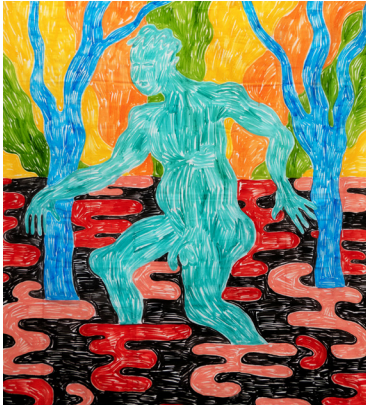


Rade Petrasevic
Where is Everybody?
 9 - 31 August 2019
 ALMA ZEVI Celerina



Rade Petrasevic, *hello ketaboy*, 2019

"It should look fun but it's not real" say Austrian artist, Rade Petrasevic (b. 1982) of the compositions and surroundings in his paintings.

Where is Everybody? brings together a selection of oil paintings on peva (shower curtain) of figures entangled in impossible positions, navigating an imaginary space either alone or with another body. Petrasevic composes his scenes with uniform brushstrokes, in groups of colours that he selects to purposefully disturb each other. His gestures are graphic and direct, lending a disruptive and yet clear language to his paintings. For this exhibition at ALMA ZEVI Celerina, Petrasevic's two metre by two metre pevas have been pinned to wooden structures, designed and produced in collaboration with PS:studio, creating a navigable architectural space that counteracts the artist's imagined scenarios.

Naked, intertwining figures in Petrasevic's paintings at first look engaged in sexual and desired communications. But looking closer, the viewer can see limbs interweaving into absurd, impossible lattices. Some of these points of contact seem unwanted, rather than invited touches, pokes and strokes. A blue arm with a limp hand goes through the trunk of a muscular, pale pink body in *the fog* (2019). In *dogging 33* (2019), curvy octopus tendrils loop around each limb of a man but resist his face by centimeters. There are moments like these in all of the artist's paintings: nude figures meeting one another or interacting with creatures and plants. The touches could be understood as gentle and poetic, but might also carry an edge of resistance.

Petrasevic has painted with graphic strokes since 2014, when he began to play with oil paint on a residency at Grande Vista Projects, Los Angeles. At the time he was using felt markers on paper to exaggerate flatness in his work. Petrasevic never had the patience to wait for oil to dry, but after experimenting with markers he applied the same technique with oil. As there was no overlaying of material, just a single line of paint, it dried quickly.

There is an urgency in Petrasevic's strokes as well as in his colours. He paints quickly, but deciding on composition and colour combinations can take the artist months. He maps out potential pairings and groupings in his head, only sometimes using paper to physically test how colours will look together. Petrasevic has made only two self-portraits, one of which, *wait, what?!* (2019) is included in this exhibition. This work shows the artist standing in front of a painting, his hands covered by his yellow vest. We look at him studying a surface with no forms or shapes, filled only with irregular patches of bright blue, green, yellow, orange, purple and red, and small areas of black, grey and brown. In his second self-portrait, *Cute but Psycho* (2017), we see only the artist's legs and sneakers, next to them lie a few sheets of paper streaked with colour. In neither of these does Petrasevic show his face, but both paintings hold what could be a pivot of indecision, or just one moment in a much longer period of deliberation.

This is Petrasevic's first solo show with ALMA ZEVI. Petrasevic received his B.F.A. from the Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna and Bezalel Academy of Fine Arts, Jerusalem and has recently exhibited at Friedman Benda, New York; The Breeder, Athens; Galerie Charim, Vienna and Christine König Galerie, Vienna.

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