

Jake Longstreth

American Heat

Goethestraße 2/3

Springtime at the Scottsdale, Arizona Walmart

Bleibtreustraße 15/16

19 January – 2 March 2024

Opening: Friday, 19 January, 6 – 8 pm

Galerie Max Hetzler is pleased to present *American Heat* and *Springtime at the Scottsdale, Arizona Walmart*, two concurrent exhibitions of new work by **Jake Longstreth**, and the artist's inaugural solo presentation with the gallery, at Goethestraße 2/3 and Bleibtreustraße 15 /16, in Berlin.

Known for his paintings of man-made and natural landscapes, Longstreth depicts American suburban and rural scenes with a clarity that is at once disquieting and subtly humorous. Devoid of human presence and bathed in perpetual midday light, these landscapes – among them American big box stores and chain restaurants – draw out a poetry of the everyday with a surprising warmth and painterly affection. Though American commercial developments may be considered a crass or ugly subject matter, Longstreth's sunny neutrality underscores the fact that most Americans find them neither bleak nor remarkable. So ubiquitous that they are rarely truly *seen*, the stores and restaurants depicted in these compositions comprise a 21st century version of the American commons. Longstreth encourages us to linger, be still, look. What has become of these landscapes?, we might ask ourselves. What will become of them?

In the larger space at Goethestraße, ten oil-on-canvas paintings depict corporate retail chains and restaurants nestled into a variety of landscapes – some in Southern and Northern California, others in Arizona, Nebraska, and along the East Coast of the United States. A large triptych, *Crossroads*, presents three vantage points of the Colonies Crossroads shopping centre, the biggest retail development along California's 210 freeway. A dense thicket of Coyote Bush foregrounds the cotton-candy pink and sun-faded orange facades that make up the rear loading area of the shopping centre's exterior. The triptych conveys the experience of walking: as we scan this large painting from left to right, we are able to observe our own shifting sense of perspective, as if we were transversing the building's perimeter step by step.

In a pair of paintings titled *Civil War Battleground 1* and *2*, a monolithic big box retailer is foregrounded by a stately oak tree and old stone wall in deep shadow. Conjuring the history-steeped farmlands of the American south, Longstreth depicts these natural and historic features



Jake Longstreth, *Civil War Battleground 2*, 2023
Photo: Dawn Blackman

as adjacent to the atemporal corporate architecture which has come to define much of the American topography.

Many of the paintings depict rural, agricultural scenes. In *Daly City*, a working class city nestled between San Francisco and Silicon Valley, we see a small agricultural plot hemmed in between a Best Buy electronics retailer and a new parking lot in the foreground. San Bruno Mountain, painted in the characteristic brown of California hills in the summertime, looms overhead.

Elsewhere, in *Raisin City*, the backside of a Taco Bell drive-thru sits adjacent to striated fields in California's Central Valley. The blinding white glare reflecting off the pavement describes the oppressive heat of a midday parking lot in the heart of California's vast middle.

In *Nebraska*, a Pizza Hut backs up against an old barn. Here, the atmosphere is decidedly hazier, the light muted, a summer humidity omnipresent. Longstreth is sensitive to the particular regions he paints; though the buildings may appear similar from picture to picture, the specificity and resilience of each place he paints remains true.

Ten oil-on-paper paintings titled *Springtime at the Scottsdale, Arizona Walmart*, on view in the smaller space at Bleibtreustraße 15/16, capture intimate views from the understory next to the titular retailer's parking lot. In these compositions, subtle desert blooms of yellow, and delicate light green sprigs, abound from the dormant trees and shrubs of winter, while the sharp lines of the store's architecture peek into view.

Beyond the signature quietude of Longstreth's landscapes, this body of work underscores the artist's astute observation of landscapes in transformation. Revealed from unusual vantage points, tenderly rendered wildflowers, foliage and trees cast dappled shadows on their surroundings, literally and metaphorically throwing into relief the cultivated domain which surrounds them.

Jake Longstreth (*1977, Sharon, USA) lives and works in Los Angeles, USA. The artist received his MFA from California College of the Arts, San Francisco, in 2005. Longstreth's work was the subject of an institutional solo exhibition at Crisp Ellert Museum, Flagler College, St. Augustine (2017); and is in the public collections of Aishti Foundation, Beirut; Crocker Art Museum, Sacramento; and Dallas Contemporary, among others.

Further exhibitions and events

Berlin:

3 November 2023 – 10 February 2024

Richard Prince

Body

Potsdamer Straße 77-87, 10785

19 January – 24 February 2024

Günther Förg

Häuser und Fenster

Bleibtreustraße 45, 10623 Berlin

Paris:

13 January – 17 February 2024

Grace Weaver

Hotel Paintings

46 & 57, rue du Temple, 75004 Paris

London:

11 January – 17 February 2024

Karel Appel

CoBrA / Non-CoBrA

41 Dover Street, W1S 4NS

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