

**ALL INTERLACED: FACING GAIA AT PERES PROJECTS**

ExHypnosis, 2023: Dylan Solomon Kraus

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Marking his third solo exhibition with Peres Projects, and his first in Berlin, amidst the bustling Berlin Gallery Weekend, 'ExHypnosis' showcases an intriguing ensemble of 11 illuminous works on oil (all 2023) by Ohio-born and New-York-based artist Dylan Solomon Kraus. On a drizzly afternoon in Berlin, the gallery, which boasts a 500-square-meter space with inviting large pane windows, lures passer-by in off the street with vibrant, celestial paintings that contrast sharply with the colossal modernist structures that line the Karl-Marx-Allee.

Upon entering, we encounter Exhypnosis, a work whose title reflects the overarching credo of the exhibition. For Kraus, this multifaceted terminology critically engages with two interlocking sets of ideas: 'Hypnos', the god who represents the personification of sleep in Greek Mythology and 'hypnosis', referring to the half-conscious trance state used in psychotherapy. The title of the exhibition, 'ExHypnosis', then, refers to a break from this suspended unawareness, urging us to wake from our every-day slumber to catch a glimpse of a re-enchanted natural world.

Caught up as we are in the repetition of our alienated techno-capitalist reality, much like lumbering, automated zombies, Kraus' works are a call to mindfulness, to renegotiate our universal understanding of and alarming disconnect with the all-encompassing natural world (wildlife, water, animals and the cosmos). This is apparent in *Exhypnosis*, which depicts a luminous blue boat, modest in size, setting sail into a vast midnight-blue ocean which melts, mirror-like, into a sky of drifting clouds. Beneath the shimmering, soft-spoken moon towards the

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top-right-hand corner of the canvas, the celestial image of an indeterminate civilisation emerges from within the clouds. In fantastical splendour, we witness a dissolving of boundaries between man, civilisation, nature, and the cosmos.

Turning to the works on display, we are reminded of Bruno Latour's prescient theory of 'Facing Gaia'. In Latour's theory, the Greek goddess of all-encompassing mother earth, Gaia, is called into question. Latour stresses a need for a 'redistribution of agency' by denouncing an anthropocentric hierarchy of power and imploring humanity to 'face Gaia': Once we accept our limitations in controlling the natural world, we must learn to re-distribute power amongst nature, which, for Latour, includes all living or animated entities as well as the cosmos. Latour recalls that all living or animated things in the world are "*interlinked, folded, and entangled in each other [meaning] that the issue of freedom and dependence is equally valid for humans as it is for the partners of the natural world.*" As such, 'Facing Gaia' implores us to take responsibility and to question power dynamics within our current feedback loop, in which all living entities affect one another and, rather than merely residing in an environment, continuously fashion it.



The reciprocal feedback loop between all living matter, in which all entities absorb the consequential output of one another, is further explored in the series *Times of Day*. Here, a set of three abstract works composed in alternating shades of vibrant blues and hints of luminous greens act as a triptych. We are confronted with a resplendent cosmos; different times of day are depicted using layered and repetitive geometric signs and symbols reminiscent of planets, moons, and stars – signature motifs within Kraus' practice. A further piece of the series *Times of Day (For Blinky)*, paired with *Hymns to the Night, Novalisstrasse (The Shining)* depicts scattered planets amidst a midnight-blue cosmos. The depiction of the planets in the work as rhythmic, cyclical formations, suggests a movement and becoming through space and time. Moreover, the occasional suspension of planets borne aloft by interlaced strings calls to mind models of the solar system. The strings also raise questions of fate, such as who or what controls our complex universe: We are reminded of a puppeteer mastering the preordained movements of the cosmos.