

BRIAN DEGRAW
SP555
December 11, 2024—February 8, 2025**Reception with the artist:**
Saturday, January 24, 2-4pm

“Our heads are round so our thoughts can change direction.”—Francis Picabia

James Fuentes is very pleased to present Brian DeGraw, *SP555*, the artist's sixth exhibition with the gallery and first in Los Angeles—where this particular body of work was completed. A visual artist and a musician working across virtually all mediums, the exhibition's title is lifted from the Roland SP555 Sampler; a piece of equipment central to DeGraw's process when making music, and in an analogous sense as well. These new paintings emerge from a simple, encompassing ideal: to trust spontaneity over all else.

As delivered from the sixteen square pads of the SP555's sample bank, DeGraw will start a composition by pulling many disparate sources, styles, places, and sketches to be recombined, sequenced, processed, repeated, and so on to create something entirely new. DeGraw's SP555 visual equivalent, then, is the 24 x 30 inch frame within which these visual compositions take place, working and reworking with the image or technique that arises in the moment. Sidestepping any given formula, obvious theme, or overarching look, these works channel meditations free from the paranoid constraints of personal branding, visual identity, and for-consumption art production.

The process of sampling is an ancient one, and DeGraw's works fold in personal and autobiographical elements as well as fragments pulled from the work of others that further reflect these personal aspects. *24th of 24* (2024), for instance, uses as its foundation the Frank Stella album art of the Phillip Glass Ensemble's *Music in Twelve Parts*. The painting was started during the weeks following Stella's death, which coincided with a rare performance by the ensemble of the album in its entirety, for which DeGraw happened to be in attendance. The direct and spontaneous incorporation into his art of experiences and images like these is a reflection of DeGraw's "faith in the idea that everything I am drawn to is existing in the same spiritual orbit."

Many of the impulses inherent to this exhibition also realize a circle back to the artist's first exhibition with the gallery, *Behead the Genre*, which in 2007 inaugurated James Fuentes LLC's first address at 35 Saint James Place, New York. That project consisted, in part, of works made from requests written on paper that were handed to the artist in clubs when he worked as a DJ. Thus, the desire to dissolve the barriers of categorization and aesthetic expectation remains one that DeGraw continually cycles through.

Brian DeGraw (b. 1974) has presented solo exhibitions at James Fuentes, New York; Wish-Less, Tokyo; Allen & Eldridge, New York; Le Confort Moderne in Poitiers, France; Dazed Gallery, London; and UKS Gallery, Oslo, among others. Most recently, he presented a two-person exhibition alongside Maia Naveriani at Tanya Leighton, Berlin. His work has been included in group exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art, Whitney Museum of American Art (in the 2008 Whitney Biennial), Jewish Museum, White Columns, Swiss Institute, Pace Gallery, Tramps, The Hole, ATM Gallery, and American Fine Arts Co. in New York; Kunsthalle Wien in Vienna, Austria; Deste Foundation in Athens, Greece; and Wish-Less, Hysteria Glamour, and Gallery Claska in Tokyo. His work is in the permanent collections of the Museum of Modern Art, Zabłudowicz Collection, Dakis Joannou Collection, Ragnarock Museum, and Agnes B Collection. DeGraw lives and works in New York City.

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