

Aurel Schmidt

I Rot Before I Ripen

September 7 – October 7, 2017

Opening Reception: September 7, 6-8 PM

P·P·O·W is pleased to present a solo exhibition by Aurel Schmidt. *I Rot Before I Ripen*, will feature new large-scale mixed media drawings as well as an installation. Schmidt uses gestures from landscape and the doodles of pre-pubescent girls as a vehicle to explore art historical tropes, infusing her works with girlish desire and erotic pleasure. Her complex, detailed drawings often depict hybrid or amalgamated forms that disorient the viewer and introduce absurdity, and oftentimes morbidity, into seemingly picturesque scenes. Images of butterflies, flowers, spider webs, snakes, skeletons, penises, and vulvas co-exist in a hyper erotic landscape of sex and death. Using her personal biography, Schmidt simultaneously examines heterosexuality from a playful, erotic, and adventuring female perspective and investigates how identity can be newly invented.



For the last decade, Schmidt has exposed myths about the body using drawing as her main vehicle of expression. Even though populated by such images as butterflies and flowers, the works presented are darkly monochromatic, and depart from the delicate detail and color for which Schmidt has been recognized. *I Rot Before I Ripen* presents a somber tone, bringing demanding urgency to her works, underlining the depth of the female experience and issues surrounding aging and mortality.

Schmidt's inspirations are wide ranging, from the work of Edvard Munch and Gustav Klimt, to Japanese Edo screens, Nancy Spero's goddesses, Hallmark greeting cards, street wear, graffiti, children's book illustrations and boyfriends' tattoos. *I Rot Before I Ripen* interweaves art and the artist's personal experience to depict a free and direct female expression of sex, love, psychology and politics.

In addition to her large-scale drawings, the exhibition will include an installation with athletic tee shirts Schmidt has treated as canvases. Combining hand drawn sexual imagery, glitter, decals, and other collaged elements with the readymade contemporary iconography of the tee shirt, Schmidt turns these items from youthful masculine boy attire into female objects of desire. From iron-on photos of Justin Bieber to iconic magic mushrooms to the World Trade Center represented by two large penises, Schmidt provocatively challenges gender stereotypes and sexuality, through works that playfully weave grunge, punk, and skateboard culture with landscape, erotica, and glitter.

The installation offers a burlesque vision of male culture, bringing together a series of shirts, many of which belonged to male figures in Schmidt's life, including her ex-husband, former lovers, and her current boyfriend. Presented variously as faux graphic design and personal objects of memory and desire, the work aims to highlight and perversify the boy's club aspect of street wear and skateboarding apparel. By appropriating the iconography of brands such as Supreme or Palace, the works both fetishize and make fun of the purported elitism of these brands, undermining the perceived significance of their brand and labeling.

Aurel Schmidt was born in Kamloops, British Columbia and currently lives and works in New York City. Schmidt was included in Phaidon's *Vitamin D2: New Perspectives in Drawing* (2013) and has exhibited nationally and internationally. Solo exhibitions include Deitch Projects, New York, and Peres Projects, Los Angeles, as well as self organized pop-up exhibitions throughout New York City. Schmidt was included in the 2010 Whitney Biennial and has contributed to group exhibitions at Romeo, New York; Lomex, New York; Andrea Rosen Gallery, New York; Marianne Boesky, New York; Marlborough Contemporary, New York; Saatchi Gallery, London; Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien, Vienna; DESTE Foundation for Contemporary Art, Greece; and Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Moscow, among others.