02 Jul 2026

J. Parker Valentine
Panthalassa
02.07. - 22.08.2026

Panthalassa, the name of the ancient ocean that once surrounded the Earth and in which the early evolution of life unfolded, forms the starting point for J. Parker Valentine's fifth solo exhibition at Galerie Max Mayer. Through new drawings and bronze sculptures and with the gallery's outside becoming part of the exhibition for the first time, Panthalassa explores shifting ways of seeing, where images emerge and familiar boundaries begin to blur. Like the ancient ocean itself, it evokes a world in constant change, where borders remain fluid. This sense of transformation extends into the courtyard, where a bronze sculpture wraps around a tree, blurring the distinction between natural growth and sculptural form, as though another living presence were emerging from the water.

In *The Log from the Sea of Cortez*, John Steinbeck writes, "An ocean without its unnamed monsters would be like a completely dreamless sleep." His image of the sea points to what escapes immediate recognition, suggesting that the unknown is not simply a gap in our understanding, but a necessity.

For Panthalassa, several works in the exhibition have developed from a large-scale canvas worked on over many months. Through cutting, washing, rearranging and redrawing, new compositions take shape while traces of earlier states remain within the woven surface of the canvas. Moving between abstraction and figurative suggestion, the drawings seem to shift with each encounter, while a rotating work carries this process further, drawing the viewer's gaze into a changing, tunnel-like depth. Its circular movement recalls cycles of time and evolution, as if the image were still in the process of becoming.

