
GNYP GALLERY
Zachary Armstrong



Zachary Armstrong, *Fish for a large wall* (2022), craved wood, encaustic

Zachary Armstrong

The point of departure of Zachary Armstrong's (b. 1984; USA) art comes from his own private sphere: his childhood, his family, the American culture, natural history books he encounters. Armstrong's works seem to contain a coded message about the person who created them, something that becomes evident when a motif is repeated and extended throughout several paintings and series, like a mannerism or a stain that's part of us. However, while making secret references to his personal universe, his works also evoke some larger context, such as the idea of the American countryside, folk art, and the tradition of American and European modernism, reaching a bigger set of references that points to the universal. Armstrong's paintings combine geometrical structures and expressive figuration. One of the most particular aspects of Armstrong's works is the use of encaustic technique, rendering them sometimes sculptural.

Solo exhibitions include Entrance, New York; Vito Schnabel, New York; Tilton, New York, Faurschou Foundation, New York, NY/Beijing; The Contemporary, Dayton; Carl Kostyál, London; Night Gallery, Los Angeles and Dayton Visual Arts Center, Dayton among others. Armstrong was included in „Inherent Structure", a survey exhibition of contemporary abstract painting at the Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus in 2018. That year, he also participated in the residency program at Lefebvre & Fils in Versailles, France. Armstrong has participated in notable group exhibitions at Lehmann Maupin, New York; GNYP Gallery, Antwerp/Berlin; Jack Tilton Gallery, New York; Pizzuti Collection, Columbus; Rental Gallery, East Hampton; and many others.



Zachary Armstrong in is studio, Dayton, Ohio (2023)



His work is included in the permanent collections of the Contemporary Art Foundation, Tokyo; the Faurschou Foundation, Copenhagen and the Pizzuti Collection of the Columbus Museum of Art, Columbus among others.

He currently works and lives in Dayton Ohio.

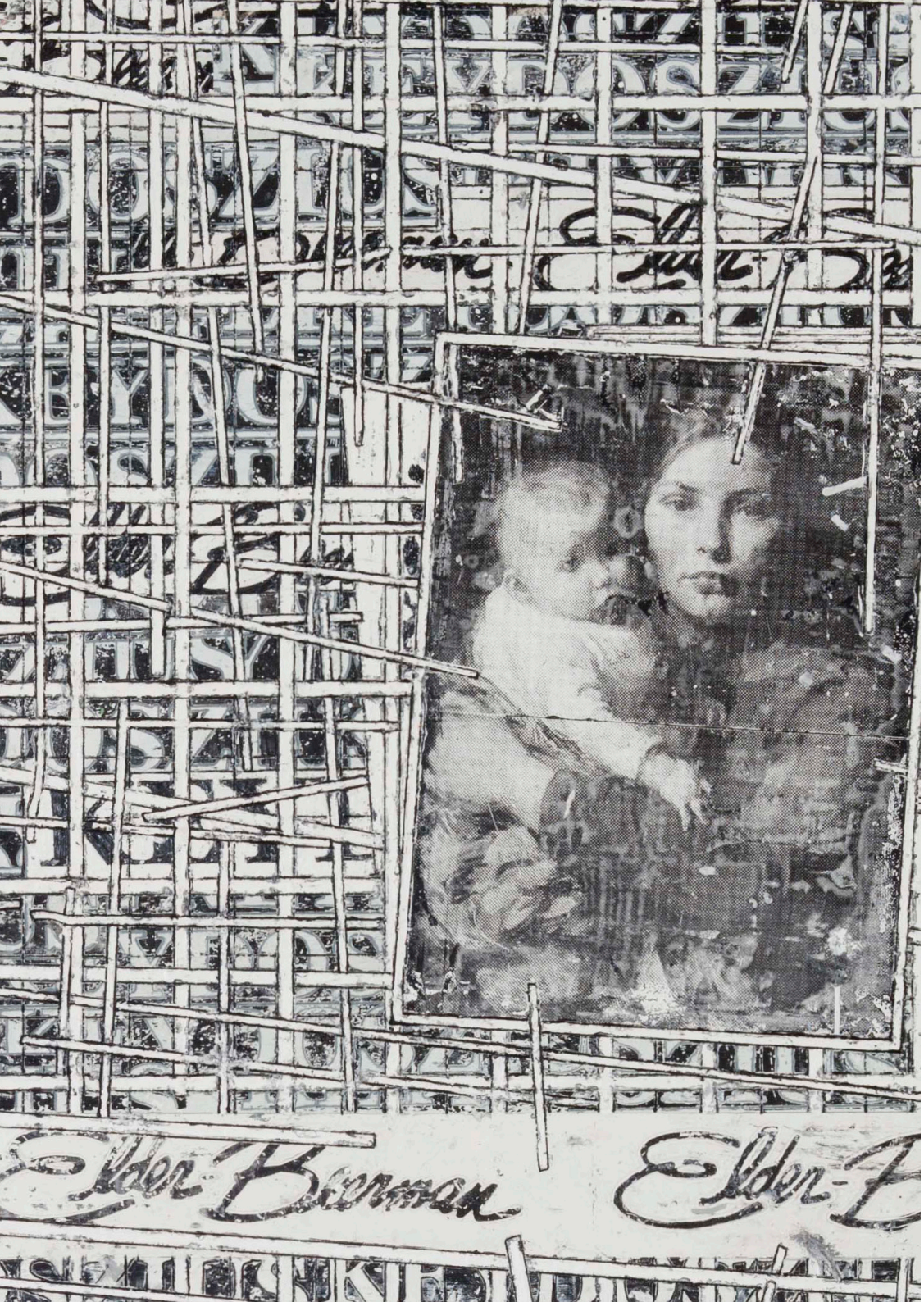
Zachary Armstrong's studio, Dayton, Ohio (2023)



Detail: Zachary Armstrong, White Line #26, 2018



Installation View: *White Lines* at GNYP Gallery Berlin in 2019

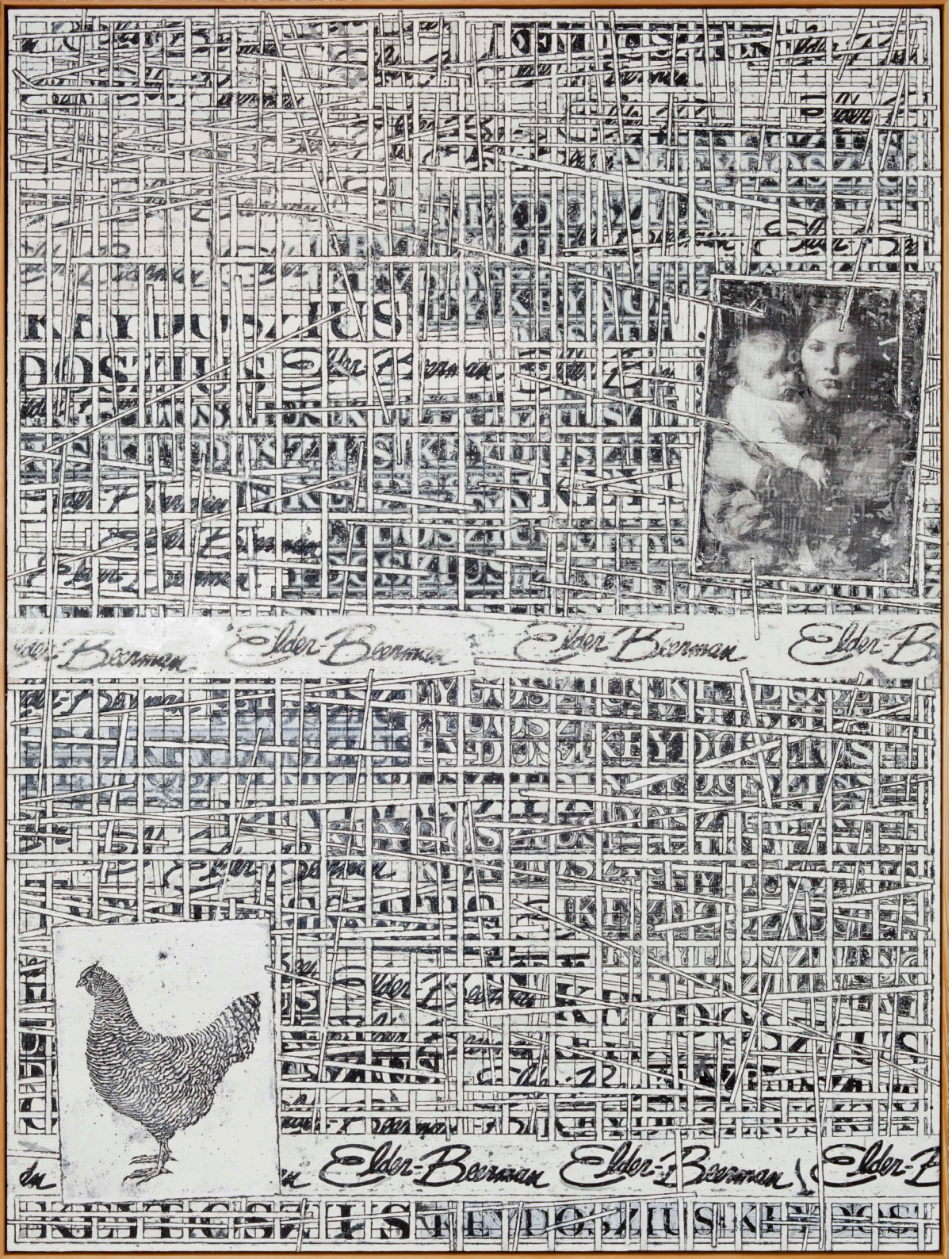


"While many artists many paintings distance the subjects they depict from their physical reality, Armstrong's use of encaustic has the special effect of melding the depicted subject with the materials depicting it, creating a single, indivisible entity. When he applies the pigmented wax on canvasses he even speaks of "building" his painting. And yet even these structured works provide very little direction for the eye, let alone a clear focal point. Instead, Armstrong's compositions become increasingly fuzzy, challenging the viewers, requiring their pupils to be in continual motion."

More information

Excerpt from Klara Niemann's text accompanying Armstrong's exhibition „White Lines" at GNYP Gallery, Berlin, 2019

Detail: Zachary Armstrong, *White Lines*, 2018



Zachary Armstrong
White Lines
2018

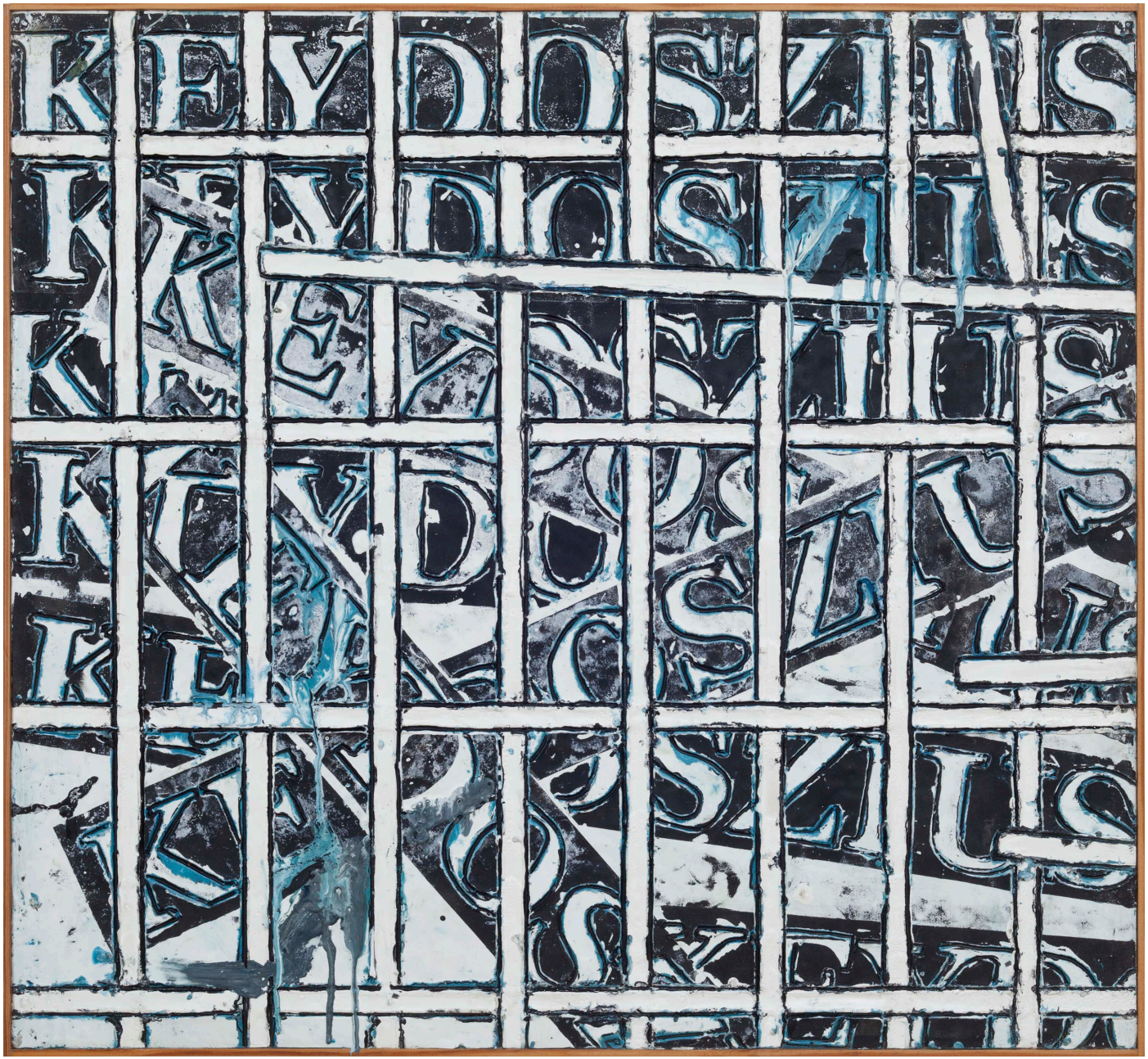
oil and encaustic on canvas in artist frame

243 x 182 cm + wooden frame
95 10/16 x 71 10/16 in + wooden frame

Zachary Armstrong
White Line #1
2018

oil and encaustic on canvas in artist frame

51 x 56 cm + wooden frame
20 1/16 x 22 1/6 in + wooden frame





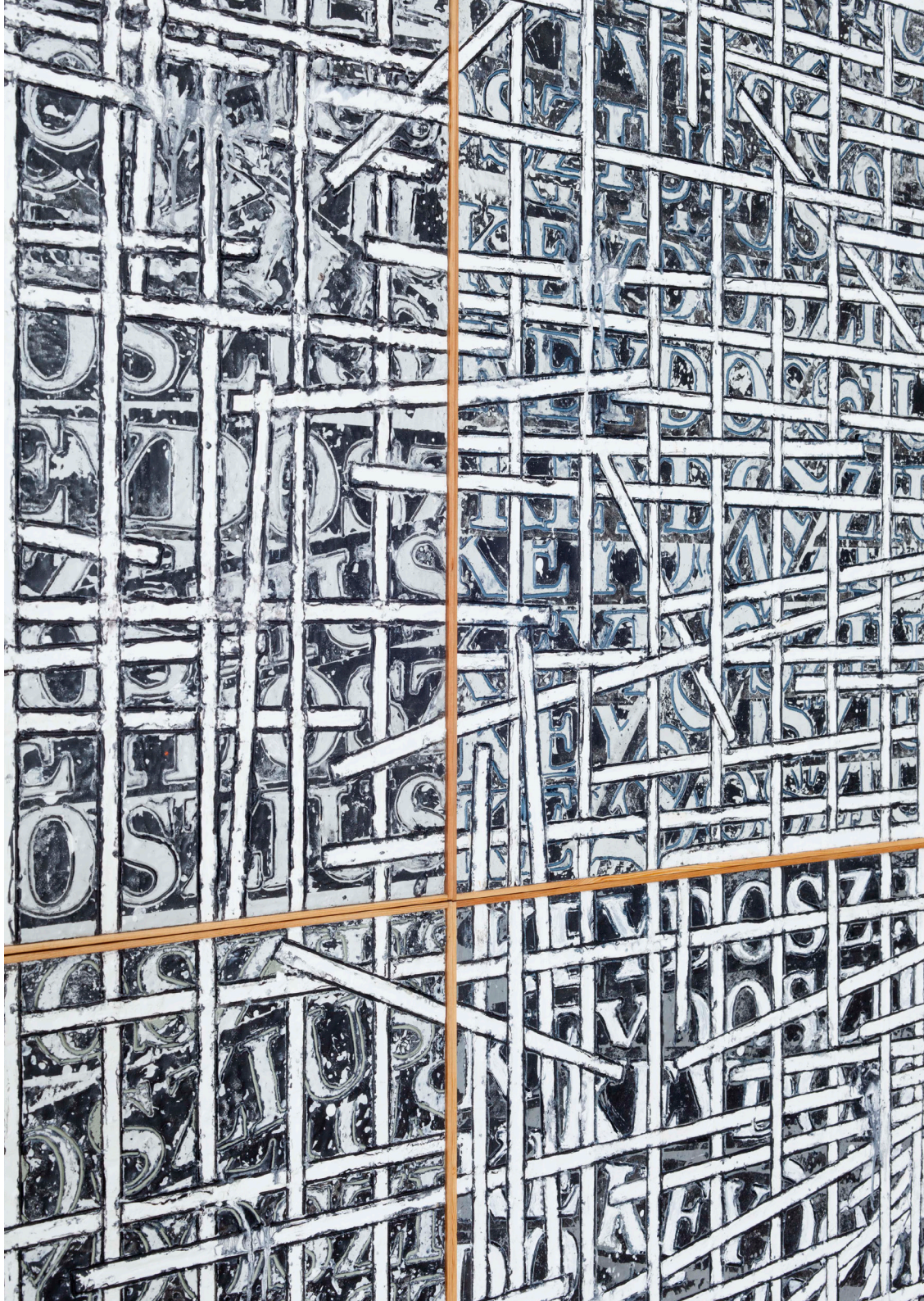
Installation View: *White Lines* at GNYP Gallery Berlin in 2019

The works seem to contain a coded message about the person that created them. For example, in one of the exhibited works, the letters “KEYDOSZIUS” represent the maiden name of Armstrong’s mother, interwoven with an art-historically charged depiction of the mother with child. In other works, Americana such as names and images of local shop signs become integral parts of the image, unfolding as a complex interplay of quotations on Armstrong’s canvas. Armstrong draws on global and local contexts, juxtaposing equally-weighted references to high culture, folkloric and commercial elements, replicating his own works and referencing personal narratives.

More information

Excerpt from Klara Niemann‘s text accompanying Armstrong‘s exhibition „White Lines“ at GNYP Gallery, Berlin, 2019

installation view: *White Lines* at GNYP Gallery Berlin in 2019



artnet

Zachary Armstrong Proves You Don't Need to Be in New York to Make It as an Artist

He's in pursuit of uninhibited creation.



Zachary Armstrong. Photo: film still via Vimeo

Zachary Armstrong's work is laden with symbolic nostalgia. The self-taught artist's canvases on view at the Tilton Gallery on Manhattan's Upper East Side are also reminiscent of the work of Jean Dubuffet and the outsider artists he once championed.

Armstrong is in fact somewhat of an outsider, choosing to live and work out of a studio in his hometown of Dayton, Ohio. The influence of the blue-collar city permeates his work. Compared to market darlings such as Jeff Koons, who rely on dozens of assistants, the 31-year-old artist builds all of his canvases and stretchers himself, and is known for spending marathon 16-hour sessions in the studio.

While the themes of youth and childhood occupy most of the artist's output, stylistically he is far less consistent, dabbling in myriad painting styles and mediums. On one hand, he creates cartoonish dinosaur paintings reminiscent of children's room wallpaper and stick figure canvases inspired by his childhood scribbles, and on the other side of the spectrum there are his vertiginous canvas stacks.

Inside his solo show at the Tilton Gallery, a childhood portrait of the artist drawn by his older brother hangs adjacent to the entrance. The picture is a recurring image throughout the show. The image is superimposed multiple times in the artist's encaustic covered canvases. We walked through the exhibition with the artist who spoke about his hometown, his influences, and his studio practice.

artnet



Installation view Zachary Armstrong *Paintings* at Tilton Gallery. Photo: courtesy Tilton Gallery

Your work has taken many forms over the years. Why the big aesthetic jumps?
I never really considered myself as a painter, just as an artist, I guess; I just want to make stuff. But after years of consistently making paintings, big paintings, and learning from them and adding and taking away and doing things then you do realize, Oh shit, I am more of a painter than I am any kind of other artist.

What's your working process?
Another good thing about Ohio is that there's just nothing else to do but work. You can't go out and have a whole lot of fun at night or do anything like that. I mean, I got my little boy and he's in the studio a lot with me too, he's 13 now. I spend time with him and I work and that's it.

I work every day, a minimum 10 hours a day...And that's all I do, that's all I want to do. Here [in New York] you can get distracted, you run an errand and half your day's gone. But there you can literally just focus. I love that; I get up and go to work. That's my working process [laughs].

I turn on the hot plates, let the encaustic heat up and start painting.

„Zachary Armstrong proves you don't need to be in New York to make it as an artist" by Henri Neuendorf for Artnet News, 2016 – Full article



Detail: Zachary Armstrong, Rooster #14, 2022-2023



Zachary Armstrong's studio, Dayton, Ohio (2023)



Zachary Armstrong
Rooster #3
2022-2023

oil and encaustic on canvas in artist frame

244 x 183 cm + wooden frame
96 x 72 in + wooden frame



Zachary Armstrong
Rooster #4
2022-2023

oil and encaustic on canvas in artist frame

244 x 142 cm + wooden frame
96 x 56 in + wooden frame



installation view: *Portraits* at GNYP Gallery Antwerp in 2023

There is plenty of droll humor in Zachary Armstrong's latest solo exhibition 'Portraits', which comprises more than a dozen vibrant, larger-than-life, encaustic paintings of roosters. Playing on our tendency to read ourselves into everything, and by gliding over the constructed distinction between human and animal, his portraits invite reflection on cocky displays of character and personality, and posit instances of interspecies cross-identification. Are these avian profile and three-quarter-turn head portraits really so different to those of beady-eyed, lace-necked merchants of the Dutch Golden Age, or the promotional filtered images of social media influencers on a pushed smartphone feed?

More information

Excerpt from Dominic Eichler's text accompanying Armstrong's exhibition „Portraits" at GNYP Gallery, Antwerp, 2023

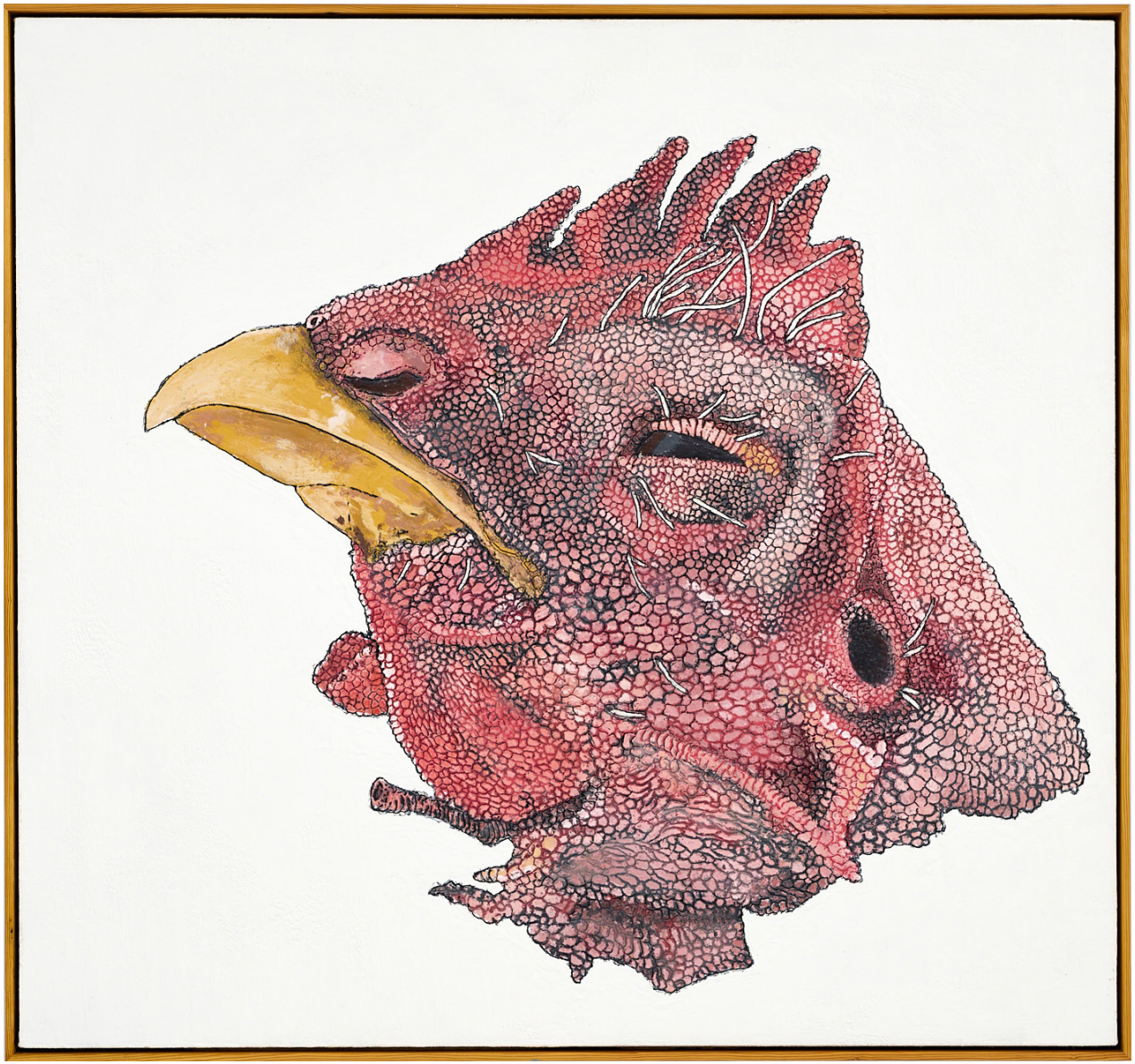


installation view: *Portraits* at GNYP Gallery Antwerp in 2023

Zachary Armstrong
Rooster #8
2022-2023

oil and encaustic on canvas in artist frame

125 x 117 cm + wooden frame
49 x 46 in + wooden frame



The artist explained his approach like this: "... once I started painting, I would have about forty different shades of red mixed up at any one time and once I finished a painting, I would trash those colors and start fresh. All that paint mixing is really what dictated what the rooster would end up looking like. A strange 'Albers' [Josef Albers, 1888—1976] thing started to happen, I would have a red that looked like fire engine red, bright red, I would paint areas with that, and then put what looked like an orange red down next to it, the fire engine red would immediately look brown, and the orange would look pink. It was crazy. I've never understood Albers until now [...] the real beauty of knowing what those colors are doing, the change of them, only happens when he was painting them. During the process. Not on the wall later."

More information

Excerpt from Dominic Eichler's text accompanying Armstrong's exhibition „Portraits" at GNYP Gallery, Antwerp, 2023

Detail: Zachary Armstrong, *Rooster #2*, 2022-2023





installation view: *Portraits* at GNYP Gallery Antwerp in 2023



installation view: *Portraits* at GNYP Gallery Antwerp in 2023



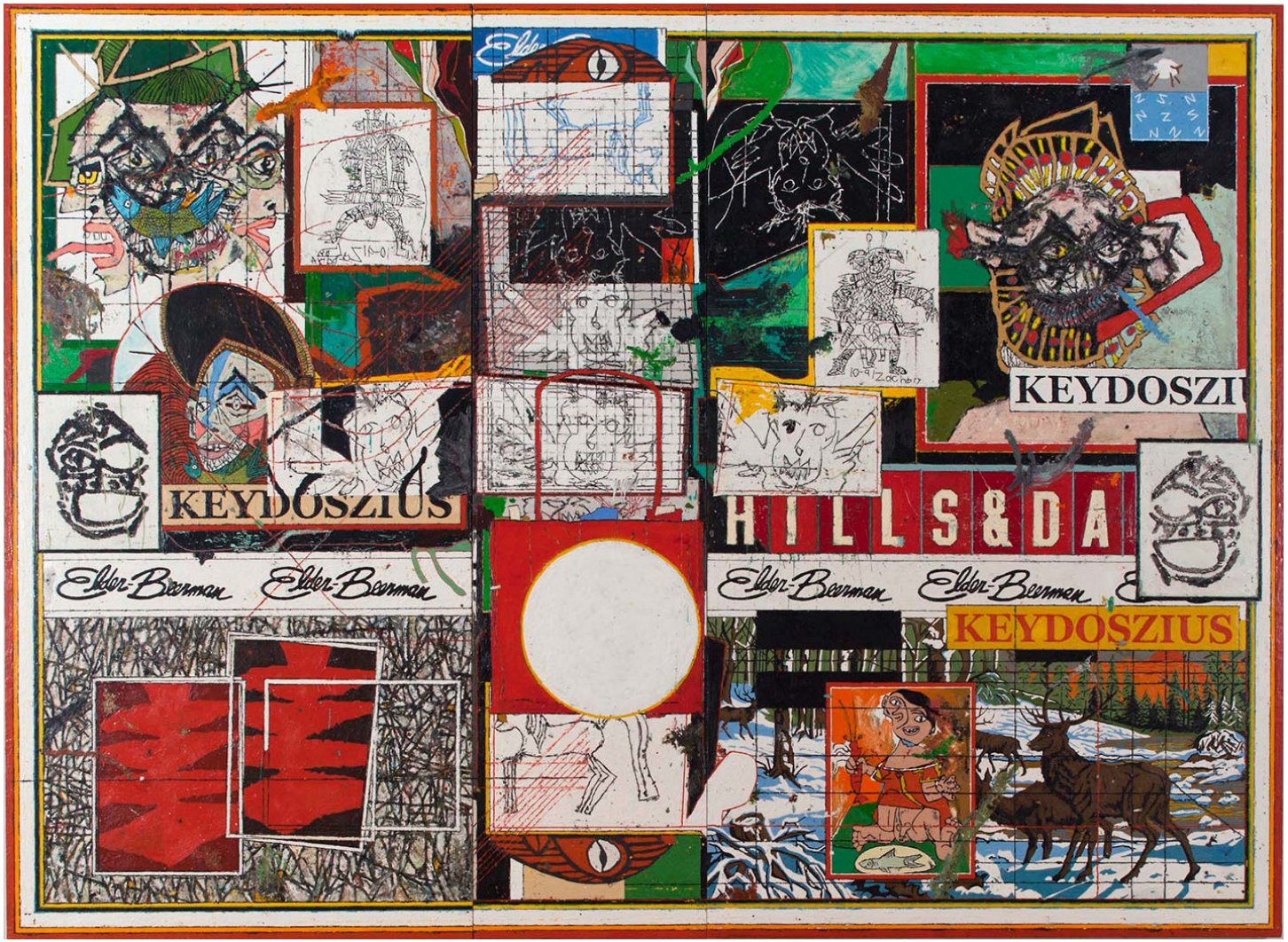
Detail: Zachary Armstrong, Black Hat Red Collar Med, 2016



Zachary Armstrong
Crown For Keith Large XL
2016-2017

oil and encaustic on canvas in artist frame

231 x 216 cm + wooden frame
90 15/16 x 85 1/16 in + wooden frame



Zachary Armstrong
21 Faces
2017

oil and encaustic on canvas in artist frame

244 x 335 cm + wooden frame
96 1/16 x 131 14/16 in + wooden frame

Armstrong works and reworks the motifs, aiming to exhaust the image, experimenting with scale and technique. He likens his approach to Andy Warhol's serialism, stating that the repetition of the same motif enables him to exhaust the pictorial possibilities inherent in the subject. Thus reworked, the images rid themselves of notions of the original, an involuntary negation of Modernist questions of artistic originality. As the artist has said "I don't make anything up." Yet via the use of colour, via the mutation – he alters the naïve motifs, replacing features with objects, so that mouths are detourned as fish or socks – imbues the images with significance above and beyond the Art Brut of children's art. He envies the naïve freedom children have in their creative processes, as soon as art is made for public display and sale, self-criticism and self-doubt restrained him from being entirely free in his subject choice.

More information

Excerpt from the accompanying text of Armstrong's exhibition „Zachary Armstrong" at GNYP Gallery, Berlin, 2017



installation view: *Zachary Armstrong* at GNYP Gallery Berlin in 2017



Zachary Armstrong
Triple Face Fish Large
2017

encaustic and oil on canvas

231 x 216 cm
90 15/18 x 85 1/16 in

"All the best drawings I did when I was young, I didn't overthink everything, " he says. His aim is to build on these drawings, to give them an adult life. "When you're a child, you draw sinister subjects, monsters – its about the possibilities you have with eyes, with the features – much more space for imagination and creativity."

Excerpt from the accompanying text of Armstrong's exhibition „Zachary Armstrong" at GNYP Gallery, Berlin, 2017 – More information



installation view: *Zachary Armstrong* at GNYP Gallery Berlin in 2017

Armstrong’s choice of encaustic as dominant medium also owes a debt to his subject-matter, choosing the imprecise, fuzzy impression of lines fused via layers of wax melted together over the hard outlines of oil or acrylic paint. The shifting layers are treated like clay, lending the work a sculptural aspect, and Armstrong uses pottery tools on the wax.

More information

Excerpt from the accompanying text of Armstrong‘s exhibition „Zachary Armstrong“ at GNYP Gallery, Berlin, 2017



Detail: Zachary Armstrong, March 2017 #8, 2017



installation view: *Zachary Armstrong* at GNYP Gallery Berlin in 2017



installation view: Zachary Armstrong, *Encaustic House* (2019), oil and encaustic at Haurschou Foundation Beijing in 2021



Zachary Armstrong
Encaustic House
2019

oil and encaustic

500 x 305 x 671 cm
16.4 x 10 x 22 ft

Forbes

LIFESTYLE › ARTS

Zachary Armstrong Draws Us Into His Singular ‘American’ Zodiac At Faurschou New York

By Natasha Gural, Former Contributor.
Published Oct 07, 2022, 03:31pm EDT



ZACHARY ARMSTRONG 'Rabbit' (2020-2022) Encaustic on canvas over panel 110 x 110 inches ... More
PHOTO BY OLYMPIA SHANNON FOR FAURSCHOU FOUNDATION

We gaze into the amber eye of a rabbit, its ears upright, indicating it hears sound and is keen to decipher the source. We wonder why the rabbit is so alert, so present, and ready to take action, even as it appears to be in a cage.

Forbes

According to Chinese astrology, rabbits embody an array of characteristics that comprise a complex creature to rival the human. They’re gentle, quiet, elegant, quick, skillful, kind, patient, and extremely responsible. They may be reluctant to reveal their thoughts and possess a tendency to escape reality, but they’re always faithful to those around them.



One of twelve large-scale wax paintings of animals by artist Zachary Armstrong (born 1984), *Rabbit* (2020-2022) makes us think deeply about the connection between humans and animals. How we interact with and relate to his monumental animal portraits reveals as much about us as it does about them. Contemporary Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben argues that the dichotomy between human and animal is a division within the categorization of the human themself. Dividing humanity into varying degrees of human types justifies slavery and genocide. Caging the rabbit forces us to confront our own precarity, as we’re increasingly trapped by volatile and violent systems of power.

„Zachary Armstrong Draws Us Into His Singular ‘American’ Zodiac At Faurschou New York“ by Natasha Gural for Forbes, 2022 – Full article



installation view: *Boy meets Girl* at GNYP Gallery Berlin in 2015

In his recent painting series, he has tirelessly and continuously repeated two drawings originating from his own childhood: a self-portrait made by the artist as a 4-year-old child and a portrait drawn by his younger brother. The common idea of children's drawings as the origin of human creation and the starting point of culture seems to be an obvious reference, but Armstrong's continuous repetition and gradual transformation of the same motifs defy the notion of spontaneity. Instead, these drawings function as a pretext for something else: a fundamental inquiry into the making of a work. Taking the two images as a matrix, Armstrong has been experimenting with materiality and painting processes, exploring the value of colors, lines, or the haptic qualities of wax layers. The works have become personal records of hours of labor, rituals of creativity, and a striving for the perfect painting.

More information

Excerpt from the accompanying text of Armstrong's and Wylie's duo exhibition „Boy meets Girl" at GNYP Gallery, Berlin, 2015



Detail: Zaccary Armstrong, *Double Self Portrait Elderbeerman Tyler*, 2015



installation view: *Boy meets Girl* at GNYP Gallery Berlin in 2015

Zachary Armstrong
Self Portrait 3-7-90
2015

oil and encaustic on canvas in artist frame

122 x 91 cm
48 x 36 in



Zachary Armstrong
Self Portrait Gray & Yellow
2015

oil and encaustic on canvas in artist frame

122 x 91 cm
48 x 36 in



Zachary Armstrong
Abstract Self Portraits
2015

oil and encaustic on canvas in artist frame

122 x 91 cm
48 x 36 in





installation view: *Boy meets Girl* at GNYP Gallery Berlin in 2015

Zachary Armstrong

Solo and Duo Exhibitions

2026
Zachary Armstrong: Encaustic House
Weston Art Gallery, Ohio (USA)

Zachary Armstrong
Entrance, New York (USA)

2023
New Work
Vito Schnabel, New York (USA)

Portraits
GNYP Gallery, Antwerp (BE)

2022
Bits & Pieces Put Together to Present a Semblance of a Whole
Tilton Gallery, New York (USA)

twelve animals
Faurschou Foundation, New York (USA)

2021
Bag of Candles
Faurschou Foundation, Beijing (CHN)

2020
Zachary Armstrong: Grids & Abstracts
The Contemporary Dayton - Dayton Arcade (USA)

2019
Fish and Chicken
Carl Kostyál, London (UK)

Zachary Armstrong: White Lines
GNYP Gallery, Berlin (DE)

2018
Copenhagen
Sabsay, Copenhagen (DK)

George
Tilton Gallery, New York (USA)

2017
NOAH
Ever Gold [Projects], San Francisco (USA)

Zachary Armstrong
GNYP Gallery, Berlin (DE)

Keith Paitings
China Art Objects, Los Angeles (USA)

Tyler Macko + Zachary Armstrong
The Glass Hat, Phil Gallery, Los Angeles (USA)

2016
Zachary Armstrong
Tilton Gallery, New York (USA)

Zachary Armstrong, Hills and Dales
Feuer/Mesler, New York (USA)

2015
Boy Meets Girl: Zachary Armstrong and Rose Wylie
GNYP Gallery, Berlin (DE)

Goodnight Bojangles
Night Gallery, Los Angeles (USA)

2014
Boy Meets Girl: Zachary Armstrong and Rose Wylie
GNYP Gallery, Berlin (DE)

Elder-Beerman
Dayton Visual Arts Center, Dayton (USA)

Group Exhibitions

2026
Between Fields And What Isn't: A Decade Inside No Place
No Place Gallery, Ohio (USA)

Collaboration with GX1000

2024
Mary With(out) Child,
GNYP Gallery, Antwerp (BE)

2023
THESE DAYS
Vito Schnabel, New York (USA)

2020
Abstract! Minimalism to now
Tilton Gallery, New York (USA)

2019
cart, horse, cart
Lehmann Maupin, New York (USA)

Gold Standard
Ever Gold [Projects], San Francisco (USA)

2018
Take Up Space
Pizzuti Collection, Columbus (USA)

Coccaro on Paper
organized by Carl Kostyál, Masseria Torre Coccaro, Puglia (IT)

Clay
Lefebvre & Fils, Paris (FR)

Inherent Structure
Wexner Center for the Arts, Ohio State University, Columbus (USA)

2017
Zachary Armstrong, Matthew Chapman, Henry Taylor
Rental Gallery, East Hampton (USA)

2014
Influx
Mint Collective, Columbus (USA)

2013
Untitled
Dayton Visual Arts Center, Dayton (USA)

Zachary Armstrong

Residencies

2018
The Residency
Lefebvre & Fils, Versailles (FR)

Link to the press page

https://www.gnypgallery.com/artists/zachary-armstrong



Installation View: *twelve animals* at Faurschou Foundation New York in 2022

GNYP GALLERY

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