

MARC STRAUS NEW YORK

PAUL PRETZER

On view: February 15 – March 31, 2019
Opening Reception: Friday February 15, 6pm - 8pm

MARC STRAUS is pleased to announce Paul Pretzer's fourth solo exhibition of new paintings. Pretzer returns to portraiture with his signature dark humor.

Pretzer frequently references famous Renaissance paintings and we are encouraged to make the associations amid his oddities and allusions to contemporary popular culture. For example, Pretzer's depiction of hands, as in the gesticulations of *Blender* (2018) or the fondling touch of the tattooed *Hasenmann* (2018)— evoke Zurbaran and Da Vinci, yet these are pure inventions and wonderfully contemporary. Pretzer's use of symbolism largely invokes the surrealists but his quixotic choices of characters and narrative is very much his own.

He loves to play with historical genres. *Portrait* (2018), composed in the classical manner, cropped at mid-torso, is a strange yet captivating figure straight out of Blaxploitation culture—her Afro hair could easily replace the halos from 15th century religious paintings. The levitating fruit over the headless friar's body in *Brüter* (2018) creates an image of disquiet and wonder. Pretzer's skull in *Wenn Zwei Lachen* (2018) symbolizes that we are indeed fallible; but topped with an apple with a laughing face, we are once again reminded to see the lighter side of life and death.



Paul Pretzer, *Brüter*, 2018
Oil on wood
31.5 x 22.05 in (80 x 56 cm)

However off-center the subject matter, we are presented with Pretzer's uncompromised pursuit of form, color, painterliness and composition. It is in the folds of fabric or modelling of skin and bone where Pretzer's acute technique shines—achieved by an exacting control of light and shadow.

Paul Pretzer (b. 1981) completed his MFA in 2007 at the Hochschule für Bildende Künste in Dresden, Germany. With immediate success he has exhibited widely since 2006, including solo shows in Basel, Berlin, Düsseldorf, and New York. His work is in numerous private and public collections such as Städtische Galerie, Dresden, Stadtgalerie Kiel, The Rubell Family Collection and the Sør Rusche Collection. Paul Pretzer is represented by MARC STRAUS Gallery, New York.

For more information, please contact Ken Tan (212-510-7646 / ken@marcstraus.com)