White Columns

Goran Medak

June 25 – August 1, 2026
Reception: Thursday, June 25, 2026, 6-8pm

White Columns is pleased to present an exhibition by Wantage, NJ-based artist Goran Medak (b. 1950, Split, Croatia.) Formally educated as an engineer but self-taught as an artist, Medak's fantastical paintings operate in a liminal space, somewhere between abstraction and representation. Informed by Old Masters like Pieter Bruegel the Elder as much as they are daily life, Medak resists observational painting, a mode that he calls "looking out the window." Instead, his works are highly aware of the picture plane, negotiating and choreographing disparate elements - and negative space - into compositions that juxtapose fields of color with areas of filigree-like detail. Medak's exhibition at White Columns — the artist's first in New York — presents a selection of earlier works from the 1980s and '90s alongside a more recent series produced throughout the past six years, after the artist's retirement from his career as a general contractor.

Raised in the former Yugoslavia and educated in Ljubljana, in his 30s Medak spent time in Paris, where he taught himself to paint by revisiting favorite paintings at the Louvre and reproducing them in his home studio, a process of self-instruction that he deems as much conceptual as pedagogical. At the borders of many of these earlier, more "academic" paintings are interventions by the artist, playful intrusions on canonical works of art that seem to anticipate his ongoing interest in the complexities of visual representation. His subsequent *Broken Symmetry Manifestation* series*,* an example of which is included in this exhibition, traded more concretely in abstraction and in the disruption of pattern.

Though their relationship to direct, observational representation is slippery, the titles of Medak's paintings frequently suggest narrative ties to phenomenological experience that might not otherwise be suggested by the images contained therein. A viewer would be hard pressed to identify any discrete mammalian forms in 1998's *Beaver Lodge at Night,* but the work nonetheless encapsulates the simultaneously eerie and uncanny feeling of making out the faint contours of a familiar scene when obscured by the cover of evening. Likewise, the more recent *Wantage* (2021) is named for the artist's current home in rural New Jersey, which is represented by a triangular slip of scenery including a field, a piece of farming equipment, a

pond and some rolling hills. Surrounding these are great painted swathes of red, yellow and blue that disorient our reading of the miniaturized bucolic scene. In *Pareidolia in Spring* (2023), named for the psychological process by which our minds read “faces” or patterns in random inanimate objects, Medak has twice incorporated his left hand, each palm raised to flank the face of an ambiguous creature, a fleeting interstice in which the “real” world seems almost to intrude upon the world of the painting.

White Columns’ 2026 summer programs focus on the work of artists who are currently represented in **White Columns’ Curated Artist Registry,** and have been organized by Violet Saxon (Curatorial Assistant) and Adeja Sterling (Gallery Assistant). Founded in the early 1980s the Registry provides a platform for artists – of all kinds – currently without gallery representation in New York. The Registry currently includes the work of more than 500 individual artists.

The Curated Artist Registry is currently open for submissions through August 6, 2026 at 11:59pm.

To learn more about the Registry, please visit: registry.whitecolumns.org

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For further information about this exhibition contact: violet@whitecolumns.org
Gallery hours: Tuesday - Saturday, 11am to 6pm.