

DEREK ELLER GALLERY



Slazerbeam, 2023-24, acrylic on canvas, 20 x 16 inches

EJ HAUSER

Grow Room

February 8 – March 9, 2024

Opening Reception: Thursday,

February 8, 6–8 pm

Derek Eller Gallery is pleased to present a solo exhibition of new paintings and drawings by EJ Hauser entitled *Grow Room*. Hauser's graphic-abstract hybrids simultaneously offer macro and micro glimpses of nature effervescing with energy and life. *Grow Room* conjures the nurturing period of germination which begins indoors during the cold months before nature takes over and performs its magic and electricity.

Grow rooms, greenhouses, orangeries, or sun porches are analogous to artist studios where materials and energies coalesce to grow artworks. For Hauser,

drawings act as the seedlings for paintings. The journey begins with schematic-like drawings, made with permanent marker and rendered with immediacy. Marks mingle with brushstrokes, as Hauser methodically reshapes forms, overlays color, improvises relationships, and eventually transforms the composition into a finished painting which, in their words, “becomes itself and has the energy of something that’s alive.” Under-paintings radiate beneath the surface like a visual diary of discovery. A recent addition, acrylic paint, has provided a kind of fuzzy opacity which Hauser refers to as “weather”.

Oceanographer Jacques Cousteau has written, “The sea, once it casts its spell, holds one in its net of wonder forever.” With the works in this exhibition, Hauser strives to harness that sense of awe and infuse it with joy and playfulness. Each painting is named after a strain of marijuana – i.e., *Starmalade*, *Eden’s Delight*, and *Blue Dream* – another reference evoked by *Grow Room*. In *Slazerbeam*, a vast topography captured in an intimate scale, red mountain peaks are overlaid with staccato almost digital blue marks, reminiscent of precipitation or prehistoric cave drawings. Hazy clouds of green “weather” float like cumulus clouds in the sky, casting a shadow—or is that an oasis?—on the ground below. It is a symphony of marks and colors, a reminder of nature’s grandeur and mystery.

EJ Hauser lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. They received a BFA from University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA in 1991 and an MFA from University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC in 1998. They are a recipient of the 2021 American Academy of Arts and Letters

Purchase Prize. Hauser was the Fall 2023 Teiger Mentor in the Arts at Cornell University, Ithaca, NY. They have shown extensively throughout the United States and Europe, including Parrasch Heijnen, Los Angeles, CA; Anton Kern Gallery, New York, NY; Haverkamp Leistenschneider, Berlin, DE; Sperone Westwater, New York, NY; White Columns, New York, NY; Participant Inc., New York, NY; Gavin Brown's Enterprise, New York, NY; Cheim & Read, New York, NY; The Journal Gallery, New York, NY; AWHRHVAR, Los Angeles, CA; The Breeder, Athens, GR; The Contemporary Art Museum, Raleigh, NC and Wayne State University, Detroit, MI. This will be their third solo exhibition at the gallery.

Derek Eller Gallery is located at 300 Broome Street between Eldridge Street and Forsyth Street. Hours are Tuesday - Saturday, 11am to 6pm, and by appointment. For further information please contact the gallery at 212.206.6411 or visit www.derekeller.com.