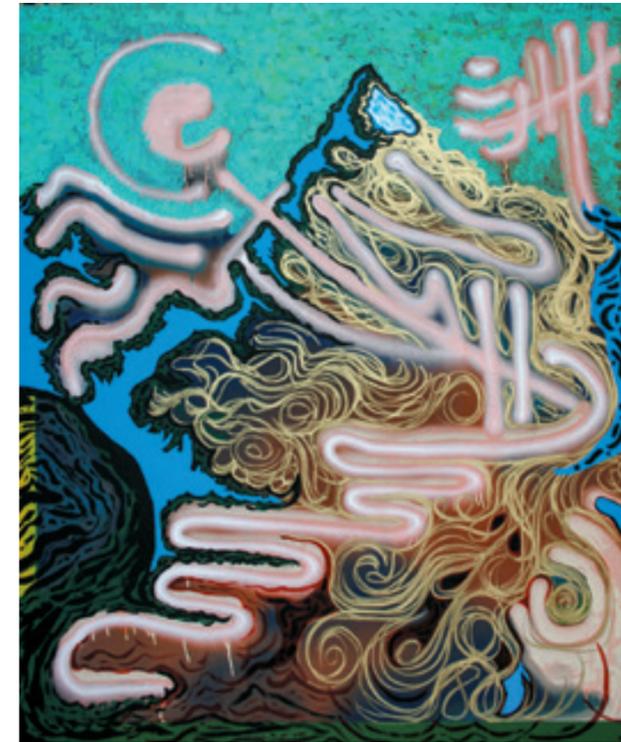


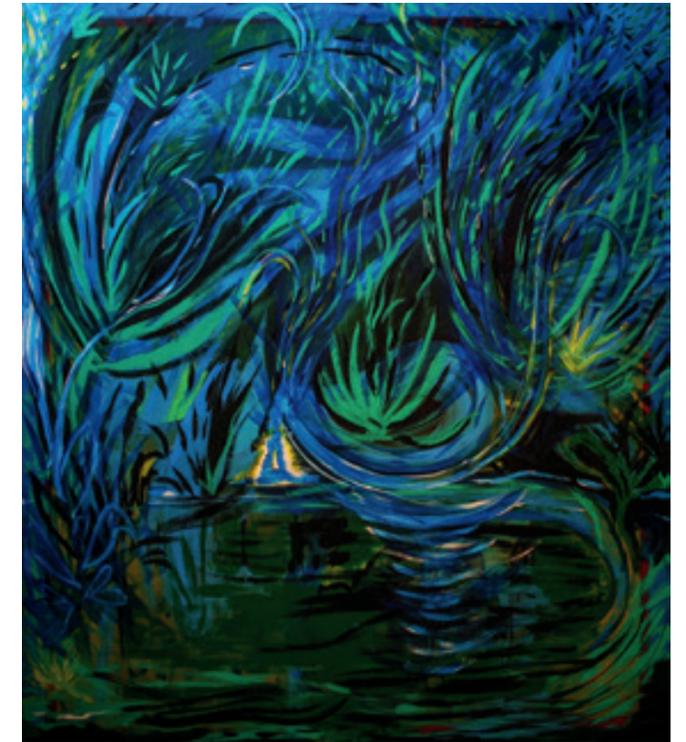
Stein Are Kjærås Dahl



Forever Light 2015, acrylics and oil on silk canvas, 185 x 160 cm.



My Reality is Realer Than Yours 2015, acrylics and oil on silk canvas, 185 x 160 cm. All images courtesy: the artist.



The Place 2015, acrylics on silk canvas, 185 x 160 cm.

THE PLACE Every experience has its own place, or at least a somewhere that resembles one. It's a specific place but with an uncertainty to it, which is hard to locate and in some cases even harder to put into words. Is it even possible to grasp art without considering some kind of dependency between the piece and the artist? Absolutely. Is it possible to do the same without considering some kind of dependency between the artwork and yourself as the person experiencing the work? I don't think so. Let's remove the artist from the equation. It's all about you the spectator and about the work you are experiencing. In my opinion, it is only by embracing the subjectivity of this relationship that one has a chance to find the Place. The Place exists at more than one location simultaneously. Finding it might feel like gazing through several parallel universes at the same time. I've visited my place lots of times. Sometimes it's full of fluidity and colour. On the brink of explosion. Other times it seems completely consumed by darkness, sailing off into the mist; slowly fading. Sometimes it is crawling with life, other times it feels lonely, yet it is never without beings. There are always creatures present. There, where limitation seems absent, I have dominion over everything that is real. I speak the first language, the native tongue of existence, and everything articulated in this language becomes real, because nothing said in this dialect can be a lie. It is the formative language. The most fundamental constituent. The Place seems more vibrant and vivid if it is neither hunted nor expected. As if its manifestation were somehow reliant on instinct. Directness adds to its strength, and preparation equally weakens it. Wasting away under the presence of expectation, so to speak. I'll never stop searching for the Place even though I know it takes me further away from its sudden arrival. I just can't help myself.
Stein Are Kjærås Dahl

Stein Are Kjærås Dahl (1980, Tønsberg) is an Oslo-based artist working with painting, drawing, printmaking and sound. Before completing his MFA studies at the Oslo National Academy of the Arts in 2015, Dahl studied interdisciplinary arts at Det Tverrfaglige Kunstinstitutt in Oslo (2003–06) as well as printmaking at Escola Superior de Artes e Design in Caldas da Rainha, Portugal (2008). There, he was an artist-in-residence at the Atelier-Museu António Duarte and participated in group exhibitions, most notably »Paperwork« at the Centro Cultural de Cascais. In 2012, Dahl was chosen to participate in »Emerging Printmaking« at the T-Gallery in Bratislava, Slovakia. Initiated by T-Gallery, this group show brought together nine artists from the academies of Stockholm, Helsinki and Oslo. In spring 2014, Dahl curated and contributed to the group exhibition »The Ship vs. Strawberry Helmet« at Oslo Kunsthavn.



The Time #5 silkscreen, 2015, 76 x 56 cm.



The Time #2 2015, silkscreen, 76 x 56 cm.

Stein Are Kjærås Dahl



The Time #1 2015, silkscreen, 76 x 56 cm.

Elusive Realism

Stein Are Kjærås Dahl's oeuvre seems driven by a desire to cover surfaces with vibrant colours and fantastical imagery. The artist focuses on painting, drawing, printmaking and sound pieces although he has created collages with found objects and other works, usually from the dregs of popular culture, whether a rusty car panel or a print of the Virgin Mary. His imagery remains both realist and figurative, however unlikely to occur in reality. In the drawing *You're Dead!* (2015), faces are multi-coloured spheres rising like soap bubbles; a massive plant blooms in eyeballs; and a green landscape is filled with a geometry of triangles and swirls instead of grass and trees. As such, Dahl's imagery comes close to psychedelic art, one of the movements documented by the French art historian Jean-François Chevrier in his survey *L'hallucination artistique* (Artistic Hallucination, 2012). As Chevrier explains, such visions were associated, first, with delirious states in the 19th century and, later, with drugs in the 1960s. Yet Dahl's works seem to take their cue from pop culture: its abundance, freakishness, variegation along with the latent dreams that seduced masses of consumers. However fantastical his imagery, the artist embraces the pragmatism of illustration, by making album covers or poster series. Plus, his visions are not singular but are often marked by patterns and by collaborative efforts, with unknown or known partners. His works with found objects include embroidered portraits, which he spray-painted over in neon shades. With fellow artist Patrik Berg, he printed political posters, inspired by historical propaganda and their own interpretations of utopian dreams in images only. Both drawings were superimposed on the same print without any words. The posters are striking for their discreetness as messages; they are a kind of political trompe l'oeil which seduces with an ardent palette instead of a powerful slogan. To return to Chevrier, Dahl reworks the original meaning of hallucination, as defined by Flaubert in 1866: perception without an object. Dahl's work appears as perception without subjects: waiting for a collective vision to be seen and realised. *Jennifer Allen*