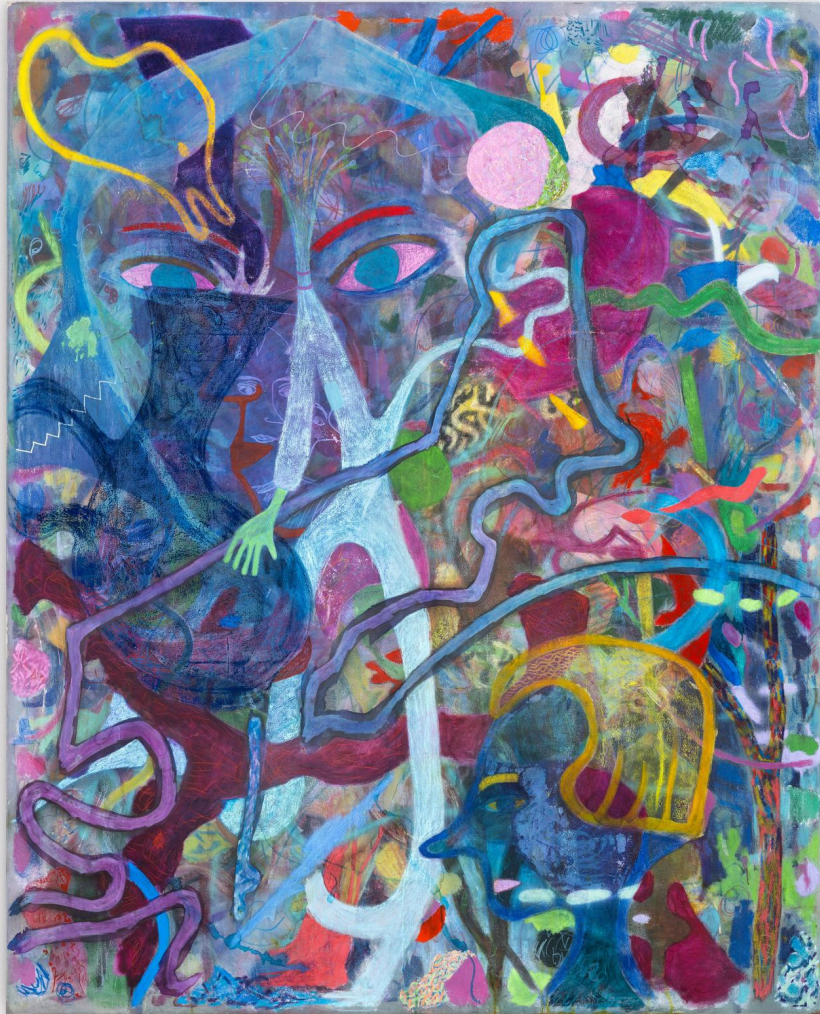


## Max Brand: Blue Elevator Pitch

30 Orchard St, Gallery 1 ▪ Sept 10 - Oct 12, 2022



The verbal description of a visual form should take about 10 seconds. This is the optimal length of time for words to drift to the top and make their way out into the conversational arena. Longer than this, and they might need to be rended forcefully from the corners of the brain in which they linger. Tell me about yourself. Keep it positive. Don't cry. There's no 13th floor. Your back brain controls the yaw. It's the elevator that controls the pitch and that's what allows the scale to go sky high. The hertz are in the details. Theirs is the timbre of a single raindrop turning to steam on the

pavement amidst a downpour.

*Blue Elevator Pitch*, Max Brand's first solo exhibition in New York in six years, is comprised of 12 large-scale canvases, each increasingly dense, eclectic, and maximal. Untitled and identified by arbitrary numbers, they propose a collapsing of abstract and representational space, eradicating the subject-ground relationship and suggesting an almost Jungian territory in which familiar forms are revealed to be monsters, morphological anomalies, complexes of the ego and the collective unconscious. Each picture contains at least one "stain," a region that resembles a pile of bird droppings, or else nods to a palette. Are these areas in which Brand mixed paint, leaving it to dry as if he is still standing next to the work, tinkering with it? Our expectations—that a limb might connect to a central mass, that a houseplant might delineate a domicile, or that a gesture might track back to an expressive domain, are dashed, made absurd, or revealed as fallacy. Brand shows us contemporary figurative painting's totemic apotheosis. It looks a little bit like the 1970's.

Max Brand's process is famously solipsistic, based on long periods of reflection and careful "building up," followed by unpredictable bursts of redaction, reconstitution, and expressive markmaking. Eschewing the media specificity and creation fetish of much contemporary painting, Brand works with all the tools available to him, layering stains, printed pictures, painstakingly handmade patches of dense and imponderable drawing, large gestural abstractions, limbs, vehicles, and freeform amalgamations borne of oilstick, acrylic, ink, spray, gouache and paint with an agnosticism and freedom with few parallels in visual art. Like free jazz dreamworks, his pictures propose their own structure, and similarly recalibrate the senses in a way that is pervasive and difficult to name. Many of the works in *Blue Elevator Pitch* began half a decade ago, and by hacking into these studio "givens," Brand proposes that his own finished artworks might themselves be considered a raw material. It is the delicate balance between making a picture and wiping it away that produces his fascinating and imponderable "Pitch."

Max Brand is a painter born in Leipzig in 1982. He studied at the Städelschule Frankfurt and HfG Offenbach, and has exhibited extensively throughout Europe, most recently at Galerie Jacky Strenz in Frankfurt and Galerie Crèveceour, Paris. Institutional exhibitions include GoMA, Glasgow in 2016, MoMA PS1, in 2012, and Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt in 2011. His work has been covered in Frieze, ArtNet, and Contemporary Art Daily. Brand is represented by Strenz and Galería Marta Cervera, Madrid.