

JUNE 18 - AUGUST 13, 2016

GRAFFORISTS

OPENING RECEPTION
SATURDAY, JUNE 18, 2016 6-9PM

CURATED BY MAX PRESNEILL

Featuring: Jonni Cheatwood, Tomory Dodge, Craig Drennen, Scott Everingham, Ann Glazer, Sebastian Helling, Alexander Kroll, John Mills, Oscar Murillo, Pepa Prieto, Christian Rosa, Kimberly Rowe, David Spanbock, Russell Tyler, Mary Weatherford and Liat Yossifor

From the very beginning of humanity's journey, *Homo sapiens* have left their mark upon the world around them. With colored spit sprayed across their hands, with signs and symbols, with elegant animals drawn, they tried to depict the world and leave a trace of themselves within it. Who knows what the concept of the individual meant to these people? Not, from the earliest known records, even from the first recognized work of fictional literature, the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, we have wondered what "I" means, what death means, what our lives mean in relationship to it and what immortality might imply.

From these early cave dwellers to the scrawls of bawdy Roman graffiti and today's tweeners writing the classic 'me-him/her' sign of love-longing in a drawn heart, we have all continued the search for this meaning. Art has been no different.

Skulls and still-lives, fruit and vegetables, poultry and fish, the symbols of our own mortality, reflected mirrors and self-portraits—the *memento mori* throughout the ages have continued as a central theme for humanity. With the emergence of abstraction, they mark themselves, independent of relationships to things outside of the artwork itself, can be read as the sign of presence and, thus, an artifact of the performative moments of the individual—a captured one in the stream of time, a 'still' of an action.

The artists included in *Grafforists* inherently deal with this realization. The very making of the paintings that they create become signifiers of their own mortality, or at least the object which rejects it. For when an artist dies, this is what we are left with—their thoughts and their bodily movements, body and mind together, making decisions that reflect their concerns, personality, thoughts, memories and desires. What more could we ask for, both as artists leaving something behind in our wake and as viewers allowed the intimacy of this connection to another person?



Alexander Kroll's *Origami Dolphin* (2016) at the "Grafforists" exhibition at the Torrance Museum, Torrance, CA