

Dave McDermott

The Varieties of Religious Experience

November 18, 2022 – January 14, 2023
GRIMM, 54 White Street, New York, NY (US)



Dave McDermott | *Seppuku*, 2022

GRIMM is pleased to present *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, an exhibition of new paintings by Dave McDermott at 54 White Street, New York, NY (US). This will be McDermott's fifth exhibition with the gallery.

The exhibition is titled after the book of lectures by psychologist and philosopher William James that contains descriptions of private experiences of theology and mysticism to explore human nature. McDermott's painting practice aims to examine our collective history and experience through allegorical, or rather meta-allegorical¹, depictions. Representations and symbols coalesce in the artist's compositions in ways that are pluralistic and usurp singular interpretations, prompting unforeseen readings and endless understandings.

McDermott's newest body of work explores the theme of "dissociation," a coping mechanism employed by the human psyche during episodes of exceptional distress. It can be described as a psychological state similar to an "out of body experience," where the mind tricks the person into believing they are watching themselves from outside of their body, as if watching a scene from a film.

Dissociation is a theme that is personal to McDermott but also one that parallels to the stress response of the world at large – a feeling that is at once private and universal. McDermott's exploration of it offers a perspective on the relationship between viewer and object, a nod to the act of viewing art itself.

Among the meta-allegorical representations in this body of work are linear markings of a golden facial profile atop each painting, as seen in most works such as *Paradiso Contaminato* and *Seppuku*, an explicit reference to the dissociated viewer. The exception to this unifying aesthetic is the large-scale work *IHMAIWTD* that hangs alone in an anteroom separate from the works in the exhibition, an embodiment of the self and thus a portrait in its own right.

¹ If allegory consists in the one-to-one relation of symbol and thing symbolized, McDermott's art is meta-allegory: the suspension between many such relations, such that the resulting feeling of ideal resolution transcends in resolving power the kind of resolution that might have arisen from any one of them taking charge of the rest. A resolution, we might say, is once and for all; the activity of resolution that McDermott's work makes possible is endless.

Meta-Allegory in the Art of Dave McDermott by James Carpenter, 2018.

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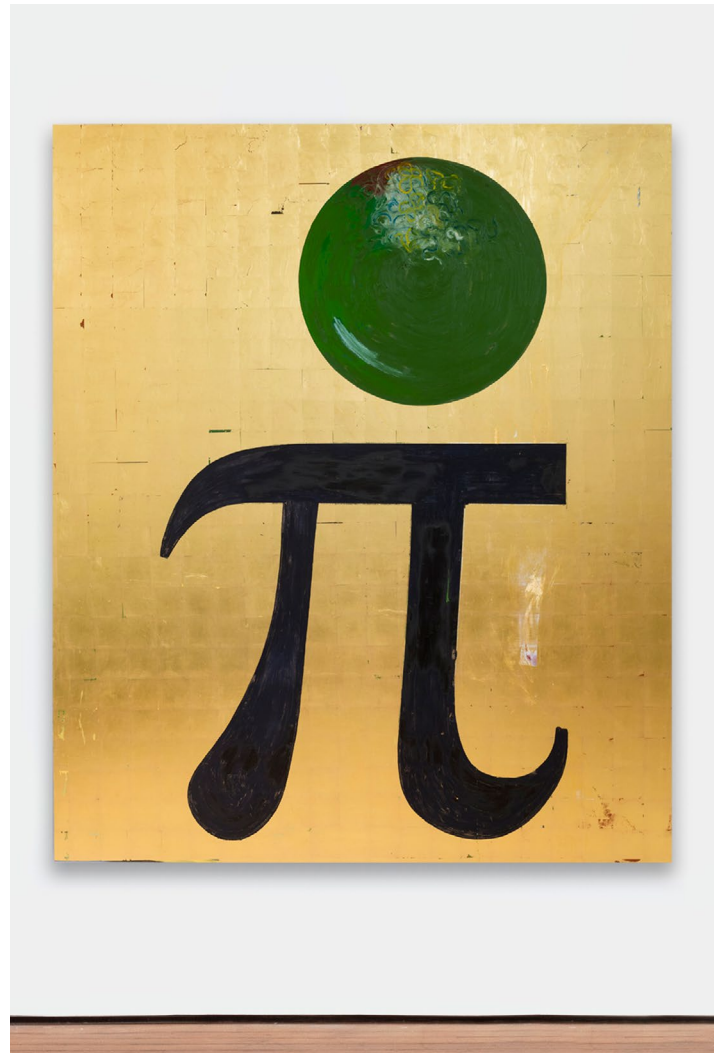
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About the artist

Dave McDermott (b. 1974 in Santa Cruz, CA, US) lives and works in Los Angeles, CA (US). He earned his BFA from the Academy of Art College in San Francisco, CA (US), and his MFA from Parsons School of Design in New York, NY (US). Selected solo exhibitions include: *West*, GRIMM, Amsterdam (NL); *The Long Goodbye*, GRIMM, New York, NY (US); *The Idiot*, Brennan & Griffin, New York, NY (US); *Goethe's Girlfriend*, Brennan & Griffin, New York, NY (US); *The Power and Influence of Joseph Wiseman*, GRIMM, Amsterdam (NL); *Pleasure Centre*, Twig, Brussels (BE); *Tot*, Duve, Berlin (DE); *A Rake's Progress*, GRIMM, Amsterdam (NL); *The Modern Temper*, Duve, Berlin (DE); *Most Of What Follows Is True*, Royale, San Francisco, CA (US).

Selected group exhibitions include: *Passing Leap*, Hauser & Wirth, New York, NY (US); *East Side to the West Side*, The FLAG Art Foundation, New York, NY (US); *Huidige Zaken*, GRIMM, Amsterdam (NL); *Beyond the Object*, Brand New Gallery, Milan (IT); *Black Medicine* (Dave McDermott/Nick van Woert), Room East, New York, NY (US); *Hi, Low and in Between*, curated by Matthew Day Jackson & Simone Subal, GRIMM, Amsterdam (NL).

His work is included in various collections such as: Museum Voorlinden, Wassenaar (NL); Beth Rudin DeWoody Collection, West Palm Beach, CA (US); Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Santa Barbara (CA); Zabłudowicz Collection, New York, NY (US) and London (UK), among others.



Dave McDermott | IHMAIWD (*Completed Figure*), 2022

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