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## Henrik Potter **SOULS**

Opening reception:  
Duration of the exhibition:

Saturday, January 18, 2020, 6 – 9pm  
January 21. – February 29, 2020

Spread across the gallery, Henrik Potter's works inhabit the space the way we might, casually standing in one spot or another, as if waiting to greet someone. Meandering through the rooms, we pause in front of them and visually inspect their being, while they slowly reveal themselves to us as a friend or perhaps even a stranger would, through the subtle details of their existence. It is here, in the brushstrokes, layers of muslin and paint, buildup of glue, and handmade frames, where we find the soul of each work: the application of tenderness.

The gallery is populated with several just larger than human-scale works, which are noticeably not self-supporting: they require being propped-up for presentation. Vertical aluminum poles provide the support, though Potter views these as an architectural addition to the space rather than part of the works themselves. Like temporary walls, the poles are used for a functional purpose: they also allow us to see both "faces" of these two-sided works. Take *Nacht flug / Figure (in a landscape)* (2017–19), which on one side is composed of a couple of wave-like, dark blue areas toward the bottom of the frame, with the upper two-thirds consists of a large dappled pattern created with single touches of the brush. The other side of the painting looks like an inverted landscape, with a figure-like shape near the bottom, while the top two-thirds are done in a black dotted pattern similar to the "front" side. The darker colored figure is set against a white, cloud-like area toward the base. The works, however, are more than just two flat surfaces: they have space between them, creating a real sense of depth. With *Nacht flug*, for example, there are Styrofoam beads leftover from a progenitor of this series of works sandwiched between the two faces.

Some of the works consist of layered patterns, which in turn forms a further pattern, while others contain figurative elements or added stickers or photographs that Potter has collected over the years. While the uniqueness of their composition as well as their size is prominent, it is their manner of making that draws us closer to them, scrutinizing them as we would a person that has piqued our interest. These upright works call out to be inspected, and there is much to see: we can see wooden frames, whose sides extend downward to act as "feet." There is bleached muslin stretched over the frames, and layers of heavily diluted oil paint as well as a mixture of glue and clay prominently applied to the sides and the feet of the works. Many of them have several layers of paint and muslin, while others are more diaphanous; and another contains glued-on photographs, which Potter took while traveling. Some are compositionally dense, with a lot of paint and perhaps even words, as in *Mauer b. Heidelberg / 1989 / Figure (in duality)* (2017–19), while others are more ephemeral, with a ghostly presence. But no matter their unique attributes, each work abounds with traces of the artist's hand. The feeling of intimacy created from this physicality not only reveals the power of touch and tenderness, but also art's ability to make us aware of the necessity of such closeness, of such humanness.

English-Swedish artist Henrik Potter lives and works in London. Recent exhibitions include *Needs*, Lucas Hirsch, 2019–20; *Headless Sleep*, Künstlerhaus Stuttgart, 2019; *Landlords are not currently collecting rent in self-love*, Cell Project Space, London, 2016; *Oh, of course, you were berry picking*, DREI, Cologne, 2015; *Down Where Changed*, Cubitt, London, 2014; and *PdT*, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, 2014.