

Matthias Groebel
A NERVOUS SYSTEM
January 31—March 7

Ulrik is pleased to announce *A Nervous System*, Matthias Groebel's second solo exhibition at the gallery. It comprises two series of works: watercolors on canvas made in 2025 and the *Chemical* series from the 1980s.

Groebel produced the new paintings with the recent reincarnation of the machine he famously built in the 1980s and has been continuously reconstructing. He is interested in the painting's distinct microstructure achieved through the application and partial washing away of the monochrome layers of pigment. The images for *Studies for the Resurrection* were taken with a spy camera in Chinatown, not far from the gallery. *Untitled* depicts a man outside the Cologne Cathedral dressed up as a priest for the Fronleichnam procession. Material for *The Changeling*, which takes its name from the eponymous Jim Morrison song, was shot with a pinhole camera outside the Anatomical Institute of Cologne University. Groebel retrofitted an old analogue camera by replacing the lens with a tiny aperture. While this camera required extended exposure times, it transformed sharpness from a function of distance into one of stillness—moving objects disappear, and static ones achieve uniform and maximum focus. In this sense, the pinhole camera's virtually infinite depth of field invites a reading of the image analogous to the Renaissance construction of three-dimensional space.

Groebel began the *Chemical* series in 1985, at the same time as he was developing the machine. These works also use analog film photography as their material and engage Groebel's conception of "latent painting" within a picture. Trained as a pharmacist, Groebel mixed a homemade solution of gelatin, egg whites, halogen salts and silver nitrate to develop images he took in Münster. Enlarged onto canvas through this photo-emulsion technique, they merge with the gestural brushwork in oil paint.

For Groebel, the idea of "latent painting" offers an alternative to the current condition of the image, in which its latent modified version is always implicit.

Matthias Groebel (b. 1958 Aachen, Germany) works and lives in Cologne. His survey exhibition *A Change in Weather* was held at Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen, Düsseldorf in 2022. Recent solo exhibitions include *Skull Fuck*, Modern Art, London (2025); *Chemical*, Schiefe Zähne, Berlin (2024); *Phantoms All Around Me*, Gathering, London (2024); and *Sattelites Cast No Shadow*, Drei, Cologne (2022). Recent group exhibitions include: *New Technologies*, Drei (2025); Albertinum, Dresden (2024); *15th Gwangju Biennial*, curated by Nicolas Bourriaud, South Korea (2024); *Multi-User Dungeon*, curated by Simon Denny, Petzel Gallery, New York (2024); *Hoi Koeln*, Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne (2023); *Dowsing*, curated by Nick Irvin, Layr, Vienna (2023); *Under Machine Thing*, Francis Irv, New York (2023); *Unto Dust*, Fitzpatrick Gallery, Paris (2023); *Only One Step From Heaven*, La SIRA, Asnières-sur-Seine (2022); and *The Wig*, Bonner Kunstverein, Bonn (2022). Recent monographs include *Phantoms All Around Me* with a text by Luciana Parisi and Catlín Doherty (2024) and *Broadcast Material* (2022).