

NINO MIER GALLERY

NEW YORK | BRUSSELS

Pieter Jennes

Bird Tales

New York | 62 Crosby St

September 7 – October 12, 2024

Nino Mier Gallery is pleased to present *Bird Tales*, our second solo exhibition with Belgian artist Pieter Jennes. The exhibition features a series of paintings, works on paper, and functional sculptures that explore the vibrancy—the beauty and the carnage—of autumn. The exhibition will be on view at our SoHo gallery in New York from September 7 to October 12, 2024.

Jennes' new works delve into autumn as a season of opulent abundance and its immanent decline. Trees burst with color, animals frolic and hunt, and fruits ripen before winter's stillness and chill sets in. Jennes translates the decline to autumn, emphasizing nature's final burst of energy before dormancy. Throughout the works, overripe fruit, energetic insects, and lively animals prepare for the coming cold. The leaves, in various stages of color and decay, symbolize the transient beauty of autumn, with Jennes utilizing vivid reds, greens, and yellows to capture the intense light and color before they fall and die.

Numerous figures are obscured within Jennes' landscapes, as though they were being swallowed up by the natural world or roguishly hiding within it. These figures, often doll-like and sometimes surrealistically floating at the edges of the canvas, add an element of mischief and play that infuses all his work. The playful nature of these hidden figures enhances the whimsical and chaotic atmosphere of the exhibition.

The oil paintings in the exhibition often incorporate elements of collage, blending painted leaves and other motifs to create a layered, textural effect. Jennes' paper works, characterized by a preponderance of staples, feature pieces of canvas collaged onto the paper, blurring the lines between painting and collage. This technique evolved as viewers of his previous works perceived his paintings as collages, prompting Jennes to experiment further with actual collage techniques. His painterly collages integrate these painted leaves stitched onto canvas, creating compositions that are as much about texture and material as they are about color and form.

To enhance this immersive experience, Jennes created a series of sculptures that function as stools and tables and resemble tree trunks. These sculptures invite viewers to step into his richly layered, immersive worlds, breaking open the traditional boundaries of painting and creating a diorama-like setup. The relationship between actor and observer plays out not just between figures within the paintings but also in the form and address of the exhibition as a whole. While the flattened space of each canvas might seem to push back on us, their installation reaches outward, inviting us into its sphere, like the dioramas of natural history museums.

Jennes' references to the dynamic works of Pieter Bruegel and Frans Snyders, blending historical inspiration with contemporary concerns. His inspirations are also more contemporary, including a 2012 youtube video titled "JESUS CHRIST IN RICHMOND PARK." On a windy day, the cameraman takes his low-resolution digital camera to a pastoral field where deer rest peacefully in the grass. The video captures an agitated man's voice booming, growing nearer and nearer to the camera's microphone. Suddenly, a flock of deer bolts across the screen. Finally, the chaos becomes clear: a dog is chasing the group of deer. Similarly, the exhibition invites viewers into a seemingly serene environment that turns unexpectedly and humorously chaotic, mirroring the unpredictability of nature and life. In all, the exhibition offers a vivid reflection on the fleeting splendor of autumn and the cycle of life and death in nature.

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Pieter Jennes (b. 1990, Mortsel, BE; lives and works in Antwerp, BE) studied painting at the Royal Academie of Fine Arts, Antwerp, as well as curatorial studies at The Royal Academie of Fine Arts & University of Gent. He has had solo exhibitions at Nino Mier Gallery, Los Angeles, CA, US; Be-Part, Waregem, BE; Gallery Sofie Van de Velde, Antwerp, BE; The White House Gallery, Lovenjoel, BE; CIAP, Hasselt, BE; and Public Gallery, London, UK.