A PICK GALLERY

I'M STILL STANDING

Paul Pretzer

BETWEEN GESTURE AND DIGITAL CODE

Michael Conrads, Riccardo Dapino, Sven DRÜHL
ANTONIO GÓMEZ BUENO, Fukushi Ito, Spazio Pirotecnico

Opening on Thursday 22nd January 2026, 7:30 pm
22.01.26 – 07.03.26

On January 22 at 7:30 pm, A PICK GALLERY, Via Galliari 15/C, will present two exhibitions: **I'm Still Standing**, a solo show by Paul Pretzer, and the group exhibition **Between Gesture and Digital Code**, featuring works by Michael Conrads, Riccardo Dapino, Sven Drühl, Antonio Gómez Bueno, Fukushi Ito, and Spazio Pirotecnico (BohDo, Paula Daher, Francesca Lopetuso).

I'm still standing

Paul Pretzer (Paide, Estonia, 1981) engages with the genre of still life by transforming it into a theatre of the absurd, where formal balance coexists with the disorder of existence. His paintings stage objects, hybrid creatures, and seemingly static situations that, upon closer inspection, reveal latent tensions, dark humor, and a subtle sense of tragicomedy.

Pretzer's works evoke fantastic worlds populated by chimeras and enigmatic figures, suspended between the grotesque and the fairy-tale. Absurdity, misfortune, and the unexpected become central narrative elements, recalling both the visionary imagination of Hieronymus Bosch and the dark comedy of Tim Burton, as well as Dalí's surrealism. Even when the subject appears to belong to the still-life tradition, objects deform, shift in function and identity, and lose their neutrality, becoming charged with ambiguous meanings.

For Pretzer, content follows form: it is through rigorous composition, a controlled use of light, and refined painterly technique that strange and elusive subjects emerge. Everyday objects—alongside entirely invented ones—coexist in a precarious balance, suggesting stories that resist a single interpretation, where the boundary between irony and tragedy remains deliberately blurred.

With *I'm Still Standing*, Pretzer enters into an open dialogue with art history, quoting the great masters while simultaneously questioning their conventions. By introducing elements of the grotesque, farce, and tragicomedy, he subverts the seriousness traditionally associated with painting—and with still life in particular—restoring to the genre a disturbing and profoundly contemporary vitality.

This ability to combine technical virtuosity, imagination, and a subtle critique of the dynamics of life and art makes Paul Pretzer's work immediately recognizable and helps explain the growing attention his practice has already received within both national and international artistic and collecting circles.

Between gesture and digital code

The group exhibition explores the relationship between mark-making, manual gesture, artisanal tradition, and technological/digital languages. The project brings into dialogue artistic practices that merge the physical dimension of making—gesture, materiality, craftsmanship—with the possibilities offered by digital code, artificial intelligence, and contemporary technologies. The works on view investigate how artistic tradition and manual techniques are transformed and interwoven with digital tools, algorithms, computational processes, and new forms of visual imagination. The title suggests a dynamic tension between the tactile, intuitive, and bodily, and the syntactic, logical, and digital: a space in which gesture and code do not oppose one another but instead influence each other, shaping new aesthetics and modes of perception.
The exhibition brings together artists with diverse backgrounds and languages, united by a shared interest in the relationship between art, gesture, and technique. Painting, drawing, and sculpture emerge as languages capable of absorbing and reinterpreting technological logics without renouncing their physical presence, creating a contemporary field of exchange between manual practice and code, sensory perception and artificial construction, painted image and technological vision.

Michael Conrads' painting (Grevenbroich, Germany, 1977) is rooted in a rigorous structure: an initial grid that functions as an almost algorithmic matrix through which the artist constructs illusions of depth and unstable perspectives. This ordering device is never visible as a simple schema but operates as an underlying principle, guiding the composition and activating a complex perceptual dynamic. Geometric forms, monochrome or chromatic, repeat, overlap, and modulate, continuously engaging the viewer's gaze. While remaining firmly anchored in the tradition of painting, Conrads' research openly engages with the logic of digital systems. Sharp geometric figures and layered materials merge to create abstract landscapes and spatial illusions. A key thematic aspect of his work is the interpenetration of two distinct worlds—the geometric abstract and the landscape—offering the viewer a uniquely immersive visual experience.
Riccardo Dapino's research (Turin, 1982) focuses on drawing with traditional tools such as graphite, pigments, pastels, and colored pencils, experimenting with supports including paper, marble, and travertine. In his work, what originates from a slow, manual gesture appears to the viewer as a sharp, compact, almost artificial image, to the point of evoking the aesthetics of printmaking or digital processing. Subjects drawn from the natural world are enlarged until they lose any immediate reference to their origin. Mushrooms and organic structures are transformed into abstract, hyper-defined surfaces that seem to result from a technological process rather than from handwork. The viewer is thus prompted to question what they are seeing, to mentally reconstruct the image by drawing on their own visual archive and memory, in a slow and meditative process of recognition.
Sven Drühl (Nassau, Germany, 1968) approaches the genre of landscape starting from vector backgrounds derived from video games and digital simulations. His practice occupies a hybrid territory in which the painterly tradition of landscape confronts images generated for virtual environments, placing nature, artifice, and visual memory in tension. His canvases evoke an apparently unspoiled and strikingly familiar nature, one that seems to draw from a sedimented collective imaginary. Yet these landscapes never stem from direct observation of reality. Through a rigorous painterly process, the artist restores to digital simulation a contemplative,

slowed-down quality historically associated with painting. As in virtual reality, his scenes construct immersive spaces that appear paradoxically more intense and "truer" than nature itself, questioning notions of authenticity, reproduction, and representation. In this shift between the virtual and the painterly, Drühl reflects on how we imagine landscape today: no longer as direct experience, but as a construction mediated by screens, digital archives, and artificial memories.

The work of **Antonio Gómez Bueno** (Cantabria, Spain, 1964) is shaped within the subcultures of surf, skate, and ska—contexts in which gesture, speed, and serial imagery naturally coexist. Through his engagement with street art, he experimented with direct interventions in public space, combining performative action, visual communication, and political irony. At the core of his practice lies the mark: a gestural, fluid, and instinctive line that, while rooted in manual drawing and illustration, takes on a quality strikingly akin to digital language. His images often appear as if generated or multiplied through contemporary graphic processes, while retaining a strong physical and artisanal presence. In this ongoing exchange between analog gesture and digital imagery, his work constructs a hybrid language capable of connecting visual cultures of the past and present, transforming drawing into a space of passage between manual practice and technology.

The research of **Fukushi Ito** (Nagoya, Japan, 1952) is grounded in the concept of recomposition and in the transformation of images through digital processes. His works originate on the computer, where visual fragments, photographs, marks, and geometries are processed, layered, and transformed into complex, unstable compositions. Light, neon, light boxes, and transparent surfaces enter into dialogue with digitally generated images, creating hybrid structures in which memory, perception, and technology intertwine. In this process, the image is never fixed but appears as an organism in constant evolution, inviting the viewer to engage with a fluid, open, and ever-changing visual reality. His practice thus develops entirely through the use of the computer, transforming digital language into poetic and visual material.

The artists of **Spazio Pirotecnico** present a series of works in which drawing, gesture, and materiality confront three-dimensionality, technology, and material experimentation. The sculptures by **BohDo**—created by Piero Brarda (Turin, 1943) and Ditjan Muça (Peshkopi, Albania, 1993)—together with those by **Francesca Lopetuso** (Rome, 1979), identify latent elements in Brarda's drawings—curves, points, shadows—and transform them into volumes, structures, and forms that move beyond the two-dimensionality of paper. What originates as a manual mark thus evolves into object, sculpture, and space. The installations turn the exhibition space into a dynamic visual field, where technical research intertwines with imagination and play, giving shape to visions suspended between dream and construction. Joining this dialogue, **Paula Daher** (Mendoza, Argentina, 1990) presents *Ánimas*, an interactive installation developed across multiple levels: a technological structure based on programming, data science, and electrical systems, and a visual and auditory dimension in which generative video art translates these data into forms, speeds, and sounds. Each interaction modifies the work, making visible the relationship between body and system, between art and algorithm.

The exhibitions will be on view until March 7th, 2026

Short Bio

Paul Pretzer (Paide, Estonia, 1981) has lived and worked between Spain and Berlin since 2017. He studied at the Muthesius Kunsthochschule in Kiel (2002–05) and at the Hochschule für Bildende Künste in Dresden, where he completed his MFA under Prof. Ralf Kerbach in 2009. He was awarded the Robert Sterl Prize by the Sammelstiftung Dresden (2009) and has received several grants for artist residencies, including the Center for Contemporary Arts, Omaha (2009), Espronceda Center for Art and Culture, Barcelona (2015), Tartuensis, Tartu (2017), as well as the Gushul Residency in Banff, Canada (2019), and Cadaqués (2024).
Recent exhibitions include *Animals & Friends*, Tokyo Art Museum (2024); *All Over*, A PICK GALLERY, Turin, Italy (2023); *New Paintings of Ordinary Incidents*, Timothy Hawkinson Gallery, Los Angeles, CA (2023); *Contemporary Voices 2022*, Platforma2, Barcelona, Spain (2022); *The Contemporary of the Sacred*, Basilica San Giuseppe al Trionfale, Rome, Italy (2022); *Früchte Einer Freundschaft*, Feldbusch Wiesner Rudolph Galerie, Berlin, Germany (2022); Marc Straus, New York, NY (2021).

Michael Conrads (Grevenbroich, Germany, 1977) develops his work from geometric structures—rhombi, triangles, parallelograms, and isometric grids—which he combines into complex compositions capable of generating abstract pictorial spaces marked by a constant dynamic tension between form, color, and depth. His chromatic imagination draws on heterogeneous references, ranging from Mexican folklore to the modernist architecture of Luis Barragán, as well as the historical avant-gardes of Yves Klein and Piet Mondrian. Through hybrid stratifications of perspectives and materials, Conrads' works establish a dialogue between construction and destruction, familiarity and innovation, moving beyond the boundaries between modernism and postmodernism.
His works have been exhibited, among other venues, at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sapporo, Kunsthaus Hamburg, the Contemporary Gallery in Brussels, and in numerous exhibition projects in Mexico.

Riccardo Dapino (Turin, 1982) holds a degree in Painting and later qualified to teach Drawing and Art History at the Accademia Albertina di Belle Arti in Turin.
Major exhibitions include: in 2025, participation in the distributed art exhibition *Germinale* and selection for the Combat Prize in the graphic/drawing section. In 2024, *Riccardo Dapino – Piero Gilardi* at Archizone Architettura Circolare – Palazzo Michelerio, Asti; the group exhibition *Paperland* at A PICK GALLERY, Turin; and participation in Cremona Art Fair. In 2023, he took part in the group exhibition *Megamix* at A PICK GALLERY; was selected for the masterclass *From Drawing to Installation* with artist Omar Galliani at the Fondazione Zeffirelli in Florence; and opened *D'inesauribile Segreto*, a solo exhibition curated by A PICK GALLERY at Leading Law Notai e Avvocati in Milan.
Earlier exhibitions include Stroke Festival, Munich, with Square23 Gallery (2012); *Contemporaneo: Giovani Artisti dell'Accademia delle Belle Arti*, Open 011, Turin (2006); *TRACCE07*, Arte in Cornice Gallery, Turin (2006); a group exhibition organized by Galleria della Tartaruga, Rome (2005); selection for the Premio Nazionale delle Arti promoted by the Italian Ministry of Education (2004); *Mondo/Mondi*, a two-person exhibition at the Accademia di Belle Arti di Torino, and *In Primis*, PostArt Gallery, Milan (2003); *Artisti a Torino*, Under 30 selection, Torino Esposizioni (2002).

Sven Drühl (Nassau, Germany, 1968) studied Fine Arts and Mathematics at the University of Essen and earned a PhD in Art Sciences. In 2007 he received the Falkenrot Prize for Painting in Berlin, followed in 2008 by a grant from the Pollock-Krasner Foundation, New York, USA.
The themes he explores—particularly in his landscape-based works—include cultural transfer, originality, authorship, quotation, remix, seriality, as well as interference with nature and transformations of the concept of landscape. His practice unfolds through different phases: landscape paintings drawn from historically based series centered on citation; mountain and water paintings from the lacquer series, based on virtual models derived from the video game industry; neon works and bronze sculptures.
Recent solo exhibitions include KÖNIG BERLIN (2025), Museum Wiesbaden (2025), Hans Erni Museum Lucerne (2024), Ludwig Galerie Schloss Oberhausen (2023), Märkisches Museum Witten (2023), Kunstverein Leverkusen (2022), Kunsthalle Emden (2021), Marburger Kunstverein (2020), St. Matthäus-Kirche, Berlin (2019), Kunstverein Coburg (2018), and Caspar David Friedrich Center, Greifswald (2017).
Group exhibitions in museum institutions include Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg; Humboldt Forum, Berlin; Kunsthalle Emden; Torrance Art Museum, Torrance, USA; Museum Kunst der Westküste, Alkersum; Centro Cultural do Banco do Brasil, Brasília, Rio de Janeiro, and São Paulo; Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg; DKM Museum, Duisburg; Palais Thurn und Taxis, Bregenz, Austria. He lives and works in Berlin.

Antonio Gómez Bueno (Cantabria, Spain, 1964) works within the complex and ironic legacy of Pop Art, intertwined with Conceptual Art, particularly in its more socially engaged dimension. His works are constructed as games—at once innocent and perverse—without explicit critical distance. They are radical and festive, ambiguous and disruptive, complex and transgressive. Through sharp humor and subtle irony, the artist navigates the fine line between an apparent veneration of irresponsible, hedonistic consumer culture and a harsh, uncompromising critical stance. Gómez Bueno acts like a sharpshooter operating from a space of freedom, asserting the right to appropriate any icon.
His works have been exhibited in numerous museums, including the Museo de Bellas Artes de Santander; Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Madrid; Círculo de Bellas Artes, Madrid; Centro de Arte de Tenerife; Laguna Art Museum; Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco; San Jose Museum of Art; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Harwood Museum of Art, Taos (New Mexico); Museo de la Ciudad de México; Galeria Torreão Nascente da Cordoaria Nacional, Lisbon; Grand Palais, Paris; Industrie- und Handelskammer, Frankfurt; Today Art Museum, Beijing; and the Chiso Museum, Kyoto, among others. He has also exhibited in commercial galleries in Spain, Belgium, France, Italy, Germany, England, Portugal, Mexico, Brazil, Japan, Thailand, China, and the United States.

Fukushi Ito (Nagoya, Japan, 1952) was born in Nagoya in 1952. She graduated from the Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music, Department of Painting (Japanese Painting) in 1978, and moved to Italy the same year after completing postgraduate studies in 1980. She lived in Florence until 1985 and then relocated to Milan, where she currently resides.
In 1983 she held solo exhibitions in Venice and Milan, followed by numerous solo and group exhibitions across Europe, the United States, Japan, and China, where she continues to exhibit today. Her work is a study of space and time, visualizing the profound connection between

spatiality and temporality. Expressed through materials that reflect the power of light and through experimentation with installation composition, the work itself becomes a metaphor for the emergence of reality and existence. For her, artistic inquiry and material experimentation constitute a human, anthropological, and spiritual research aimed at explaining our existence in the world and the ways humanity represents and shapes itself.
In Japan she has held 15 solo exhibitions, including one at the Aichi Prefectural Museum of Art, and participated in 14 group exhibitions, including at the Fukuyama Museum of Art. In 2014, she was awarded the Medal with Dark Blue Ribbon by the Japanese government. She lives and works between Milan and Turin.

Spazio Pirotecnico

BohDo

Piero Brarda (Turin, 1943) began working in his family's artistic foundry in his early twenties, coming into contact with young artists of Turin's Arte Povera scene. He approached art as an exhibition installer, collaborated with Carlo Mollino, took part in the production of the important Alexander Calder exhibition in Turin, met Renzo Piano, and experienced the vibrant cultural climate of those years. In recent years he has returned to drawing and began his collaboration with Spazio Pirotecnico. He lives and works in Turin.

Ditjan Muça (Peshkopi, Albania, 1993), trained as an architect, has developed an independent artistic practice as a self-taught artist in recent years. Passionate about drawing, sculpture, and assemblage, he cultivates his creativity through the production of sculptures—primarily in iron—of varying scales. He lives and works in Turin.

Paula Daher (Mendoza, Argentina, 1990) creates interactive experiences through creative coding at the intersection of art, data, and technology. She is currently exploring the relationship between nature, human beings, and human–computer interaction, using human and natural behavior as input to generate real-time visualizations and immersive experiences. Trained as a creative technologist and industrial designer, her practice began with the creation of digital scenography for performances, later evolving into the development of immersive and interactive experiences using techniques such as computer vision, sensor systems, and coding. She subsequently decided to become a data scientist in order to transform large volumes of data into artistic works. She lives and works in Turin.

Francesca Lopetuso (Rome, 1979), after graduating in architecture, worked in restoration and museum exhibition design. Long active in the field of creativity, she has often integrated elements of "authorial" design into her projects. Since 2013 she has collaborated with Piero Brarda, both in the realization of exhibition designs of various kinds for different clients and, above all, in the creation of sculptural objects as an independent line of research. Her practice shows a particular interest in transparency, color, and lightweight geometries. She lives and works in Turin.