectral symbiosis: bruised mauves suggest viscosity, working as a bridge between the sensory and the psychological; golds recall alchemy, evincing both overindulgence and regeneration; the scarlet flashes in *Field 2* and *Metamorphose Trilogy 1* could be read as expressions of passion or carnage. Because Waterston considers the paintings complete only with the viewer's experience of the work, the ultimate interpretation is reflexive and interdependent, homed in the viewer's perception and relationship to the work both as text and object.

Waterston's paintings trace their genealogy through several avenues of art history, borrowing from the technique and iconography of Northern Renaissance painters, as well as the Surrealists and Symbolists. Waterston's process is rooted firmly in the history of painting, underwritten by his use of traditional preparation and oil glazing methods. He begins by applying rabbit skin glue and genuine gesso to the panel, reapplying and abrading layers tirelessly before underpainting with bole, a clay pigment traditionally used by Renaissance painters to warm gold leaf. He also incorporates abstracted iconography into his artworks, such as the oculus (*Hemlock, Bourne, and Low Humm*), further hinting at the spiritual and visceral experience of roaming his dreamscapes.

Darren Waterston has been exhibiting his paintings, works on paper, and installations in the U.S. and abroad since the early 1990s. Waterston's artwork is included in numerous permanent collections including the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles; Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco; New York Public Library, New York City; The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles; Seattle Art Museum, Seattle; and Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. He graduated with a BFA from the Otis Art Institute in 1988, having previously studied at the Akademie der Künste and the Hochschule für Bildende Künste, both in Germany. Waterston currently lives and works in Kinderhook, New York.

A Life in Fields, May 2 – June 13, 2024. On view at 10 Hawthorne Street, San Francisco, CA 94105. Images and previews are available upon request. For all inquiries, please contact the gallery by phone (415) 781- 4629 or by email info@berggruen.com.

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