

Press release

Surrounding You | Anna Bella Geiger, Paul Graham, Alexandra Grant, Tarik Kiswanson, Paul Pfeiffer, Laure Prouvost, Jessica Rankin

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Opening: Friday, 22 November, 2024, 6 – 9 pm

carlier | gebauer, Berlin, is pleased to present the group exhibition *Surrounding You*, with works by Anna Bella Geiger, Paul Graham, Alexandra Grant, Tarik Kiswanson, Paul Pfeiffer, Laure Prouvost and Jessica Rankin. *Surrounding You* is the first iteration of an evolving curatorial series, with future presentations developing alongside and in dialogue with the gallery's ongoing programme.

Surrounding You is an exhibition that unfolds like a ball of yarn being unwound, with each thread revealing a new level of perception. As the thread extends, it reflects the different ways the artists in this show engage with the world. The exhibition's central work by **Laure Prouvost** features a virtual reality headset encased in a basket of dry branches, which stretch outward, acting as symbolic threads that connect Prouvost's piece to the surrounding artworks and weave together the diverse practices of the artists on display. The works in *Surrounding You* invite reflection on diverse ways of being in the world—whether through transformation, collective experience, language, or nature—as each artist approaches their environment in a distinct way, presenting different methods of engagement and connection with the world around us.

Tarik Kiswanson's monumental cocoon-like sculptures, inspired by the transformative processes of nature and migration, evoke constant flux and the ongoing metamorphosis of identity. Floating between stages of change, these works invite us to reflect on our own states of becoming as we navigate a world of ever-shifting boundaries. **Paul Graham's** *Agfa Agfacolor XRS400 (New Europe) 1989* similarly challenges our perceptions, though through the lens of photography. What initially appears to be an abstract field of color reveals itself to be an extreme close-up of a photographic image, magnified to such an extent that it exposes the very structure of the film. This magnification invites a deep consideration of the physical and scientific nature of the medium itself, much as Kiswanson's sculptures push us to reflect on the nature of transformation and change. Both works interrogate the underlying structures of their respective media—whether physical or conceptual.

In contrast, **Paul Pfeiffer's** *Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse (17)* transforms the drama of sports into a modern-day cathedral, elevating athletes to saintly status and turning the crowd into a reflective, energizing force. This mirrors Elias Canetti's concept of the crowd as a circular mass, where the actions of one group stir the emotions of another, challenging how we perceive ourselves in a world dominated by mass entertainment.

Alexandra Grant's *Nimbus* series offers a more intimate approach, capturing the ethereal quality of language through delicate wire sculptures and prints. Her work suggests an infinite space where words float between the tangible and intangible, inviting us to connect to the world in quieter, more personal ways.

Anna Bella Geiger's *Macios* series blurs the boundaries between abstraction and figuration, using geometric shapes and fragmented forms to question the limits of representation. Her works, with their allusions to maps and borders, mirror the fragmented nature of language and identity, inviting us to piece together our own understanding of the world from the fragments of our histories and experiences. **Jessica Rankin's** work, blending acrylic, oil paint, and embroidery on linen, draws on the conceptual backdrop of Sappho's poetry, using intimacy and vulnerability as a form of resistance. Through delicate, layered threads and muted tones, Rankin creates a space where the complexities of desire and pain coexist, much like Sappho's sweetbitter verses.

The work evokes the quiet power of poetry to confront darkness, transforming personal, emotional turmoil into a lasting, subtle form of resistance.

In a separate space, **Laure Prouvost**'s video work *No More Front Tears* invites us to envision a world where human and non-human beings can move freely across the planet. The work questions whether we could transcend national borders and imagine a future where migration routes are open to all species. By exploring empathy and interconnectedness, Prouvost asks if we could dream of a world without divisions, where we, like birds or sea creatures, might belong to one world—free from borders. This immersive experience offers a moment to pause, reflecting on the possibility of a more fluid, unified future.

Together, the works in *Surrounding You* weave a rich tapestry of diverse responses to being in the world. Each artist presents a unique way of engaging with the world around them—whether through the cyclical processes of transformation, the collective experience of the crowd, the quiet presence of language, or the fragmentation of identity and experience. These conceptual threads grow outward, intertwining with one another, connecting ideas, forms, and perspectives. As we move through the exhibition, we are invited to reflect on how we, too, exist in relation to the world—constantly shifting, interacting, and redefining our place in an ever-changing landscape. The works reach out to you, yet also exist within you, drawing a complex web that explores the relationships between human and non-human beings, between the external world and the internal self. This immersive environment surrounds you, inviting you to navigate through its interwoven concepts and reflect on the shared threads that bind them all.

Anna Bella Geiger (1933) lives and works in Rio de Janeiro; **Paul Graham** (1956) lives and works in New York; **Alexandra Grant** (1973) lives and works in Los Angeles and Berlin; **Tarik Kiswanson** (1986) lives and works in Paris; **Paul Pfeiffer** (1966) lives and works in New York; **Laure Prouvost** lives and works in Brussels; **Jessica Rankin** (1971) lives and works in New York.