

DEREK ELLER GALLERY

ARA PETERSON

November 18 - December 23, 2016

OPENING RECEPTION: Friday, November 18, 2016, 6-8pm



Ara Peterson, *Untitled*, 2015 (detail), acrylic paint on wood, 94 x 144 x 3 inches.

Derek Eller is pleased to present Ara Peterson's first exhibition with the gallery, featuring a recent group of his interlaced relief paintings.

Based in Providence, Rhode Island, Peterson's art evokes the elegance of New England transcendentalism, the overwhelming geographies of H.P. Lovecraft, the crisp sonic landscapes of Steely Dan, and the vertiginous feeling of swimming out to sea. The relief paintings are, like the ineffable works of Agnes Martin or James Turrell, subjectively kinetic, and can only truly be experienced in person. They can be both soothing but also disorienting. And as with the artist's films and music, his paintings are unrelenting. It is the tension between these impulses -- the meditative and the aggressive, that makes these brilliantly-hued works so compelling.

Peterson begins his process with a lengthy period of development rooted in the visualization of wave phenomena. For each work he plots the relationships between color, mood, scale, weight, surface tension, and

directional flow. The actual physical process is a series of stages executed by hand that the artist refers to as organization, execution, deconstruction, editing, re-editing, and re-execution. Peterson cuts wood laminate forms using a heat laser, paints them with a brush or an atomizer, and divides the slats to be manipulated, arranged and affixed.

The result of these procedures are objects that, while utterly self-contained in their construction and references, can variously evoke senses of place, motion, substance, and bodily awareness. A life size panoramic band consisting of a sequence of high and low beige and ochre swooping undercuts and overhangs might resemble a topographical map of a far off prehistoric land; a tall work of undulating earth tones, yellow, red, grey, and turquoise vertical scrolls seems to pulsate as it expands and contracts like an enormous wave just about to break over a viewer. Peterson's smaller works offer a chance at more intimate experiences with the wood itself. Here are sets of tight diagonal rolls that appear improbably soft, resembling kneaded and glazed clay, and nearly asking to be handled; another work, is the inverse of those rolls, with deep scoops of blue and beige simultaneously nodding at absence and presence.

Each work in this exhibition rewards sustained viewing. Color and form are seamlessly integrated and these still objects become kinetic as they shift and move with light, placement, and the physical presence of the viewer.

Ara Peterson has mounted solo exhibitions at Ratio 3, San Francisco, LOYAL Gallery, Sweden and John Connelly Presents, New York. His work is in the collections of Albright Knox, Buffalo, New York, Berkeley Museum of Art and Pacific Film Archive, University of California Berkeley, The Deste Foundation Centre for Contemporary Art, Athens, The Progressive Art Collection, Cleveland, and the Museum of Modern Art, New York. His artwork has been exhibited in The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, The Garage, Center for Contemporary Culture, Moscow, Bergen Kunsthalle, Bergen, Norway, P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center/The Museum of Modern Art, New York. As a founding member of the art and performance group Forcefield (1996-2003), he released multiple records and videos, and participated in

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the 2002 Biennial Exhibition, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, as well as *What Nerve!* Alternative Figures in American Art, 1960 to the Present, RISD Museum, Providence, RI and Matthew Marks Gallery, New York.

Derek Eller Gallery is located at 300 Broome Street between Eldridge Street and Forsyth Street. Hours are Wednesday-Sunday from 11am to 6pm and Tuesday by appointment. For further information please contact the gallery at 212.206.6411 or visit www.derekeller.com