

Paul Beumer, solo show

Recovering a Talisman

7 June – 30 August 2025

CAN Christina Androulidaki Gallery, Athens

CAN Gallery is pleased to present a selection of works by Paul Beumer created between 2016 and 2019, a period that marks a significant phase in the artist's evolving engagement with textiles, abstraction, and material experimentation. The works represent the emergence of Beumer's distinctive visual language—one that deliberately blurs the line between painting and textile.

Recovering a Talisman, explores the idea of textiles as vessels of symbolic resonance—objects that hold invisible meanings, subtle protections, and lingering echoes of cultural and personal histories. The exhibition's title further evokes a sense of memory, protection, and invisible force. Frayed, stained, dyed, or collaged, these pieces are imbued with a fragile mysticism, suggesting objects that have absorbed both time and intention.

Drawn from periods of research and artistic production in China and Nigeria, these works reflect the artists's ongoing investigation into abstraction, craft, and the cultural resonance of material. Beumer's journey into textile began in 2015 during a pivotal residency in Beijing, where he first turned away from the conventional painter's studio in favor of a more mobile, intuitive approach. Working with black ink on loose cloth, he drew inspiration from the ethereal spaces of classical Chinese painting—mountains, mists, and the emptiness between. The practical need for lightness and ease while traveling catalyzed a deeper conceptual shift: painting became a process of imprinting, staining, and assembling rather than depicting. These early works were often presented on the floor, echoing Zen gardens in their composition and material impermanence, as seen in exhibitions at CEAC Xiamen and later at Museum Het Valkhof and the Fries Museum.

The works from 2017, made during Beumer's time in Taiwan, reflect an engagement with historical textile aesthetics, influenced by his visit to the National Palace Museum's vast collection of Chinese artifacts. Using ink, rust, and chlorine, Beumer composed large-scale textile collages that straddle the line between painting and aged fabric. Their distressed surfaces and fragmentary compositions evoke the sensibility of archaeological remnants—visual talismans bearing traces of forgotten rituals.

By 2019, during a residency in Lagos, Nigeria, Beumer began working with indigo, a material deeply rooted in local textile heritage. This marked another shift in process: cutting fabrics into smaller strips and assembling them into rhythmic compositions. These works are less gestural but more architectural, built through repetition and nuance. Indigo's cultural weight and visual depth provided a new field for abstraction, connecting Beumer's painterly impulses to longstanding traditions of dyeing, pattern, and symbolic labor. Each piece becomes a quiet, layered construction—both intimate and expansive.

Hang against the raw, space of the bunker, the softness of fabric, the handmade touch, and the complexity of patterns create an atmosphere of intimacy and fragility that challenges the cold, brutalist space. This tension amplifies the emotional weight of the works, bringing forward themes of craftsmanship, vulnerability, shared authorship, and cultural exchange. In this setting, the textiles quietly assert their presence as collective, human-centered works rooted in tradition, while simultaneously challenging norms and claiming space for care and collaboration.

Across the works presented in *Recovering a Talisman*, Beumer plays with the formal logic of painting while embracing the material language of textile. "Various aspects of painting are reflected in my textile works," he explains, whether through the blending of warp and weft like painted color fields, or in the composition of found cloth as abstract arrangements. The pieces at CAN gallery remain unframed, hanging freely and lightly pinned to the wall; What unites them is a search for resonance—objects that don't shout, but hum. Like talismans, they protect a fragile beauty, grounding memory and gesture in fabric and form.

Bio

Paul Beumer (1982, The Netherlands) holds a BFA from the Royal Academy of Art in The Hague and is a former resident of the Rijksakademie van beeldende kunsten in Amsterdam. Over the past decade, he has cultivated a distinct practice centered on the cultural, material, and symbolic dimensions of fabric and fiber. Beumer's work is deeply informed by his experiences living and working in diverse regions—including China, Nigeria, Japan, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, and India—where he engages with local textile traditions and techniques. His approach reflects a conscious move away from the brush and canvas toward a more process-based, intuitive form of image-making rooted in dyeing, staining, and assembling cloth.

Recent solo and duo exhibitions include *Play becomes joy, joy becomes work, work becomes play* at Artisans' in Mumbai, India; *Pilgrim discovering another world* at Dürst Britt & Mayhew; *As long as you know I am waiting, take your time flowers of the spring* at Galeria de Arte Mexicano (GAM) in Mexico City; *CONDO Mexico City* at Proyecto Paralelo in Mexico City; *Paul Beumer & Willem Hussem* at Museum Jan Cunen in Oss; *He wanted kisses, but all he got was analytical anecdotes and philosophic epigrams* at Venue in Taipei, Taiwan; and *Paint Wide Mouth White* at Qingyun International Art Centre in Beijing, China. He participated in major group exhibitions at the Fries Museum in Leeuwarden, Museum Het Valkhof in Nijmegen, Museum Kranenburgh in Bergen, Museum De Paviljoens in Almere, and the Gemeentemuseum in The Hague, The Netherlands. Work by Beumer is held in private and public collections, including Museum de Domijnen, Sittard; NADA Collection, New York; the AKZO Nobel Art Foundation, Amsterdam; the collection of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Hague; the Academic Medical Centre Art Collection, Amsterdam; the Collection of the District Court of Law, Amsterdam; and the Rattan Chadha Collection, Voorschoten, Netherlands.