

MICHAEL WILLIAMS
Drawings
Opening October 21, 2022

Drawing is a privilege and painting is an obligation. It's the difference between thinking and working. Drawing is thinking.

- MW, 2022

The Power Station is pleased to present Michael Williams *Drawings*, the artist's first exhibition to feature works on paper and drawing exclusively. The 250 works in the exhibition foreground Williams's drawing practice as an integral aspect of his approach to painting and to his negotiated relationship with cultural, critical and personal observation. He chooses subjects that metabolize the world into iconographies that often overlap in pools of social and formal energy. Unique to the works presented in the exhibition, is to what degree the medium of drawing serves the indexical and pictorial vectors of Williams's thinking. The works remind us how an idea can take shape as a sketch or produce meaning from the chaos of a scribble.

There are several contained modes of drawing on presentation here. In a group called "Drawing Set 2012-2018" we see Williams in a process of searching for visual conundrums, palindromes, or puns. In a group of drawings about painting we see him striving to ascertain a clarity on his primary medium. And in other groups of "Puzzle Drawings" and related drawings Williams reworks images from representational categories and processes them into a kind of abstraction or what he calls a "hyper-stylization." These modal transitions push material against information until one subtends the other, taking a recognizable bit of cultural detritus and subverting it with humor and sensitivity to say something new about the subject.

For Williams, drawing is a tool for thinking. It encodes gesture with thought, where the two, like the pictures in each work, vibrate and interchange. There is much to be said about the calligraphic and choreographic, or the products of boredom and failure, in these works, but with each Williams is able to make "necessary" the wayward potential of thinking and working as an act of drawing. "No problem can withstand the assault of sustained thinking," and, for Williams, drawing is the uninterrupted form of attention collected on paper.

Writing on Williams' work Richard Shiff says "I suspect that he and other deeply reflective artists make art because the human condition demands it. We know neither our origin nor our end; our mythologies and theologies are no less absurd than reality unanchored. Drawing and painting span the impassible gap between three dimensions and our fantasies in two. The results are "funny"—displaced, confounding, miraculous. The scene of aesthetic creation is heaven on earth."

The works collected for the exhibition similarly don't offer to neatly resolve the problems they present. As with Williams's paintings, the drawings make productive use of confusion through linework and convert informational noise to meaning.

Michael Williams (b 1978, Doylestown, US. Lives and works in Los Angeles.) has been the subject of solo and two-person exhibitions at LOK, the Kunstzone in the Lokremise, Kunstmuseum St.Gallen, Switzerland (2021); Le Consortium, Dijon, France (with Tobias Pils, 2017); Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh (2017); Musée des Beaux-Arts de Montréal, Canada (2015); and Gallery Met, New York (2015). Recent group shows include *.paint*, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago (2020); Joe Bradley, Oscar Tuazon, Michael Williams, Brant Foundation Art Study Center, Greenwich, Connecticut (2018); *The Trick Brain*, Aïshti Foundation, Lebanon (2017); *High Anxiety: New Acquisitions*, Rubell Family Collection, Miami (2016); *Artists and Poets*, Secession, Vienna (2015); and *The Forever Now: Contemporary Painting in an Atemporal World*, Museum of Modern Art, New York (2014). His work is in the permanent collections of institutions including the Dallas Museum of Art; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; and Musée des Beaux-Arts de Montréal, Canada.

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