

Kai Matsumiya

Zoe Pettijohn Schade

*Attempts at Self-Organization:
Prevailing Bonds*

March 1 – 30, 2024

Opening: Thursday, March 7, 6-8pm

Kai Matsumiya presents a single-work solo exhibition by Zoe Pettijohn Schade, *Attempts at Self-Organization: Prevailing Bonds*.

Previously, the exhibition *The Hard Problem* (2023) initiated the series "Attempts at Self-Organization" in 35 graphite drawings and gouache paintings on hard-marbled paper. Schade defined and explored the elements foundational to "Attempts at Self-Organization", including ideal-platonic shapes of reflecting cubes, hexagons, pyramids, pentagons, and dodecahedrons. All such elements were meticulously drawn from life using mirror devices that generate internally repeated structures and patterns. Tiles of painted weeds, rock formations, and worm-like threads appear and intermingle with these three-dimensional shapes, as do purely 'psychological' forms, Rorschach blots and fragmented particles. Her mid-size paintings, *Attempts at Self-Organization 1-9*, incorporate these clusters of individual elements organized into progressively labyrinthine configurations.



Zoe Pettijohn Schade

Attempts at Self Organization: Prevailing Bonds, 2024

Gouache, Palladium, and Gold Leaf on Paper

50 x 33 in. 127 x 83.82 cm

Her largest work in the series *Attempts at Self-Organization: Prevailing Bonds*, a culmination of two years of attentive work (nearly 50 x 40 inches), is the first of three of the largest crowning pieces representing finalities of what she describes as "shifting sets". Any shifting set begins as a group of graphite drawings featuring distinct elements that grow into larger and more complex gouache-based paintings. These larger works oftentimes represent the culmination of the artist working through all the variables and systems of the smaller drawings and paintings that preceded it. Forthcoming large works in the series *Attempts at Self-Organization* will complicate, reconsider, and expand upon such aspects of pattern addressed thus far.

KAI MATSUMIYA

264 Canal Street 5E
New York, NY 10013
Wed - Sat 12 - 6 & by appointment

† 646 838 9595

m 617 678 4440

kaimatsumiya.com | info@kaimatsumiya.com

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In *Attempts at Self-Organization: Prevailing Bonds* Schade has specifically chosen to prioritize formations where longer edges join together. Shapes with such “prevailing bonds,” as the artist calls them, create larger organic armatures that take up a greater surface area and rest on top of other shapes, some of which are facing extinction while others clearly prosper. See, for instance, the crystalline circle formed by six pentagons bound together in the painting’s upper right half of the visual field. This ring is a strong and prevailing component within a greater game. Below it, layers of diffuse vermicular lines and leaf-like tendrils effervesce into overlapping contours and colors. Where certain other areas are cacophonous and burgeoning like the metallic gilded lines which comprise the entire back drop, there are other areas such as the tiny vegetal growth in the center right part of the painting that appear vanishing.

More suborders are often proliferated when the sheer scale of order itself is expanded. These suborders attempt to self-correct and compete for self-preservation – and usually at the expense of others. This larger painting, *Attempts at Self-Organization: Prevailing Bonds*, attempts to live on its own with its constituent elements while a quiet maximalism and poetic mélange emerges.

Reflecting on the series, Schade says, “there is not one single pattern exerting itself, but rather many patterns jostling for position.” With its emphasis on strong and stable connections or “bonds,” the work *Attempts at Self-Organization: Prevailing Bonds* explores, in the artist’s words, “maybe the most dominant paradigm of how we conceive of life and society – a laissez faire competition, or Darwinian model” in which the strongest living things survive and thrive.

Attempts at Self-Organization: Prevailing Bonds is part of a program of one-work solo exhibitions at Kai Matsumiya, preceded by Maryam Jafri’s *Independence Day 1934-1975*. Each of the remaining two large works in Zoe Pettijohn Schade’s *Attempts at Self-Organization* series will be honored with a solo exhibition.

Zoe Pettijohn Schade lives and works in Boston, MA. Previous solo exhibitions include *The Hard Problem* (2023), *Crowds* (2016) and *Shifting Sets* (2018) at Kai Matsumiya Fine Arts Gallery. Schade’s paintings are currently featured in the 14th Shanghai Biennale at the Power Station of Art in Shanghai, CN. Schade has also featured in group exhibitions including the 2019 deCordova New England Biennial at the deCordova Museum in Lincoln, MA, *Our Secret Fire* at Hirschl & Adlr Modern, New York, NY; *Less is a Bore: Maximalist Art & Design* at Institute for Contemporary Art, Boston, MA, and *The 10th White Columns Annual* at White Columns, New York, NY. Schade was granted the Blanche E. Colman Award by the Bank of New York Mellon in 2020. In 2012-13, she traveled to France on a Fulbright U.S. Research Scholars Grant to work with a collection of 18th century textile paintings culminating in a solo exhibition at the Mona Bismarck American Center for Art and Culture in Paris.

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