

Meredith Rosen Gallery is pleased to present *I met your needs in the bar down the street*, a solo exhibition of new paintings by Tina Braegger spanning both gallery locations at 11 East 78th Street and 11 East 80th. The exhibition opens May 12 and remains on view through June 27.

Tina Braegger employs the canvas as a container for appropriation and manipulation. In a new series of large scale works, the indexical mark of painting grates against the jovial “dancing bear” symbol, eroding its connotations, but never fully erasing them.

Braegger utilizes the Grateful Dead “dancing bear” as a vessel for endless permutations. The bear motif was originally a one-off illustration on the back of an album, has come to represent not only the band, but was immediately bootlegged and morphed into an emblem of LSD, counterculture, and spread so vastly through popular culture over decades that it has been used by large fashion corporations, amongst seemingly endless other contexts. The bear is thus a sponge of symbolic value, evoking a plethora of vestigial meanings. Through her highly conceptual practice, Braegger has taken this form as a polarity of painting’s deeply subjective value, and pushed it through an exceptionally dynamic painterly practice.

In this expansive two gallery exhibition, Braegger takes the “dancing bear” into multi-figure compositions and pushes their representational quality to the extreme, wherein the motif is fragmented, combustible yet still holds on to its recognizable form. These large scale works particularly hone in on moments of violence, where the dancing bears fight each other or are otherwise targeted or trampled on. In doing so, Braegger injects the motif with its own kind of subjectivity, wherein the constant practice of bootleg and repetition places the symbol in a fight for its meaning, constantly pushing against the frame of painting’s history. This push and pull of meaning parallels the bear’s own symbolic history, as it has been ingested by corporate interests, come to represent the dark side of 1970’s psychedelia and constantly resurrected through nostalgia for the past.

The ceaselessly repeated symbol acts as a foil to the painterly mark, tied historically and materially to the individual artist. Through this process, Braegger challenges notions of individual genius, originality and artistic authority. Each work becomes a bootleg of the prior—metamorphosing *ad infinitum*.

Tina Braegger (b. 1985, Lucerne) lives and works in Berlin and Zurich. Recent exhibitions include *Curiosity Killed the Cat*, a two-person exhibition with Sturtevant curated by Udo Kittelmann at de 11 Lijnen in Belgium (2021) and a solo exhibition at Neuer Essener Kunstverein (2022). Her works have additionally been exhibited at Kunsthalle Bern; Luma Westbau, Zurich; Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art, Oslo; Istituto Svizzero di Roma, Rome; Kunstmuseum St. Gallen, St. Gallen; Fondation Ricard, Paris; Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia; among other venues. This is Braegger’s second exhibition at Meredith Rosen Gallery.