

# Elmgreen & Dragset: Landscapes

May 23 – August 10, 2024  
Quai des Bergues, 15-17  
Geneva

**Opening Reception: Wednesday May 22, 5-8pm**



Elmgreen & Dragset, *Still Life (Blackbird)* 2024 © Elmgreen & Dragset

Pace is pleased to announce Elmgreen & Dragset's first exhibition at its Geneva gallery, featuring a mix of new and recent work that employs the artist duo's signature use of surreal qualities and the absurd to comment on nature, and our place within it. Set directly on its shore, Lake Geneva acts as a site-specific parallel to the works in the exhibition, inviting the viewer's reflection. The show will incorporate installation and sculptures—one of which is enlivened by animatronic technology—that are imbued with an enigmatic pathos that has become emblematic of Elmgreen & Dragset's oeuvre.

As the backdrop for their presentation, Elmgreen & Dragset chose a quotation by the late Danish poet Inger Christensen:

*A desert can be so desolate that nobody knows it exists.*

Printed on the gallery's rear wall, the sentence hovers in the sky above a desert, setting the scene for the artists' exploration into landscapes that are more emotional than physical. The vast horizon looks like a still from a road trip movie.

Forming a rhythmic structural base to the exhibition, five street signs stand evenly spaced in front of the billboard-like print, almost resembling a cluster of trees. While their shapes are familiar and universal—circles, squares, and triangles—they have no instructions, no warnings, or directions. The upper panel of each sign depicts clouds on a blue sky, whereas the lower panels are made of mirror-polished steel, reflecting the gallery and the visitors. This reflection of the space turns the signs into chameleons; they become their surroundings, they become us. We are left to find our own way.

Opposite the signs, two hands made of white lacquered bronze protrude from the wall, holding a small blackbird. Upon closer inspection, viewers will notice the bird's subtle, nearly imperceptible, breathing. It is a scene of fragility—perhaps a child trying to save a small dying creature.

Next to the reception desk stand a pair of green rainboots. Perforated with circular holes and cast in bronze, they provide no protection from rain.

Towards the entrance of the gallery, visitors will encounter two further artworks. A realistic figure of a boy concentrates on piecing a puzzle together. It seems as if the finished puzzle will also reveal a blue sky with clouds. Not far from the boy, a small bird's nest sits inside a museum vitrine. Within the nest lies a tiny book entitled "*How to Become a Bird.*"

The slightly surreal imagery in many of these artworks is a familiar feature of Elmgreen & Dragset's practice. Since their first sculpture, a diving board piercing through the panoramic window of the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art (*Powerless Structures, Fig. 11, 1997*), they have created numerous works that offer viewers an opportunity to experience everyday objects in new and often uncanny ways. Many might know the artist duo's well-known work, *Prada Marfa* (2005), a fully stocked but permanently closed luxury goods boutique located in the middle of the West Texan desert.

Before he became a visual artist, Michael Elmgreen wrote the following poem:

*While birds are crossing the line  
between mountain and sky  
You stand on the soil on  
soil so firmly pressed  
because home is  
what you were told  
should be solid  
You don't turn around  
Because home is  
what you were told  
while birds are crossing  
Home is the place you left*

**Elmgreen & Dragset** (Michael Elmgreen, b. 1961, Copenhagen, Denmark; Ingar Dragset, b. 1969, Trondheim, Norway) pursue questions of identity and belonging and investigate social, cultural, and political structures in their artistic practice. They are interested in the discourse that can arise if objects are radically re-contextualized and if normal modes for the representation of art are altered. Michael Elmgreen and Ingar Dragset are based in Berlin and have worked together as an artist duo since 1995. They have presented numerous solo exhibitions at prominent institutions worldwide, including Centre Pompidou-Metz, France (2023–24), Fondazione Prada, Milan (2022); The Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas (2019–20); The Whitechapel Gallery, London (2018–19); Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Tel Aviv (2016); UCCA, Beijing (2016); PLATEAU, Samsung Museum of Art, Seoul (2015); Victoria and Albert Museum, London (2013–14); Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam (2011); ZKM Museum of Modern Art, Karlsruhe (2010); Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Castilla y León, Spain (2009); Serpentine Gallery, London (2006); Tate Modern, London (2004); and Kunsthalle Zürich (2001). In 2009, they represented both the Nordic and the Danish Pavilions at the 53rd Venice Biennale. They are renowned for large-scale public installations, including *Van Gogh's Ear* (2016), a gigantic vertical swimming pool placed in front of Rockefeller Center in New York, City, *Prada Marfa* (2005), a full-scale replica of a Prada boutique installed along U.S. Route 90 in Valentine, Texas, and *Short Cut* (2003), an installation comprised of a Fiat Uno and a camper trailer, which appear to emerge from the ground.

**Pace** is a leading international art gallery representing some of the most influential contemporary artists and estates from the past century, holding decades-long relationships with Alexander Calder, Jean Dubuffet, Barbara Hepworth, Agnes Martin, Louise Nevelson, and Mark Rothko. Pace enjoys a unique U.S. heritage spanning East and West coasts through its early support of artists central to the Abstract Expressionist and Light and Space movements.

Since its founding by Arne Glimcher in 1960, Pace has developed a distinguished legacy as an artist-first gallery that mounts seminal historical and contemporary exhibitions. Under the current leadership of CEO Marc Glimcher, Pace continues to support its artists and share their visionary work with audiences worldwide by remaining at the forefront of innovation. Now in its seventh decade, the gallery advances its mission through a robust global program—comprising exhibitions, artist projects, public installations, institutional collaborations, performances, and interdisciplinary projects. Pace has a legacy in art bookmaking and has published over five hundred titles in close collaboration with artists, with a focus on original scholarship and on introducing new voices to the art historical canon.

Today, Pace has seven locations worldwide, including European footholds in London and Geneva as well as Berlin, where the gallery established an office in 2023. Pace maintains two galleries in New York—its headquarters at 540 West 25th Street, which welcomed almost 120,000 visitors and programmed 20 shows in its first six months, and an adjacent 8,000 sq. ft. exhibition space at 510 West 25th Street. Pace’s long and pioneering history in California includes a gallery in Palo Alto, which was open from 2016 to 2022. Pace’s engagement with Silicon Valley’s technology industry has had a lasting impact on the gallery at a global level, accelerating its initiatives connecting art and technology as well as its work with experiential artists. Pace consolidated its West Coast activity through its flagship in Los Angeles, which opened in 2022. Pace was one of the first international galleries to establish outposts in Asia, where it operates permanent gallery spaces in Hong Kong and Seoul, along with an office and viewing room in Beijing. In spring 2024, Pace will open its first gallery space in Japan in Tokyo’s new Azabudai Hills development.




Press Inquiries

Europe  
 Rebecca Riegelhaupt  
 Communications Director  
 rriegelhaupt@pacegallery.com  
 +44 7917 909779

Kirsteen Cairns  
 Communications Manager  
 kcairns@pacegallery.com  
 +44 7467 830230

Sales Inquiries  
 Pace Gallery  
 geneva@pacegallery.com

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