

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tom Burckhardt: *Psychodiagnostik*

4 April—18 May, 2019

Artist Reception: Thursday, April 4 (5-7:30 PM)

Gallery Hours: Tuesday–Saturday, 11:00-5:30 PM

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Gregory Lind Gallery is proud to present *Psychodiagnostik*, a series of paintings by Tom Burckhardt. Burckhardt's goal is to simultaneously infect and dismantle the purity expected from abstraction, while de-specifying the figural elements. He is interested in cultivating the tenuous relationship between "creative seeing" and the randomness of nature. His recent works explore the line between figuration and abstraction, with an emphasis on how our perceptual biases impact us. The psychological concept of *pareidolia*, in which figuration or faces are read in abstract visual phenomena (as in Rorschach blots) is key to these works, which encompass the nature of perception and empathetic reaction.

Burckhardt works with oil paint on linen, but has developed a number of adaptations, such as cutting commercial stretched bars with a jigsaw to establish a slightly discombobulated ground compared to the visual perfection of the grid. In fact, imperfection is built into the process, as Burckhardt always starts with a single panel, painted intuitively, which he completes before moving on to the next panel, where he works to create the same image in reverse. One side reveals an improvisational process, while the other is executed in an analytical fashion, and yet, when put together, the image takes on a new persona and is hit with a jolt of symmetrical energy. By working on two panels at different times, and then adjoining the original and its mirror image, Burckhardt emphasizes the paradox of a symmetrical image that is literally split down the middle, revealing both its wholeness and its inherent sense of division.

The current works bring together abstract and almost totemic figures, suggested landscapes, and visceral reflections on objects in space. Forms, lines, patterns, and gradated colors coalesce into seemingly identifiable collections of matter, only to melt back into the idiosyncratic whole. The paintings invite prolonged scrutiny, as Burckhardt's ability to embrace both the abstract and the representational enables viewers to read each work in different, often contradictory, ways without coming to a decisive conclusion. The hard-lined shapes of the paintings also evoke the solid, blocky depictions of contemporary graffiti, which can assume a variety of meanings, from the purely ornamental aspects of a bold style to the functional facets of lettering and language. The result is that the piece transforms during the act of perception, turning a deceptively simple form into one that evokes myriad associations.

Tom Burckhardt lives and works in New York. He is a graduate of Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture and State University of New York, Purchase. Recent solo exhibitions include Pierogi Gallery, Tibor de Nagy Gallery, New York; and Fred Giampetro, New Haven, CT. His work has been exhibited in numerous institutions, including Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Ridgefield, CT; The Kochi Muziris Biennale, Kerala, India; The Neuberger Museum, Purchase, NY; The City Museum, Aalst, Belgium; The Weatherspoon Museum, Greensboro, SC; The Tang, Saratoga Springs, NY; and McNay Museum, San Antonio, TX. Burckhardt has been the recipient of a Pollock-Krasner Grant (1997, 2005), a Guggenheim Foundation Grant (2009), a Joan Mitchell Foundation Grant (2011), a NYFA Grant (1996, 2008, 2018), and a Marie Walsh Sharpe Studio Grant (1992). His work has been featured in various publications, including *Arforum*, *Hyperallergic*, *Art in America*, the *New York Times*, *The Brooklyn Rail*, *Village Voice*, and the *Boston Globe*. This is the artist's fourth exhibition with Gregory Lind Gallery.