

## Press release

### **Eckart Hahn: Spirits We've Called**

**Exhibition dates: May 18 through June 23, 2023**

Pablo's Birthday is pleased to present Eckart Hahn's debut solo exhibition in the 105 Hudson space, *Spirits We've Called*. After the poem *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* by Johann von Goethe, the exhibition calls viewers to contemplate a rapidly changing society that is greatly influenced by technology and where social tensions have blurred realities.

Visual mnemonics of each work represent an unleashing of spirits into the world. Seven paintings will be presented in which depictions of fantastical animal imagery appear alongside a recurring motif, the rope. Without being didactic the animals lead to a realization that spiritual instincts for grappling with our most contemporary existence are primal and yet uncorrupted. Finally, two light boxes illustrating fervency with fire present another side to the sensitivity of intuition and the manifestation of the transformative.

In *Red Dragon (Escher)* (2022) the scaled and feathered wyvern holds a red rope in its open mouth. The rope pierces its body, becoming entwined with the swirling serpent-like corpus. The image of the dragon is based on a graphic by M.C. Escher, which the artist had on a poster as a child. The work harkens back to a biographic and now, somewhat historic visual. It presents a fictitious image in contrast with a further paradox that lies among the incongruity between desire to control time and change and the inability to do so. Thereby, representing a moment of confrontation with the past and future that is often problematic for humanity.

Just as antiquity accelerates and moves faster into the past, *Prometheus* (2022) depicts a spherical and translucent shape of flaring luminosity. A human hand that is open, facing upwards, cut off at the wrist, and sitting underneath the ball seems to be the former custodian and commander of the vital symbol above it. *Dschinn* (2022) is complimentary with its depiction of a mythical fiery spirit in the form of a bird. Its name alludes to the root for both "adapt" and "hide". Furthering the notion that animals acclimate to their new conditions more naturally, the works hint towards listening to the awakened spiritual world through inhuman forms.

*Spirits We've Called* invites collective attention to the growing complexity of society and its undoing. While old masters may attempt to reaffirm the past, at the same time new knowledge is also harnessed bringing with it pain and individualization. Questions regarding freedom in society are raised through this story of shifting social provocations.

*Text by Katelynn Dunn*

Eckart Hahn (b. 1971, Germany) attended Eberhardt-Karl-University and the Johannes-Gutenberg-School in Stuttgart. His work has been represented in solo and group institutional exhibitions throughout Europe; most recently his work will be included at the Kunstmuseum Heidenheim (2023). Hahn has notably exhibited at Württembergischer Kunstverein, Stuttgart (2019), Ludwiggalerie Schloss Oberhausen (2020), and Museum Art Plus, Donaueschingen (2021). Accompanying the publication of his monograph, "Der schwarze Hund trägt bunt" 2018, were three museum exhibitions at Haus am Lützowplatz, Berlin; Neue Galerie Gladbeck, Gladbeck; and Museum Villa Rot, Burgrieden. He currently lives and works in Germany.

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*The old sorcerer  
Has finally gone away!  
Now the spirits he controls  
Shall obey my commands.*

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*The Sorcerer's Apprentice  
by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, 1797*