

# GARDEN

## Spencer Longo

*5,000 A.D.*

June 29 - August 31, 2019

Garden is pleased to present *5,000 A.D.*, an exhibition of new works by Los Angeles-based artist Spencer Longo. With this group of drawings and their installation, Longo conjures a vague future that may, or may not, be radically different from life and the planet today. Viral, fractal, and cellular, the works in the exhibition explore the narrow divide between conceptions of utopia and dystopia, infected and healthful, order and disorder, industrial and natural.

*5,000 A.D.* comprises 21 graphite on paper drawings of varying sizes in wooden artist frames, all installed in a custom-built steel armature positioned along and in front of all four walls of the gallery. These simple-appearing line drawings proliferate to fill their pages, like mold growing in a petri dish. Each of the works incorporate recognizable nature iconography (cacti, flowers, seeds, vines, globes) laid out, flattened, and arranged using their own obscure, creeping logic. Within each drawing, the line is largely uninterrupted - every part of the picture plane is connected in cyclical, arresting loops. Amidst the blooming forms, certain bodies are marked with perma-smiling, clown-like, star-eyed faces, while other negative spaces are filled with acronyms, words, or phrases. The installation method - a modular steel prefab structure - both outlines the interior architecture of the room and grips the framed drawings with rubber stoppers. The drawn works appear squeezed and contained, their vitality forcefully controlled within this branching storage apparatus.

At first glance, the drawings and their installation seem at odds - the works on paper appear handmade, ancient, mysterious, glyph-like, while the steel structure nods towards contemporary industry and mechanization. The drawings appear to grow outwards occupying all available space while the armature literally presses inwards, clamping them in place. This dynamic energy, tension, and clash between seeming opposites - the rigid, infrastructural steel against the organic, rhizomatic graphite lines - collapses the objects and images into a single yet multiplicitous network. This merging destabilizes the distinction between nature and culture.

Each drawing in *5,000 A.D.* is its own unique galaxy. Networked into the larger logic of the installation, motifs travel meme-like across the pictures. Images here repeat, intertwine, expand and contract while text invokes ambiguous markets, systems, and poetics. The works, with their unwavering grins, laugh at the hubristic attempt to dominate and organize nature - as myths of hierarchy and individuality dissolve, the male ego shrivels and dies. Longo presents a world that is interconnected, interdependent, and shape-shifting; what is phallic is yonic, yonic is phallic, or maybe both are something in between. In the exhibition, the seed is a stand-in for both the genesis of life as well as its many varied and enmeshed continuations on Earth. The vitality of earthly life will surely survive any imminent climate threat, even if humans do not. In the ambiguous future imagined here, it is unclear whether we have arrived at the end or the beginning. Are these images presaging a cancerous death or the reemergence of life on a steel planet?

**Spencer Longo** (b. 1986, Exeter, NH) is an artist living and working in Los Angeles. He received a BFA from Carnegie Mellon University, PA. His work has been shown in solo exhibitions at Brand New Gallery, Milan; Levy.Delval, Brussels; Smart Objects, Los Angeles, CA; and as an artist in residence at Chiat/Day, Los Angeles, CA. He was a member of the artist collective JOGGING and showed work together at Still House, New York, NY and on MOCA TV. Recent group exhibitions include Garden, Los Angeles, CA; LOYAL, Stockholm; Future Gallery, Berlin; Chez Valentin, Paris; Carl Kostyal, London; Perry Rubenstein, Los Angeles, CA; and Edouard Malingue Gallery, Hong Kong. Forthcoming exhibitions include solo exhibitions at Jakob Kroon Gallery, Worthing, UK; and King's Leap, Brooklyn, NY.