

Timothy Taylor



Michel Pérez Pollo, *Un Otoño XIX*, 2023. Oil on linen, 78 $\frac{3}{4}$ × 78 $\frac{3}{4}$ × 1 $\frac{5}{8}$ in. (200 × 200 × 4.1 cm) © Michel Pérez Pollo

Michel Pérez Pollo *Two Poets*

30 November 2023 — 20 January 2024
15 Bolton Street, London

Timothy Taylor is pleased to present *Two Poets*, an exhibition of new paintings by Michel Pérez Pollo at the gallery's London location following its recent announcement of the artist's representation. Featuring luminous, surreal still-lives, this will be the artist's debut solo exhibition with the gallery.

Pérez Pollo paints biomorphic forms captured in states of precarious balance. Rendered in airless, illusionistic spaces with shallow horizons and dramatic orchestrations of light and shadow, these forms are

uncanny—at once buoyant and melancholy, hyperreal and inscrutable. These scenes represent a search for equilibrium within chaos, the artist has explained. Growing up in Manzanillo, a small city in Cuba, he established a certain relationship to ephemerality: “We live for the moment, and there is no great concern for the future, as the present is a full challenge,” he recalls. This experience informed his understanding of objects; he sees the ways in which they are unfixed and adaptable, according to context and perception. A tabletop might be used as a door, for example, and a stone found in the street may have once belonged to an Aztec pyramid. In his work, Pérez Pollo considers the way objects generate poetry when they are placed in relation to each other and the way these juxtapositions impact our inner worlds.

Pérez Pollo implements a multi-step process that spans a range of media and techniques. He channels the Surrealist method of automatism to produce miniature plasticine and found-object models, which he lights and photographs. He then translates these compositions onto canvas with oil. As he works, he remains receptive to his environment and proceeds according to sensation, intuition, and the unconscious, resulting in warped and exaggerated renditions of the original photographed image. “I try not to think when I am painting; I try to let myself go, let the images emerge.” He layers color upon color on the surface of his paintings, leaving passages where raw canvas is exposed, as well as drips, stains, and other evidence of the painterly process. Despite the fresco-matte surfaces he achieves, his brushwork results in remarkable effects of volume, mass, and texture. His paintings recall the arcane geometries and dramatic shadows of Giorgio De Chirico, as well as the subdued tonal palette and stillness of Giorgio Morandi.

Much of the recent cultural production in Pérez Pollo’s hometown of Manzanillo was influenced by a community of local poets, whose work and conversation were likewise integral to the artist’s development. This exhibition pays tribute to two of these poets, who were particularly close friends of the artist, and who both died over the past year, Alfredo Perez Muñoz and Felipe Gaspar Calafell.

About the Artist

Michel Pérez Pollo was born in 1981 in Manzanillo, Cuba, and lives and works in Madrid, Spain. He received degrees from the Escuela Profesional de Artes Plásticas de Holguín in 1999 and from the Instituto Superior de Arte de Cuba (ISA) in 2007. The subject of numerous institutional exhibitions, work by Pérez Pollo has recently been featured at the Brownstone Foundation in Paris, France (2021) and the National Gallery of Fine Arts in Havana, Cuba (2018). His recent exhibitions also include *Un Automne*, a solo show at Lempertz, in collaboration with Mai 36, in Brussels, Belgium (2023); *Vidas Paralelas*, a group show at Galleria Continua La Habana in Havana, Cuba (2022); and *PERFUME*, a solo show at Mai 36 Galerie in Zurich, Switzerland (2020).

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