



"Water on Fire Bird", 2015-17
Water-based paint, ink, graphite, carved wood. 208 × 152 cm / 82 × 60 inches



"Philosopher Stone (in 2020)", 2016-17
Water-based paint, ink, graphite, carved wood. 208 × 152 cm / 82 × 60 inches

Zach Harris "Purple Cloud"

Vernissage : jeudi 18 mai 16h-21h
18 mai - 29 juillet 2017

Perrotin Paris is proud to present "Purple Cloud", Zach Harris' debut exhibition outside of the US and his first with the gallery.

*"Of goddesses: and with idolatrous paintings
Remove again from shadow their waists' bindings:
So that when I've sucked the grapes' brightness
To banish a regret done away with by my pretence,
Laughing, I raise the emptied stem to the summer's sky
And breathing into those luminous skins, then I,
Desiring drunkenness, gaze through them till evening."*

Stéphane Mallarmé
The Afternoon of a Faun, 1876

While closely observing Zach Harris' mysterious and obsessive body of work, one can realize that the surface of his wooden panels, painted with vibrant tones and troubling shapes, in fact reveals a variety of subtle woodworking techniques, from laser etching to hand-carving, echoing an American sensibility to crafts. Seen through the cracks and the cut-outs, it exposes a myriad of detailed sketches, scrupulously drawn with a pencil or a micron pen, and representing erotic scenes recalling the iconography of Persian or Mughal miniatures, if not battle scenes or representations of angels and saints, as if directly inspired by Michelangelo's Last Judgement. There is indeed, in Zach Harris' ensemble of paintings, an insightful tension between the macro and the micro, the large picture and the small details, the captivating virtuosi surface and the meticulous obsessive undercoat.

Whether he depicts Mayan calendars or solar clocks evoking Vitruvius Man and his perfect proportions, whether he aligns stars and mythical characters or portrays burning books and lightning on the edges of his wooden panels, Zach Harris conveys in his work a fervor for cosmology and cyclical systems, but also a profound, insoluble reflection on chaos and order. In many ways it could be related to the systemic approach of American painter Paul Laffoley, whose symbolic and seemingly paranoiac language addresses the mystical, while his bright colors and eccentric imagery also reference the Science Fiction genre. Similarly Zach Harris has developed a painting practice revolving around an

almost compulsive study of calendrical structures, and in particular of the number '2020', which stands for a perfect alignment of figures, while also evoking the possible date for an utopian perfect vision of an ideal future.

There seems to be a fascination for European painting in Zach Harris' pictorial universe and representation of the world. Post-Impressionism's vivid colors and geometric shapes come to mind when looking at Harris' multifaceted panels. He also explicitly refers to Pierre Bonnard's 1921 work *The Open Window* in one of his pieces that features a carved window shaped as a guillotine. Furthermore the mysterious visions within Zach Harris' paintings might evoke the symbolism of Gustave Moreau, but tainted with a hint of Californian psychedelia. Here again, observing Zach Harris' panels feel like a journey in the dead-ends of Californian subculture where American tradition of visionary landscape painting meets optical illusions, and where psychedelic tones and underground figures encounter occult symbols such as pyramids and eyes in an overall sentiment of a mystical and apocalyptic end of the world. His paintings are haunted with purple clouds, orange sunsets and pink sunrises, and a strange magic emanates from their halo. It is the vision of Gustave Moreau falling in love with Salome, if only the two were, in their perfectly French outfits, cruising in a convertible through the fading golden light of Malibu Beach.

Martha Kirszenbaum

March 2017

Harris' work is included in many prominent private and public collections, including The Hammer Museum, The Santa Barbara Museum of Art, and Princeton University Art Museum. Recent solo exhibitions include "Echo Parked In A No Vex Cave", at David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles, CA, and "Central Park In A No Vex Cave", at Zach Feuer, New York, NY.



"Glass Guillotine", 2016-17
Water-based paint, ink, carved wood. 157,5 x 108 cm / 62 x 42 1/2 inches