

Ehrlich Steinberg  
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Tuesday - Saturday 12-6pm

September 14 - November 2 2024  
Opening: Saturday September 14 6-9pm

Emi Mizukami  
*Million Bubbles*

Ehrlich Steinberg is pleased to present the solo exhibition *Million Bubbles* by Tokyo-based Japanese artist Emi Mizukami. The exhibition comprises a new series of paintings that form a circular narrative centered around various motifs and references, including the ancient Roman god Mercurius, the fictional world of Anglo-Irish satirist Jonathan Swift's 1726 *Gulliver's Travels* and Mexican writer Juan Rulfo's 1955 novel *Pedro Páramo*. Mercurius, featuring as changing forms throughout each painting, acts as a key symbol of opposites and duality in the exhibition, his alchemic namesake 'mercury' simultaneously existing as both solid metal and liquid. Within the paintings, motifs and characters overlap in disjointed chronological order, crystallizing and dissolving the narrative cycle.

At once allegorical and abstruse, Mizukami's work develops a dense visual and material language, engaging with ancient and contemporary modes of representation. Repeated symbols and imagery emerge across Mizukami's practice, including ancient mythological motifs such as snakes, swords and angels, disembodied and enlarged hands and feet, and contemporary and pop culture references.

Building up the painting's surface through numerous layers of imagery and sand paste-thickened paint, recurring depictions become simultaneously concretized and obscured as they emerge or submerge. Although earlier images now lie hidden underneath the surface, Mizukami does not distinguish any hierarchy between these visible and invisible layers. Instead, the hidden and exposed - described by the artist as the "disappearing" and "remaining" images - are seen as mutually developing the painting's pictorial, temporal and structural plane.

These sealed under-layers resurface on the backs of the paintings as loosely drawn and painted fragments from the artist's memory. In this way, the work's representational structure and allegorical timeline is further complicated as supposed origin images and initial sketches are reconstituted as final marks and remembered traces.

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Emi Mizukami (b. 1992, Tokyo, JP) lives and works in Tokyo, JP. Mizukami received her BFA in Oil Painting from Tama Art University, Tokyo in 2017. Previous solo exhibitions include *Pale Phantom* at King's Leap, NY (2024); *And so it goes* at Larder, Los Angeles, CA (2023), *So it goes* at 4649, Tokyo, JP (2022); *Catharsis Bed* at CADAN YURAKUCHO, Tokyo, JP (2022) and *Dear sentiment* at TOKAS Hongo, Tokyo, JP (2021).