

Hoffman Donahue

Greg Parma Smith: *Things in the Air*
April 11 – May 23, 2026
New York

Hoffman Donahue is pleased to present a solo exhibition of new work by Greg Parma Smith.

Parma Smith's latest series, developed since 2017, explores optical effects that hold the viewer in a state of uncertainty between flatness and depth. Built from repeated geometric forms and subtle tonal shifts, his compositions appear to both recede and advance, hovering at the edge of dimensionality. Though they may resemble digital images, his process is entirely analogue, using a systematic approach to construct volume from discrete units.

Working across figuration and abstraction, Parma Smith combines traditional oil painting with layered imagery drawn from art history and contemporary visual culture. His work positions itself as a post-subculture extension of earlier painters such as Manet, Cézanne, and Johns, who were attuned to the artificiality of the image, reanimating that concern through a contemporary visual language. As he describes it, his work "seeks to create new spaces in painting that make the synthetic foundation of images more vivid, strange and sensate... putting pictures in a kind of suspension that revels in their constructed nature."

In this exhibition, references to music provide a framework for his compositions, with rhythmic, circular forms and recurring motifs suggesting sound, time, and structure. This approach allows him to further explore the relationship between representation and abstraction.

The Lark & The Nightingale offers a particularly concentrated example of this dynamic. The sky is rendered with greater geometric density than the figure's face, reversing expected hierarchies of attention. While working on the painting, Parma Smith recalled the scene in *Romeo and Juliet* in which Juliet listens for birdsong, uncertain whether she hears the lark or the nightingale—one marking the arrival of dawn, the other its postponement. Poised between two readings, the work captures a condition central to his practice: an image held just before resolution into certainty.

Greg Parma Smith was born in 1983 in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He lives and works in New York.