



MUSEUM IM BELLPARK

A forum for art, photography and history

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Greg Parma Smith Shells

April 13 to July 6, 2025

The works of Greg Parma Smith gain a special radiance in the tension between stylization and organic forms. The Swiss-American artist (*1983, Cambridge, MA, USA) approaches his current works with a motif-driven focus on a "universal" iconography. Drawing from the classical principles of painting, Greg Parma Smith creates a technical intensification that evokes a kind of fantastic hyperreality. For the exhibition at Museum im Bellpark, Parma Smith presents new paintings and combines them with drawings that explore the fragility of casings and coverings.

The craftsmanship involved in the creation of illusion is the central point of Greg Parma Smith's most recent paintings. Fixed yet detached, his compositions of geometric shapes and structures make nature-inspired motifs either „appear“ individually or are brought into association with others. Embedded in a highly precise approach, Parma Smith's "Trompe-l'œil bas-relief" technique creates a particular plasticity. Firmly rooted in traditional oil painting, the artist achieves a technical enhancement that produces a kind of hyperreality. The targeted and controlled use of optical illusions not only captivates viewers aesthetically but also draws them into the spell of his art.

It is evident that the production of these works requires extremely concentrated precision work, almost computational efforts, making the color gradients and placements appear so perfectly and plastically that its human creator almost disappears from the works of art. This applies equally to his highly ambitious drawings, which in the exhibition are combined with his paintings. His current pencil drawings portray the fragility of the coverings and casings of both human and non-human organisms—"shells."

Although the signs and forms in Parma Smith's work are conceived by him, they are situated on the threshold of a "universal" iconography. His visual subjects sometimes seem like archaeological finds, which the artist has extracted from the deep layers of (human) history. As survivals from the past or speculative symbols from the future, they are arranged in strict geometry, thus also telling of alternative orders. The artist always stages an ironic rupture in his works, such as robbing clouds of their supposed sculpted form to strip them of their inherent lightness, or making the rays of the sun tangible as an incised relief. Although these configurations challenge the tactile and thus the sense of touch, we are ultimately only ever thrown back on our sight.

As Greg Parma Smith mentioned in a preliminary conversation, he sees his art as an attempt to consciously construct synthetic images of the unrepresentable world. His paintings should therefore be understood as images that are aware of their fixed nature, but undergo activation in the act of viewing them. Parma Smith's painterly compositions have the potential to interact with the viewer's imaginative repertoire, thereby extracting elements from the deposits of their own visual memory. Thus, his works also circle the question of the status of "personal images" and their intertwining with overarching visual languages.

Biographical Information

Greg Parma Smith was born in 1983 in Massachusetts, USA, and is a Swiss-American artist and painter. Since completing his art studies at Columbia University in 2007, he has lived and worked in New York.

Exhibition Program

Saturday, April 12, 2025, from 5:00 PM, Museum im Bellpark Kriens

OPENING OF THE EXHIBITION

After introductory words from Kathrin Graber, President of the Museum Association, a short artist talk between curator Hilar Stadler and artist Greg Parma Smith will take place, followed by an apéro.

Sunday, April 13, 2025, 2:30 PM, Museum im Bellpark Kriens

ARTIST TALK

Dialogical tour of the exhibition with Greg Parma Smith and the art historian and curator Arthur Fink from Berlin.

Participation (including exhibition entry): CHF 12/10

Press Images

Press images for web and print, as well as the digital press release, will be available for download from April 1, 2025 at www.bellpark.ch/presse. No password required.

Press Contact

For further inquiries, please contact:

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Support

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