

PRESS RELEASE

Austin Eddy
Selected Poems

January 15 – March 5, 2022
Opening on Friday, January 14, 4 – 7 pm
Private Showroom, New York

Eva Presenhuber is pleased to present *Selected Poems*, an exhibition of new paintings and works on paper by Brooklyn-based artist Austin Eddy. On view at our private showroom, *Selected Poems* continues Eddy's career-long fascination with marrying a formalist concern for shape and color with distinctly autobiographical source material. In the process, the artist creates works that are rooted in art historical considerations—from early twentieth-century Cubism and Fauvism to the color field of the post-war years—but born of the present moment.

For this particular body of work, Eddy continues his use of stylistically rendered birds as a compositional through line for all paintings on view. A leitmotif in his lexicon of symbols since 2018, Eddy's birds are here given new context and energy with the artist's latest addition of vividly and sometimes abstractly depicted flowers and grasses, all of which is visually derived from the flora endemic to the American Northeast where Eddy has spent much of the last year. While the surreality of the flowers' forms refutes any attempt at taxonomy, the touchingly illustrated shapes, dots, and lines that comprise both the birds and vegetation still index a symbolist attraction to the natural world that is transcendentalist without slipping into dogma.

The poetic titles of each work further this point. Most directly lifted from Paul Verlaine's decadent verse of the *fin de siècle* era, Eddy's appellations share additional affinity with the rhetoric of earlier forebearers like Tennyson and Thoreau in their pastoral attraction, a fact underscored by Eddy's decision to compose his works *en plein air* for the first time in his practice. However, Eddy's paintings are hardly mired in antiquity. Instead, using the carefully studied formal qualities of the canvas plane and its boundaries, the artist examines the gamut of contemporary human emotion, with each work functioning as a musing on mortality, fragility, and the passage of time. The subjects of these paintings—a bird perched on a flower, two birds huddled on a sandbar, birds in flight, a falling bird at sunset—are a window into this sense of our temporal precarity. In Eddy's own words, "This work is the inverse of a river, where time is a stone and we exist as the water, passing by these moments ever so briefly."

This ability to connote sympathies and tensions in equal measure is constituent to Eddy's paintings. Much like his Cubist predecessors, the works on view here use an amalgam of colors, flattening of perspective, and distortion of scale in service to mining the depths of the lived experience. While each represented scene alludes to an actual moment in Eddy's world, the artist's highly stylized visual language of figures and forms move the particular to the universal, with Eddy's birds acting not as proxies so much as thoughtful reminders of the spectrum of our communal reality.

Austin Eddy was born in 1986 in Boston, MA, US, currently lives and works in Brooklyn, NY, US. He earned his BFA in Painting from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2010. Recent exhibitions include *Seeuferweg* at Livie Fine Art, Zurich, CH (2021); *Light Reflecting Distance* at The Pit, Los Angeles, CA, US (2021); *Birds At Night* at Althuis Hofland Fine Arts, Amsterdam, NL (2020); *Cold On The 4th Of July* at Institute 193 B, New York, NY, US (2020); and *The Poet And The Muse* at Knust Kunz, Munich, DE (2020). In the coming year, a monograph of the artist's practice will be published in conjunction with Knust Kunz, Munich.

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