





Zachari Logan

Unkraut vergeht nicht

MOCA London

11 June - 22 July 2023



Unkraut vergeht nicht

Zachari Logan has a facility with a pencil perhaps not seen for many decades. His line recalls Dürer or perhaps Ingress and he knows it, and yet he does not give into it. Not for him the easy, remarkable likeness, the human photocopier, the I am a camera and my hand is the printer. Logan fights against such easy impressive results, to make even greater works that, while they rely on his facility, not only take it forward, but are conceptualised as 21st century art.

Logan's work reveals a queerness about itself, in form and content. His *26 Months* (2011, blue pencil on mylar) depicts a remarkable likeness of himself as a child. What makes it startling is that he does not use cross hatching or other drawing techniques to make the self portrait. Instead he has written the word FAGGOT over and over to build up the image. It is startling when the reader first makes out the words and the construct. One also knows intuitively the child has sadly grown up to hear that word thrown at him far too many times. In *Advice I: Don't Be Gay* Logan built up a contemporary portrait of himself by writing the phrase over and over. Fortunately for the viewers Logan has not taken his own (or someone else's) advice. Other times he draws weeds in beautiful detail, on verges of road or sites of lost woodland, and sometimes they morph into versions of himself as a mad Yeti'ish character. These are drawn on paper or directly onto gallery walls for temporary installations. Their obvious erasability is a comment on queerness.

For MOCA he has chosen to make a large installation called *Unkraut vergeht nicht*, drawing directly on the walls. The work is from his *Nomenclature Series*, which looks at the science of choosing names for those things we encounter in our world. Usually these names are picked and codified by patriarchal forces (yes, straight white cis men), and his German title comes from a proverb that states "Weeds don't vanish". This is a rather two edged sword of a phrase, as it is used when someone perseveres against adversity, does not give up, and in the end succeeds. But it also likens that person to a weed, a troublesome out of place plant. A weed is something not wanted, that needs to be pulled up. In itself, it is perfectly fine as a plant, but we

humans see things as weeds because they are not what we want, or want them to be elsewhere, out of sight (and mind). Weeds are rather queer little plants. Weeds are seen as invasive, why do weeds always have to shout their weediness, can't they just hide in the background, keep to themselves, why do they always have to show off? Logan says that he often draws "these species and the liminal spaces in which they inhabit as stand-ins for the queer body and queer spaces that remain resistant to monocultures and thrive on the margins."

Logan's *Nomenclature Series* started at the beginning of the Covid pandemic, a period of intense introspection for most people, a time when mortality and impermanence were common currency. Few times in the ordinary person's life will such a major mental shift be forced upon them, nor the luxury of time to contemplate its deeper meanings to self and society. That Logan draws onto the walls only for them too soon to be erased and painted over for the next occupier of the space increases the viewers connection with the temporal, with the reality of a time based life and the ever approaching end to it. Like all good contemporary still life, these works remind the viewer of death, but not as something to fear, but as an encouragement to enjoy each and every day of living.

Logan's work straddles many contemporary issues, queerness, the ever present possibility of death, the structures at play within society that enforce certain beliefs that only benefit a select few to the detriment of the many. For those few, we are all but weeds, out of place, a nuisance, maybe one that is needed to do our job as consumer or worker, but held in little or no esteem. Logan reminds us, we are the weeds, and we should hold our heads up high like a bright dandelion coming through a crack.

Michael Petry 2023



















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Canadian artist Zachari Logan works mainly with large-scale drawing, ceramics and installation practices, evolving a visual language that explores the intersections between identity, memory and place. In previous work related to his current practice, Logan investigated his own body as exclusive site of exploration. In recent work, Logans body remains a catalyst, but no longer the sole focus. Employing a strategy of visual quotation, mined from place and experience, Logan re-wilds his body as a queer embodiment of nature. This narrative shift engages ideas of beauty, mortality, empirical explorations of landscape, and overlapping art-historic motifs that all underline a fundamental interconnection of the human as nature.

Logan has exhibited widely throughout North America, Europe and Asia and is found in private and public collections worldwide, including: National Gallery of Canada, Art Gallery of Ontario, Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art (NMOCA), 21cMuseums Hotel Collection, Remai Modern, McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Leslie-Lohman Museum, and Thetis Foundation Venice. Logan has attended many residencies; including Vienna's Museums Quartier MQ21 Program, the International Studio & Curatorial Program in Brooklyn, Wave Hill Botanical Gardens, Little Bird Residency in Bulgaria and was artist in residence at the Tom Thomson Shack at the McMichael Gallery. Logan has worked collaboratively with several celebrated artists, including Ross Bleckner and Sophie Calle and his work has been featured in many publications worldwide.

The artist would like to dedicate the exhibition to the memory of his late Aunt, Donna Millikin.

Work list:

Outside and inside back cover: *Dandelion Root*, from *Wildman Series*, blue pencil on mylar, 9 x 12 inches, 2023.

Inside front cover: *Moustache No. 2*, from *Wildman Series*, 9x12 inches, 2022.

Pages 2, 5, 6 - 7: *Nomenclature Series, Unkraut Vergeht Nicht*, graphite and pastel on plaster wall, 2023. Details, MOCA London.

Pages 8 - 9 and 14: Installation views MOCA London.

Pages 10 - 11: *Unkraut Vergeht Nicht* and *Dandelion Root*.

Page 12-13: *Ditch, The Light Eaters*, blue pencil on mylar, 4 x 36 inches, 2023. Detail.

Page 15: *Phosphene, Datura*, blue pastel and eraser on plaster wall, 2023.

Cover: Images courtesy the artist.

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