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Solo Online Exhibition from Franck de las Mercedes:
Every Year the Flowers Bloom



Every year we wait for Spring, as the ancients waited for Persephone and in that wait we are rewarded with the first buds pushing up from the soil, breaking out on branches, and de las Mercedes' many odes to flowers likewise reward our wait. Drawing on the notion of a certitude in spring growth, this exhibition explores not only the cyclical quality of seasons, but also the artist's repeated return to the subject. But there is more, and an interesting marriage between his artistic practice and how nature blooms. Known as an artist that is not the silent painter in a pristine studio, de las Mercedes creates works bursting with both color and energy - unexpected as the artist is more often soft spoken. Not only are his works overflowing with vibrancy, their very making resembles the process of digging and planting as the artist scrapes his paint onto his canvas or paper, often filling his studio with the sounds reminiscent of machines tearing up a surface - this quality likens the process to the unheard sounds and violence of blooming and budding flowers as they break through the bonds of Winter.

Also of great interest is the flowers that he paints - for example, *Art Poppies*, 2014 cannot stop one from making associations and understand that not only is the artist interpreting the flowers he paints in his gestural brush and spatula application, he is also relying on the symbols affixed to the flowers. Poppies have been the fodder of creativity for centuries, due to their connection to

opium, one of the main substances used by The Romantics to release their creativity from the constraint of the burgeoning Industrial world. Today, still meshed in that nature barren world, we often look to the external and distant to connect with nature, but more often than not, as a visitor. De las Mercedes, in drawing on the poppy and other flowers and their links to releasing imagination from a contrived and ordered world, affords the viewer with freedom - freedom to bring inside nature, without disturbing it, and the freedom to imagine the action involved in the work, freedom to connect to artistic practices founded in yesteryear, freedom to imagine all that is bursting within the work, and the knowledge that all of this is the artist's intent.

Melanie Prapopoulos