

Daniele Toneatti
Brand New Love
February 16 – April 14, 2024
Opening reception Friday, February 16, 6–9 PM

Peres Projects is pleased to present *Brand New Love*, an exhibition of new paintings by Daniele Toneatti (b. 1989 in Venice, IT), marking the artist's debut with the gallery and his first solo presentation in Milan.

Blurring lines is central to Daniele Toneatti's practice. In *Brand New Love*, figuration dissolves into abstraction, and virtuosic technical skills coexist with intuitive, visceral languages. Oil paintings reminiscent of rough charcoal sketches hang in a state of permanent incompleteness, alongside completed paintings that hasty washes of paint have obliterated. Here the very process of making paintings is atomized, and each of its constituents given equal attention and importance. Like the interlocking pieces of a puzzle, drawing, color, and subject are reworked into myriad combinations, as the artist's studio seems to seep into the exhibition space.

Informed by postmodern approaches and theories, where interpretation transcends creation, Toneatti cultivates a singular appropriation-based practice. The artist collects and paints from found images ranging from stock photographs to art historical references, which he remixes and samples into a versatile body of work. In *just before they split* (2023), he paints a photograph of a framed Jean-Honoré Fragonard painting. In his rendition of the French rococo painter's composition, a blurred and coarse brushwork emphasizes the transient and sensual nature of the embrace, while obscuring the identification of the source image. In *Classic Impression* (2023), on the other hand, Toneatti recreates, through a romantic lens, a stock photograph of an overweight boy sitting on the beach. Here, his delicate, impressionistic brushstrokes and pastel color palette infuse the image with a tenderness and charm reminiscent of the work of post-impressionist painter Pierre Bonnard. In so doing, Toneatti engages with a lineage of artists who envision a renewed way of making art by reframing, restaging, and reinterpreting existing images in order to produce new contexts and meanings.

"Underneath a picture there is always another picture," Douglas Crimp wrote in *October* in 1979, reflecting back on *Pictures*, an exhibition he curated two years before, which introduced a new generation of artists later known as the Pictures Generation—a recurrent source of interest for Toneatti. Just like the Pictures Generation acknowledged, or reacted to, the growing influence of mass media on shaping culture, Toneatti's practice resonates with current patterns of visual consumption in today's image economy. His body of work engages with the ubiquity of images in contemporary life, emphasizing their circulation across the now porous boundaries and hierarchies that used to structure cultural ecosystems. A permeability also evidenced by the formal diversity of the work itself.

Indeed, *Brand New Love* illustrates the stylistic boundlessness of Toneatti's practice, and the fluidity and ease with which he navigates his way from one pictorial language to another. More than a reflection on our current image-driven society, Toneatti's work is, above all, a personal and passionate dialogue with art history. Each work captures an encounter with an image, translated through varying pictorial approaches freed from any formula or recipe. The artist, who treats each canvas as a page in a diary, excavates and records images that linger in his memory—like retinal afterimages—sometimes burying them again under new strata of images. Works such as *Don't Look Now* (2023) and *Romantic Painting* (2023) present a dense palimpsest-like surface layered with a multitude of intertwined motifs that simultaneously cancel and complete each other; while in others like *flight of ideas* (2023) and *hard truths* (2023) the canvas serves as a sketch pad, where a same motif is repeated and revised.

In Toneatti's work, process and product share equal prominence. His emphasis on the fragmented and the unfinished gestures toward Raphael Rubinstein's concept of "provisional painting," described in an eponymous article published in *Art in America* in 2009—that is, works that look "casual, dashed off, tentative, unfinished, self-cancelling." Embracing doubt and uncertainty rather than monumentality and permanence, Toneatti adopts a humble approach. This is especially apparent in *Venetian Red* (2023), a painting derived from a snapshot of a photograph by Cindy Sherman, which he took at a retrospective of the artist's work. The expanses of red hues that dominate most of the canvas are actually Toneatti's fingers partially yet deliberately obscuring the camera lens. This image, captured furtively, encapsulates a moment of both devotion and shyness.

Within the exhibition space, the paintings are arranged in clusters, fostering free associations of images and ideas. Invisible links connect the works, forming mysterious constellations as the artist unfolds his own journey through visual culture and art history. While Toneatti's images exude a sense of déjà vu, many of the references he draws from remain elusive. This uncertainty creates boundless surfaces of projection, allowing the viewer to connect the works with their own mental image bank. Through processes of selection, digestion, reformulation, Toneatti interrupts the flow of images that submerges us every day. *Brand New Love* embodies a renewed, and ultimately romantic, way of absorbing images, inviting us in turn to reflect on our own pantheon of pictures.

This is Daniele Toneatti's first solo exhibition with Peres Projects. Toneatti had his solo debut at Open Forum in Berlin in 2023. Titled *Das Ding*, the exhibition explored our era of image nihilism, questioning the flattening of both culture and our aesthetic experiences.

For further information and sales inquiries, please contact milan@peresprojects.com.
For press and media inquiries, please contact media@peresprojects.com or +49 (0) 30 275 950770.