

# Petzel

## *Multi-User Dungeon (MUD)*

Curated by Simon Denny

February 21 – March 30, 2024

35 E 67th Street, Third Floor

Petzel is pleased to present *Multi-User Dungeon (MUD)*, a group exhibition opening Wednesday, February 21, 2024, curated by Simon Denny. The show will be on view through March 30, 2024, at Petzel's Upper East Side location at 35 East 67th Street, Third Floor. *Multi-User Dungeon (MUD)* features works by etoy.corporation, Öyvind Fahlström, Genevieve Goffman, Jack Goldstein, Matthias Groebel, Peter Halley, Yngve Holen, Tishan Hsu, Josh Kline, Isabelle Frances McGuire, Seth Price, Harris Rosenblum, Avery Singer, Suzanne Treister, and Anicka Yi.

The exhibition takes its title from an historical genre of computer game, called Multi-User Dungeons (MUDs). Early online adventure games often based on genres like fantasy or science-fiction, technically speaking, MUDs were text-based software that accepted connections from many simultaneous users. Starting in the 1970s, MUDs were the predecessors of contemporary Massive Multiplayer Online Role Playing Games (MMORPGs or MMOs). The era of the MUD's emergence and prominence can be seen as an in-between time, which bridged the emergence of the commercial internet, and earlier networked systems like Bulletin Board Systems (BBS) and academic internets.

Today, as social media giants compete with startups to expand and standardize digital worlds, we find ourselves in another moment of transition, with these worlds exponentially increasing in importance and usage. The history of the MUD remains central as newer virtual worlds are designed and deployed. Hardware and software transformations—through types of screens, glasses, network structures and beyond, from online marketplaces to metaverses—affect the visual and the visceral.

*MUD* brings together artworks from many eras that can be seen to navigate the uncanny skeuomorphism of virtual worlds as they evolve over time and spill over into politics, finance and culture. They process and reflect worlds in between the analogue and the digital using “traditional” media like painting and sculpture as they meet new making tools that stem from screens, digital print and 3D print technology.

*Multi-User Dungeon (MUD)* is organized in conversation with *Dungeon*, a solo exhibition of new works by Simon Denny, presented simultaneously at Petzel's Upper East Side location at 35 East 67th Street, Parlor Floor.

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## About the Artists

**etoy / etoy.CORPORATION** (est. 1994, Zurich, Switzerland) is an art group registered as a Swiss stock corporation known for its pioneering role in internet art (etoy.INTERNET-TANK-SYSTEM / etoy.com, 1995), controversial operations like the digital hijack (1996), the domain name battle TOYWAR with eToys.com (1999), or the etoy.TANKS (mobile studio and exhibition units built in standard shipping containers).

etoy twists artistic production and appearance in a world dominated by ambivalent parameters: mass production and consumption of information and goods, global transportation, branding, maximization of profits, growing complexity, technological penetration of life and virtualization. etoy is incorporated as a privately held shareholder company to replace the traditional concept of the genius artist with a brand that is owned, controlled and fed by hundreds of stakeholders: 25 etoy.AGENTS, a few investors, art collectors and many fans. The only available product in the art market is the etoy.SHARE: unique Swiss stock certificates visually document the etoy.HISTORY and represent the idea of sharing intangible assets such as knowledge, passion and code or social networks and cultural value.

**Öyvind Fahlström** (b. 1928, Sao Paolo, Brazil, d. 1976, Stockholm, Sweden) was born in Brazil to Swedish and Norwegian parents. In 1939, at the age of ten, he was sent to Sweden to visit his grandfather and his aunt. Following compulsory military service, Fahlström entered the University of Stockholm, where he studied Art History and Classical Archaeology. Beginning in the early '50s, Fahlström experimented with different art forms, writing poetry, theater scripts, and art criticism, as well as cultural commentary for major Swedish newspapers and journals. Between 1957 and 1961, Fahlström continued to experiment with and further develop his signature motifs of “character forms” and “informal” background, involving the fragmenting of black-and-white drawings and comic strips, which he first developed in 1951-2. He met and befriended several New York artists in Stockholm in the late '50s, among them Robert Rauschenberg.

In 1961, Fahlström won a scholarship to live and work in New York, moving into Rauschenberg's studio at 128 Front Street (Jasper Johns lived in the same building). From 1962 to 1968, Fahlström was one of the most active creators of Happenings in New York, Stockholm and Paris. He created a major work, *Kisses Sweeter Than Wine* for the E.A.T.-sponsored *Nine Evenings* at the Armory in 1966. In 1969, Fahlström was honored with a traveling retrospective organized by The Museum of Modern Art in New York. He had subsequent exhibitions at the Guggenheim Museum and the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, among others. He died of colon cancer in Stockholm on November 9, 1976, at the age of forty-seven.

**Genevieve Goffman** (b. 1991, Washington, D.C.) is based in New York City. She graduated from the Yale MFA in 2020. Goffman's recent solo exhibitions include *Before it all Went Wrong* at Hyacinth Gallery in New York in 2022; *Grind* at Money Gallery, St Petersburg, RU, 2021; *Here Forever* at Alyssa Davis Gallery, New York, NY, 2020; *Hotel Heaven* at Lubov, New York, NY, 2019. Goffman's installation *The View*, was exhibited in 2023 at the Museum of Applied arts in Vienna Austria. Goffman has exhibited at NADA x Foreland in 2021 with Alyssa Davis Gallery and Bienvenue Art Fair (Paris) in 2021 with Lily Robert.

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**Jack Goldstein** (b. 1945, Montreal, Canada, d. 2003, San Bernardino, California) was a member of the first graduating class from CalArts, where he studied under John Baldessari, and alongside artists Troy Brauntuch, Eric Fischl, Matt Mullican, David Salle, and James Welling. His work featured prominently in a number of seminal exhibitions, including *Pictures* (1977), organized by Douglas Crimp and Helene Winer, at Artists Space in New York.

Goldstein's work has been the subject of numerous international solo presentations, including exhibitions at the Jewish Museum, New York (2013); Galerie Perrotin, Paris (2013); the Orange County Museum of Art, Newport Beach (2012); MMK Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt am Main (2009); Galerie Daniel Buchholz, Cologne (2009); Mitchell-Innes & Nash, New York (2008); Metro Pictures, New York (2005); The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2002); and Le Magasin – Centre National d'Art Contemporain, Grenoble (2002). Goldstein lived and worked in Los Angeles until his death in 2003.

**Matthias Groebel** (b. 1958, Aachen, Germany) works and lives in Cologne. Selected solo exhibitions include Ulrik, New York (2023); *A Change in Weather* (Broadcast Material 1989-2001), Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen, Düsseldorf (2022); *The Rhythms of Reception*, Schiefe Zähne, Berlin (2022); *Satellites Cast No Shadow*, curated by Andreas Selg, Drei, Cologne (2022); *Avid Signals* (Broadcast Material 1989-2001), curated by Andreas Selg, Galerie Bernhard, Zurich (2021); *Embedded Painting*, Praxis Staat, Cologne (2009); *Save from Demons*, Livingroom, Cologne (2007); *Collective Memories*, Universal Concepts Unlimited, New York (2003). A monograph of *Broadcast Material* series was published in 2022 by Edition Patrick Frey.

**Peter Halley** (b. 1953, New York, New York), amongst the electrical landscape of 1980s New York City and toward the end of the modernist era, liberated the square from its prior minimalist stage and set it on fire for a new generation. Using geometry to express the physical and psychological aspects of contemporary urban space in the burgeoning digital age, his dynamic and radically colored paintings introduced a bold new abstraction. On Halley's flattened canvas planes, or integrated seamlessly into architectural spaces, shapes become elevated from mere form to conjure the prisons, cells, conduits, and apartment blocks of 21st-century life, connecting us as viewers to the realities of our isolated modular existence.

**Yngve Holen** (b. 1982, Braunschweig, Germany) lives and works in Oslo, NO. Recent solo exhibitions include *Neuroeconomics* at Spazio Maiocchi, Milan, IT (2022); *Foreign Object Debris* at X Museum, Beijing, CN (2021); *Overbeck-Preis für bildende Kunst der Gemeinnützigen*, at Overbeck-Gesellschaft Kunstverein Lübeck, Lübeck, DE (2020); *HEINZERLING*, Kunsthall Stavanger, Stavanger, NO and Kunsternes Hus, Oslo, NO (both 2019); *ROSETTA(DECORAZIONE)*, San Paolo Converso, Milan, IT (2018); *Bagatelle*, Fine Arts, Sydney, AU (2018); *Robert-Jacobsen-Preis*, Haus Würth, Berlin, DE (2017); *VERTICALSEAT*, Kunsthalle Basel, Basel, CH (2016).

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**Tishan Hsu** (b. 1951, Boston, Massachusetts) lives and works in New York. He studied environmental design and architecture at MIT and received his BSAD in 1973 and M.Arch in 1975. His first exhibition in New York was at Pat Hearn Gallery, and in 1987, he had a one-person show at Leo Castelli. Hsu's survey exhibition, *Liquid Circuit*, opened at SculptureCenter in 2020, following its first iteration at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles. In 2019, *Delete*, was held at Empty Gallery, Hong Kong. Hsu's first New York gallery exhibition in 32 years, *skin-screen-grass*, opened at Miguel Abreu Gallery in October 2021. In 2022, His work was included in the 59th Venice Biennale: *The Milk of Dreams*, and in the 58th Carnegie International, Pittsburgh: *Is it morning for you yet? Tishan Hsu: recent work* is currently on view at the Secession, Vienna; and his first European survey exhibition will be held at MAMCO, Geneva, in March 2024.

**Josh Kline** (b. 1979, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania) lives and works in New York. The Whitney Museum of American Art in New York recently presented the first U.S. museum survey of Kline's work. His film *Adaptation* (2019-2022) recently screened at LAXART on the occasion of his first solo exhibition in Los Angeles. Kline's work has been exhibited internationally at Astrup Fearnley Museet, Oslo (2020); Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin, Italy (2016); Portland Art Museum, Oregon (2016); and Modern Art Oxford, UK (2015), among others. He has participated in group exhibitions including the Whitney Biennial, New York (2019); *New Order: Art and Technology in the Twenty-First Century*, Museum of Modern Art, New York (2019); MoMA PS1, New York (2013, 2012); and *2015 Triennial: Surround Audience*, New Museum, New York, among others.

**Isabelle Frances McGuire** (b. 1994, Austin, Texas) lives and works in Chicago. Selected solo and two person presentations include *Scherben* (Berlin, DE), *King's Leap* (New York, NY), *Mickey* (Chicago, IL), *Good Weather* at Et al. (San Francisco, CA), *From The Desk of Lucy Bull* (Los Angeles, CA), and *Prairie* (Chicago, IL). McGuire will stage a two-person exhibition at *What Pipeline* (Detroit, MI) later this year.

**Seth Price** (b. 1973, Sheikh Jarrah, East Jerusalem, Palestine) lives in New York City. His work has been the subject of numerous one-person exhibitions including most recently the Aspen Art Museum (2019), MoMA/PS1 (2018), the ICA London (2018), and the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam (2017), and he has participated in Documenta 13 (2012) and the Venice Biennial (2011).

**Harris Rosenblum** (b. 1994, Baltimore, Maryland) is a sculptor based in NY, NY. His recent solo exhibitions include *Inorganic Demons* (Sara's, NY, 2023) and *Relics of The Corrupted Blood* (Blade Study, NY, 2022). His work is an investigation into the spiritual potential of contemporary alienation. He is interested in craft, post-industrial materiality, manufacturing, and the novel intelligences borne by networks. He is a contributor and moderator of Do Not Research, a digitally native community and publishing platform. Rosenblum is a founding partner of Transcendence Creative, the first 360 corporation with a historical materialist approach to brand identity.

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**Avery Singer** (b. 1987, New York, New York) was born and raised in New York, NY. Singer studied at the Städelschule, Frankfurt am Main in 2008, and she received her B.F.A. from Cooper Union, New York NY in 2010. During her studies, Singer engaged in performance art, video making, as well as sculpture utilizing carpentry, metal casting and welding. After graduation, she discovered her chosen art form from an unanticipated experiment with SketchUp, a program used by her peers to design exhibition spaces, and airbrushed a black-and-white painting based on a digital illustration. Since then, Singer has employed the binary language of computer programs and industrial materials in order to remove the trace of the artist's hand while engaging the tradition of painting and the legacy of modernism. Her first self-portrait, *Self Portrait (Summer 2018)* (2018), exhibited at the 2019 Venice Biennale, incorporated a new process with liquid rubber, spray bottles, and watered-down white paint to achieve the reproduction of foggy glass. Often reimagining the subject of painting and image-making as the subject itself, by disengaging with romanticized views, Singer creates her own way of seeing.

**Suzanne Treister** (b.1958, London, United Kingdom) studied at St Martin's School of Art, London (1978-1981) and Chelsea College of Art and Design, London (1981-1982) and is based in London and the French Pyrennes, having lived in Australia, New York, and Berlin. Initially recognized in the 1980s as a painter, she became a pioneer in the digital/new media/web-based field from the beginning of the 1990s, making work about emerging technologies, developing fictional worlds and international collaborative organizations. Utilizing various media, including video, the internet, interactive technologies, photography, drawing and watercolor, Treister's work has engaged with eccentric narratives and unconventional bodies of research to reveal structures that bind power, identity and knowledge. Recent solo and group exhibitions include 14th Shanghai Biennale; Helsinki Biennial, Finland; P.P.O.W. Gallery, New York (2023-4); High Line, New York; Palace of Culture and Science, Warsaw (2022).

**Anicka Yi** (b. 1971, Seoul, South Korea) lives and works in New York City. A survey of her work was recently on view at Pirelli Hangar Bicocca in Milan, Italy through summer 2022. She has had solo exhibitions in leading international institutions including the recent Hyundai Commission, Turbine Hall, Tate Modern, London (2021); Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York (2017); Fridericianum, Kassel (2016); Kunsthalle Basel, MIT List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge (2015); The Kitchen, New York (2015); and Cleveland Museum of Art (2014). She has participated in numerous group exhibitions, including the Venice Biennale (2019) and Whitney Biennial, New York (2017). In 2019, the artist launched "Biography Fragrance," a line of three fragrances in limited edition in collaboration with Barnabé Fillion, at Dover Street Market. In autumn 2024, Yi will present a solo exhibition at Leeum Museum of Art in Seoul.

Petzel Gallery is located on the parlor floor and third floors of 35 East 67th Street New York, NY 10065. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday from 10:00 AM–6:00 PM. For press inquires, please contact Ricky Lee at ricky@petzel.com, or call (212) 680-9467.